

Nationalism, Communism, and Christian Identity

Protestant Theological Reflections
from Korea and Hungary

Studies in Hungarian and Korean Protestant Theology

Series Editors

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Volume 2.

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Edited by

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Edited by: Jaeshik Shin & Ábrahám Kovács

Published by
Debrecen Reformed Theological University • Honam Theological University and Seminary
Debrecen • Gwangju, 30 October, 2019

Publisher in Charge: Zoltán Kustár

Cover Design: Kamilla Mikáczó

Technical Editor: Éva Asztalos Szilágyiné

ISSN 2676-8356

ISBN 978-615-5853-22-7, DRTU Debrecen
ISBN 979-11-958594-3-6 [93230] , HTUS Gwangju

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Printed by: Kapitális Ltd. Debrecen, Hungary

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JAESHIK SHIN
and
ÁBRAHÁM KOVÁCS

Editors' Preface

Weaving Europe and Asia: Hungarian
and Korean Reformed Theologies Meet
within the Changing Landscape of
World Christianity

A book is just like a fingerprint. There are no identical fingerprints. We, therefore, could figure out the identity of a human being from its fingerprint. As each fingerprint is different from others, so is each book. Each book has its own uniqueness, because it reveals the whole experience of the writer in its writing, contents and style. Every writer puts his/her own thought, experience, vision, idea and even soul into his/her book. That way each book has its own fragrance. Thus, when we read a book we could feel who the writer is and draw out his/her fermented life. At that time, the book becomes an authentic one which conveys a sparkling insight and a persuasive power to the reader.

This book entitled "Nationalism, Communism, and Christian Identity: Protestant Theological Reflection from Korea and Hungary" is one of those works which has its distinctive fragrance. The fragrance of this work is a blended aroma mixed from two different scent-bottles: Hungary and Korea. It is an emergent fragrance from a margin where 460 year old Hungarian Reformed church and 135 year young Korean Protestant church meet together. Each church has tried to formulate her own tradition and ministry apart from a modern Western centered Christianity. Even though Hungary and Korea located far away from each other, there have been some commonalities which has recognized from the starting points of Hungarian (Hun) and Korean (Han) Theological Forum (HHFT). First of all, both countries have been suffered from the international superpowers during the twentieth century. Therefore the nationalism and division of their nation is a deep concern for both countries. Secondly, communism also made an indelible impact on the Hungarian and Korean nations, presenting issues such as reconciliation and forgiveness. Thirdly, secularization is a crucial issue

for Hungarians who had faced a new world after the collapse of communism since 1989. At the same time Koreans also experience an unparalleled and swift change since the 1990s. In the midst of these commonalities, HHFT has looked for the encounter between Hungarian church and Korean church and tried to share each experience together during last three consecutive conferences.

The articles in this book are some results of the 2nd and 3rd HHFT. The 2nd HHFT was held in 24-29 October, 2016, in Honam Theological University and Seminary, Gwangju, Korea. The 2nd theme was "Church and State in Hungary and Korea: From a Historical Approach." The 3rd HHFT was held in 8-12 January, 2018, hosted by Sárospatak Reformed Theological University, Hungary. The theme was "Hungarian and Korean Reformed perspectives on Nationalism and Christian identity before the collapse of Communism." 26 papers were presented during 2nd and 3rd forums. Both forums provided opportunities to be familiar with and to learn from each historical context of its nation and church. Among those presented papers, 10 articles were selected for the publication of this work which is focused on the theme of this book. Many of papers on the 2nd and 3rd Forum were focused on the period of during and after Japanese occupation in Korea and Communist regime in Hungary. Thus, this work is consists of two parts: Part I Korean Protestant Churches before and after Liberation, and Part II Hungarian Reformed Churches during Communism. The period of Japanese Occupation and Communist Regime were a traumatic experience in Korean church and Hungarian church respectively. The articles in each part deliberately present historical and theological reflections on those periods. As a first stage of HHFT, most articles intend to introduce the experience, context, and history of each church for sharing, understanding, and learning from each other. These articles in this book would be the warp and weft for weaving mosaic textiles which would be some parts of world Christianity.

Our hope is that these articles will stir further debates and stimulate new theological thinks on both sides, in Hungary and Korea. Any book is best used if students read it, therefore, this volume hopefully will be used as a textbook for students who wish to study in a comparative manner topics that are evergreen for theologians, scholars of religion and historian. It is believed that the contributions made here will excite, provoke and initiate critical theological reflections that may be useful not only the respective two nations but to the churches across the world with similar concern in Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australia and Europe.

Gwangju-Debrecen
30 October, 2019.

PART I

*Korean Protestant Churches
before and after
Japanese Colonization*

The Character of Korean Protestant Nationalism in Japanese Colony

Some Characters of Korean Protestant Nationalism during Japanese Colonial Regime

Introduction

Nationalism can take on various meanings dependent on historical contexts and situations. It is not easy to define a general concept of nationalism due to these cultural, regional, and national differences. Nevertheless, the rise of nationalism has greatly influenced the formation of modern national states.

I consider that Korean nationalism was developed through experiences of several serious external aggressions during the Chosun-Dynasty. The Japanese aggression from 1592 to 1598 and the plunder by the Chinese Ching-Dynasty, 1636-1637, are some of those examples.

At the end of the 19th century, the Korean peninsula was encircled by three large countries, Russia, China and Japan. They had the initiative in the political negotiation with the Korean government due to their superiority in power. In 1910, Korea was annexed by Japan, and the Korean government lost its sovereignty. From that time on, some Korean people have protested against the governing of Japan, and as a natural consequence the March 1st Independence Movement arose in 1919 with the support of the majority of the Korean people. But this peaceful movement was suppressed brutally. From that time on, under the stimulus of nationalistic resistance against colonialism, independence movements continued with the use of violence until 1945.

This paper focuses on the character of Christian nationalism during this time of resistance in the Korean colonial age. However, the major part of Korean

Christians had discontinued their resistance against Japanese colonialism after the 1919's independence movement, because of the Christian idea of nonviolence. This paper will ask whether Christian nationalism had lost its way, and whether Christian nationalism had changed its character from "resistant nationalism" into "non-resistant nationalism (Statism)."

The Political Situation of Korea at the Age of Protestant Introduction

The Protestant mission in Korea was relatively successful compared with other countries. The success of the Korean mission can be seen not only by the rapid growth of Christian followers, but also by the role of Christianity for enlightenment in 19th century Korea. At the same time, the age of Protestant mission was one of the most politically confusing times in modern Korean history.

In 1871, the American government dispatched an army to Korea. Five warships attacked *Gangwhado (Synmi Yangyo)*, because an American merchant ship, named General Sherman, which entered into Pyeongyang in order to force a trade treaty in July 1866, was completely destroyed by fire.¹ In the same year (1866), the French military invaded *Gwangwhado* and plundered national manuscripts of the Yi-Dynasty (*Byeongin Yangyo*). Therefore, the Korean Catholic Christians were persecuted more than before, as they were believed to be agents of Western invasion.

In 1876, Japan forced an agreement with Korea, the *Gangwhado Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Korea and Japan*, which was an unequal treaty. In 1884 there was political upheaval, named *Gapsin Jeongbyeon*, led by some pro-Japanese political leaders, and was brought to an end after three days. In 1895 Japan assassinated Korean Queen Min, who was hostile toward Japan. This is called *Eulmi Sabyeon*.

It was in this political situation of the Korean peninsula that Protestantism was introduced into Korea by American missionaries. Therefore, the missionaries needed to establish a moderate policy of mission, meaning they wanted to avoid conflict with the Korean government or the Japanese ruling power. However two decisive incidents happened due to the Japanese Governing-power, the Protectorate Treaty at 1905 (*Eulsabohojoyak*) and the Japanese Annexation of Korea (1910).

The moderate policy of Protestant missions in Korea meant a non-political and non-social attitude of Christians. After the Protectorate Treaty in 1905, some Korean Protestant leaders began to show such attitudes more openly. On the other hand, some Korean Protestant leaders protested against Japanese domination with their Christian faith and nationalism. The failed result of the Independence Movement on 1st March 1919 became the turning point of the Korean church to be non-political.²

Reflecting this radical change in the Korean political situation, the character of Korean Protestant nationalism in this paper will be considered in three divided periods: before the Japanese Annexation (1910), from annexation to the Independence Movement (1919), and after the Independence Movement.

Character of Protestant Nationalism in the Formative Period of Protestantism in Korea

The introduction of missionaries itself was a political problem. They wanted to seem non-political, because they knew enough about the political situation of Korea and also about negative backlash on the mission work if they acted politically. We can verify their non-political attitude in their mission policy, the Nevius Method of mission work (1890).

The Nevius Method influenced the general mission rules of the Korean Presbyterian church (1893). From the Nevius Method, missionaries focused on two points in their mission. The first was denying self-governance to Korean Christians, and the second was checking the growth of nationalism within Korean churches.³ At the same time, the non-political and non-social attitude of mission policy was responsible for the growth of "other-worldly faith" of Korean Protestantism. The most representative Korean pastor was Rev. Gil Sun-Ju (1869-1935), who was educated by this method and was very famous as a leader of the Pyongyang great revival movement in 1907.

After the revivalism of Korean Protestantism, we can see the non-political character of churches, and, "the great revival movement can be considered to be a movement that arose in interactions between the external factor, that is, the U. S. policy toward Korea, and the internal factor designed to make the Korean church non-political and transform it into salvation one."⁴In this moment we must

ask, whether this non-political policy was successful in Korean Protestantism generally. I believe that we cannot give a positive answer to this question, as some of the continuant resistances of nationalistic Christians against Japanese governing arose centered around churches.⁵

Protestantism and Nationalism under Japanese Suppression (1910-1919)

After Annexation in 1910, Japan began to suppress Korean nationalists, who resisted through enlightenment, education and restoration of national rights against Japanese colonialism. Most of these nationalists are Christian. The *Anak* Incident (1910) broke out in Hwanghae-province, and 28 nationalists were imprisoned, including Kim Gu and Kim Hong-Nyang. There was also the '105 persons Incident' in Pyongan-province, when 700 nationalists were arrested, and after severe police torture, 105 of them were sentenced to imprisonment at first trial.⁶ Yet the response of the mission station on this incident was surprising. At the second trial, just 6 persons were sentenced to imprisonment, and the mission center explained to the colonial government that they (missionaries) taught Korean church leaders to obey authorities and did not permit them to participate in lawless activity.⁷

Here we understand two ways of Christian faith in front of the national crisis. One is a way that emphasized on social responsibility, and the other is pious, conservative, evangelical faith.⁸ But it is very difficult to verify, how deeply and far Christianity or the Christian faith played as motivation in the national movement of nationalistic Christians.

Although Lee Sang-Jae (1850-1927), Lee Seung-Hoon (1864-1930), An Chang-Ho (1878-1938), Namgung Uk (1863-1939), Cho Man-Sik (1883-1950), and etc. are sufficient to be called as representative nationalistic Christians. For An Chang-Ho, participation in the independence movement of Korea meant practicing Christian love.

At first, the Christian faith helped awaken a nationalistic conscience to deny colonialism, however, the evangelical faith of the great revivalism with the Pyeongyang great revival movement in 1907 revealed a dualistic tendency by dividing the world into a profane and divine world. Noh said, that the evangelicals

insisted the dependence on God's providence through all difficulties of the national crisis. Therefore, he defines this attitude as a "psychological problem solve of the social crisis".⁹ Yet we cannot easily verify all evangelicals as non-nationalistic as, there were evangelical leaders who preached and prayed for the future of Korea. However, after the failed March 1st Independence Movement in 1919, a clear characteristic change of Protestantism around the concept of nationalism appeared.

For example, the representative evangelical preacher Rev. Joo Ki-Cheol (1897-1944), who was arrested several times by Japanese police and ultimately died in jail in 1944 due to severe torture by police, preached publicly that the national movement had nothing to do with Christianity. In his last sermon we cannot find any words about nation or patriotism, except for the righteousness of God. In spite of his non-political stand-point he was arrested and died in jail as a political criminal, because he refused to worship the Japanese national god of Shindoism.

Nationalism and Protestantism after the March 1st Independence Movement

The March 1st Independence Movement was broke out with active participation by Protestants. The number of Christian participants held superiority, and 16 out of 33 national leaders who signed the Declaration of Korean Independence were Christians. But the Protestant churches not only lost the initiative to draft the Declaration, but also hesitated to participate officially in the Movement, because the Protestant leaders had no conviction, "whether participation in a political movement accords with the will of God or not."¹⁰ Also, most western missionaries did not recognize any possibility of Korean independence, because of the power deficiency of Korea against the Japanese military. At last, most missionaries were compelled to be pro-Japanese.

After the failure of March 1st Independence Movement, the Korean non-political stand-point was settled in Korean Protestantism. When the Anti-Japanese movements in church were no longer possible, many Christian nationalist leaders left the church.¹¹ Therefore, the year of 1919 was a remarkable turning point for dividing Christian faith and nationalism. A conservative theologian even said, that he did not agree on the socialization, Koreanization and nationalization of Christianity.¹²

Here I will distinguish this non-political Christian entity into three groups. The first group continuously tried to awaken Korean Christians with a faithful conviction for nationalism, in spite of renunciation of active independent movement. I believe that the representative person was Kim Kyo-Shin (1901-1945), who maintained the Christian faith and national spirit went together and published the journal, *Bible-Chosun*. He was known as a type of native Christianity, so-called "Christianity born in Chosun".¹³ Also Kim was a "creative restoration of national identity".¹⁴

The second group is characterized by those imprisoned due to their participation in the March 1st Independence Movement and that had decided to concentrate just on church-life after being released from prison. For example, Rev. Joo Gi-Cheol and Rev. Lee Yong-Do (1901-1933) had no more concerns on national independence. Yet most of them did not hesitate to resist against the Japanese suppression, if what the Japanese demanded was idolatry, such as a worship of the Japanese Shindoism.

The third group not only turned away from national activities, but also cooperated with the Japanese Government. Such as Choi Nam-Sun (1890-1957), who as a typical nationalist (non-Christian) drafted the Independence Declaration in 1919, and turned to pro-Japanese activity. Of course it can be assumed that it was forced through threat and appeasement from the Japanese governing-power. Nevertheless, many famous patriotic nationalists changed their attitudes to pro-Japanese at that time.

In 1938, the General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church eventually determined to agree with Japanese Shindo-worship. This determination of the Korean church would be considered as "Submission to Japanese Statism".¹⁵ In my opinion, the concept of "Statism" is a "variant nationalism". The Assembly insisted that Shindo-worship is not religious, but civil and national. Instead of the powerless and right-less Korean state, they selected the Japanese sovereignty as their own nation.

Conclusion

At the initial period of Protestant introduction, Korea was in an inferior political situation in between strong countries. Through compulsory treaties, Korea

opened with an expectation of enlightenment and self-strengthening of nation. Protestantism was also expected to be helpful for the modernization of Korea. Because of this reason we can say, that early Protestantism had political and national character.

However, after the Protectorate Treaty in 1905 (*Eulsabohojoyak*) and the Japanese Annexation of Korea in 1910, many missionaries and Korean Christian leaders taught their belief, that political activities for national independence may not be faithful to Christianity. This change can be called an internalization of the Christian faith, and the beginning point of such internalization was the Pyeongyang great revival movement in 1907.

The U. S. government permitted tacitly the Japanese invasion and governing of Korea, and the non-political attitude of American missionaries also meant the same stand-point. Therefore, I would like to define this period, from the introduction of the Protestantism to the Japanese annexation in 1910, as a period of "tension between Christian nationalism and non-political faith of missionaries". From 1910 to 1919, the character of Protestant nationalism was at the head of the independence movement. We can define this period as a "resistant, nationalistic Protestantism". After the March 1st Independence Movement, the character of Protestantism on nationalism was divided in at least three ways as I have written, such as "faithful resistance with nationalism", "faithful resistance against religious suppression" and "change to Statism". This differentiation occurred not simultaneously, but separately in time until 1945.

Here I did not refer to any nationalists, who did not give up their violent resistance for independence of the nation. They left the institutional church, which did not allow any kind of resistance against the Japanese Statism. They were also Protestant Christians, but it is not easy to define whether they resisted against colonialism violently on a foundation of Christian faith.

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Nationalism and Biblical Symbols in the Anti-Japanese Movement of the Protestant Church in Korea, 1884-1919

Introduction

The first Protestant missionary reached Korea in 1884 when Japanese influence was starting to grow¹. Officially annexed by Japan in 1910, Korea was not liberated until 1945. Early Korean Christians were educated not to participate in socio-political affairs by American missionaries. Despite the missionaries' teachings, early Korean Christians staged anti-colonial resistance for the sake of national independence. This article critically reviews the factors which caused the Korean Christians to actively participate in the anti-Japanese movement.

As Korean Christians understood their context under Japanese rule, biblical symbols such as liberation (Exodus) and millennial hope (Revelation) functioned as the driving force behind social and political change. The power of these symbols in addition to national consciousness in the independence movement during the Japanese occupation of Korea will be expounded in this paper. This study covers the period from the first Protestant mission (1884) to the March 1st Independence Movement (*Samil Undong*) of 1919,² the apex of the anti-Japanese struggle.

The Socio-Political Milieu of the Anti-Japanese Movement

The Korean church had been taught to be conservative and indifferent to political affairs from the outset by the missionaries. At the end of the nineteenth century, Protestant Christianity was first introduced to Korea. At the same time, the country was in the process of being annexed by Japan. Christians with national consciousness took the lead in anti-Japanese struggles. The national independence movement, however, was never supported by missionaries. Missionaries (mostly Americans) were against the participation of Korean Christians in the political movement. In fact, missionaries attempted to prevent such anti-Japanese endeavors by all available means.

Japan's victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 and over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 decisively gave Japan the upper hand in controlling Korea among international powers. With the Portsmouth Conference of 1905, which terminated the Russo-Japanese War, Japanese hegemony of Korea was internationally recognized. Together with Britain, the United States promptly approached Japan to ascertain Tokyo's understanding of Washington's trusteeship of the Philippines, and thus, came to actively defend Japan's special interests in Korea. The overall pro-Japanese nature of American missionaries should be understood from the perspective of such international relations as well as their own conservatism.³

In 1905, a protectorate treaty was signed which gave Korea's sovereignty to Japan. The office of the Japanese Resident General was opened in Seoul as the supreme authority. Japanese military police soon landed in Korea to seize judicial rights and the Korean Royal Army was disbanded. The missionaries led a revival movement in 1907 and the main features of these revival meetings were confession and repentance of sins after a convicting sermon and loud prayers in unison. Korean church historian George Paik suggests three reasons for this Great Revival Movement of 1907: a sense of failure, a desire for deeper spiritual experience, and the deliberate efforts of the missionaries.⁴

Most mission reports on these revival meetings were limited in focus to immoral sins and did not mention the political unrest of Korea. The complete absence in these reports of how Korean Christians dealt with their intense feeling about the destiny of their nation is remarkable.⁵ It should be noticed that the newspaper Korea Daily News (*Taehan Maeil Sinbo*),⁶ which usually criticized the

Japanese aggression policy of the Japanese imperialists and defended Korean independence ethos, almost ignored the Revival Movement of 1907, whereas a British newspaper *The London Times* allotted large spaces to the movement day after day. This most likely had something to do with Britain's pro-Japanese policy at that time. At any rate, missionaries' disregard to historical reference in describing the "spiritual" revival experience is conspicuously incongruent with the circumstances of that time.⁷

After the *Eulsa* Treaty or Korea-Japan Protectorate Treaty of 1905 was signed,⁸ the Christians' nationalistic movement gradually transformed from prayer to active anti-Japanese efforts.⁹ The treaty had made Japan the virtual ruler of Korea, and five years later this was actualized at the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty (1910). After the annexation, the national consciousness of Korean Christians developed more than ever. An American missionary to Korea and mission historian, Samuel H. Moffett remarked, "The annexation was a humiliating blow to a proud and sensitive people... Nationalist sentiments boiled in Christian circles, though missionaries counseled moderation and sought to avoid involvement in political problems."¹⁰

The Mission Policy of Depoliticization and Other-Worldliness

The early American missionaries to Korea were of a strongly conservative and evangelical theology.¹¹ This has become the characterizing traits of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Missionaries who were trained against the background of conservatism did not fully realize the socio-political implications of the gospel. As early as August 1902, Arthur Judson Brown (1856-1963), secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, reported about the relations of American missionaries to the authorities concerned in Korea as follows:

The missionaries [in Korea] strongly believe with the [mission] boards at home that all respects should be paid to the lawfully constituted civil authorities... not to needlessly embarrass them... it is better for the disciples of Christ to patiently endure some injustice than to array Christianity in antagonism to the governments under which

they labor. ... Already ambitious political leaders have tried to enlist the cooperation of the Korean Christians, but the missionaries have promptly and decisively prevented the consummation of the intrigues. I believe with them that it would be as indeed as it would be suicidal to allow the infant [Korean] Church to array itself against the government.¹²

When Korea became the protectorate of Japan in 1905, missionaries were sympathetic toward Koreans because they were losing their political sovereignty. At the same time, missionaries realized that future missionary work depended on the favorable attitude of the Japanese regime. Brown explicitly stated,

They [American missionaries] are on friendly terms with the government and officials, and they are determined that by no act of theirs, and by no rashness of the Korean whom they control, shall the Church be led into a position which would surely result in tumult, persecution, and perhaps irretrievable disaster.¹³

In the same article as above, Brown contended that the Korean church should distance itself from all political matters. He went on to say, "No Christian should make the mistake which Moses made when he smote the Egyptian and 'supposed that God by his hand was giving deliverance.'"¹⁴ Brown was not concerned about the missionaries because he was convinced that they fully understood the importance of political neutrality. Consequently, missionaries actively discouraged nationalistic actions taken by Korean Christians. Thus, they kept a politically neutral stance for the mission.

Most of the pioneer missionaries in Korea followed this line of thinking. A letter written to Brown, the secretary of the mission board of the Presbyterian Church of America, on February 5, 1908 by Charles Allen Clark (1878-1961) of the Northern Presbyterian mission clearly revealed the same position by field missionaries on depoliticization:

As to the Board's action for a neutral policy concerning political matters, it does not change by one iota our mission policy for it has always been rigidly held and enforced... We believe that the church as a church has absolutely nothing to do with politics in any way...

The church is a spiritual organization and as such is not concerned with politics.¹⁵

As a result, many missionaries welcomed the colonial rule of the Japanese in Korea. Arthur Brown went so far as to say that “the Japanese administration is far better than Korea would otherwise have had and far better than Korea had under its own rule.”¹⁶ It’s shocking to find that Brown even argued that “in the evolution of the race and the development of the plan of God, the time had come when it was for the best interests of the world and for the welfare of the Koreans themselves that Korea should come under the tutelage of Japan.”¹⁷

Korea was, in the eyes of Western missionaries, a very backward and primitive country, not only pagan in religion but also behind in civilization. Some missionaries thought that they could work together with Japan to introduce into Korea a new faith and a new civilization. Missionaries looked upon Japan as the introducer of an advanced civilization to Korea, not as an imperial power. This was especially true of Arthur Brown. In his book, *The Mastery of the Far East*, Brown devoted an entire chapter to the “Benefits of Japanese Rule in Korea.” Speaking in favor of the colonial expansion of Japan, Brown argued:

They [Japanese] were forced to occupy Korea to prevent a Russian occupation, which would have menaced their own independence as a nation... the Koreans could not be independent anyway under present conditions in the Far East, and they are far better off under the Japanese than they were under their own rulers or than they would have been under the Russians... They [Japanese] have made some mistakes... but on the whole their work in Korea has been beneficent in many ways... His alien masters are, as a rule, more just with him than the native officials were prior to Japanese occupation.¹⁸

Ironically, exactly two months after the publication of Brown’s book, the nationwide anti-colonial movement broke out in Korea on March 1st, 1919.

At the start of the twentieth century, Japan’s aggressive colonialism was closely linked with Shintoism. Under the divine rule of their Emperor, the Japanese believed it to be their role to rule over Asia. Their aggression was a holy one, designed to bring peace to the conquered nation as conquered nations enjoyed the benefits of Japanese culture. The Japanese so believed in their superiority that

they thought they were doing a favor to the nations they invaded. Additionally, some of the Japanese Christians, especially the Japanese Congregational Church, understood the Japanese annexation of Korea as the conquest of Canaan and thought it justified.¹⁹ These Christians of the Congregational Church quoted Deuteronomy 31:7-8²⁰ in their belief that Korea was the promised land that God had sworn.²¹

The missionary acceptance of the Japanese occupation became the officially accepted position of the Korean church. Many American missionaries endorsed the occupation, justifying this stance with the teaching of Jesus, who said: "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's" (Matthew 22:21), and of Paul, who said: "Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established" (Romans 13:1). In 1910, the Korean Presbyterian Church which was under the control of the missionaries made the following resolution:

The church is dedicated to God, not designed for the discussion of national affairs. Churches and chapels are facilities for church service but not the place to discuss national affairs.²²

Missionaries not only declared their own neutrality on political affairs but also wanted to neutralize the Korean church and Korean Christians. Missionary neutrality on political affairs was designed specifically to reduce the fears and suspicions of the Japanese colonial regime and to protect future mission work. Missionaries most likely felt that any political action could jeopardize the chance to preach the gospel. This situation effectively made them depoliticize the church, at least on the official level. While Protestant churches served as "a safe place" for Korean patriots to promote their nationalistic ends and carry out activities to mobilize against the Japanese, the political neutrality of missionaries made many national-minded Koreans leave the church.²³

As mentioned above, the Korean church was nurtured to be conservative and apolitical. This became one of the typical characteristics of the Korean Christian community under the missionary leadership: i.e., "other-worldly" consciousness.²⁴ Christians were trained to seek utopia in the other world. The natural consequence was the suppression of any social thinking about political matters. This was an almost deliberate policy of the missionaries. They suppressed any socio-political

thinking. After the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910, Arthur Brown argues that:

As a matter of fact, the missionaries, in so far as they have touched political matters at all, have used their great influence to induce the Koreans to acquiesce in Japanese rule. Indeed, it has often been said that if it had not been for the missionaries, a revolution would have broken out when Korea was annexed to Japan. The Japanese fully appreciate this.²⁵

Following this line of thinking, the missionaries incessantly preached that the duty of every Christian was not to engage in political affairs. Some Christians suspected of political activity were denied from responsible positions in the church, and in some cases were excommunicated. They were even treated as heretics.

To promote satisfactory relations between the missionaries and the Japanese in Korea... they[mission boards] and the missionaries continued to... cultivate friendly relations with the Japanese officials... and teach the Korean Christians to respect and obey the lawfully constituted authorities; limit their activities to missionary duties and keep themselves and, as far as possible, the Korean churches wholly apart from all political matters.²⁶

The Korean Christians were encouraged to recognize the Japanese power as the absolute legal master of Korea. As a result, the missionaries tried to foster amicable relations with the Japanese authorities during the colonial period. Despite the missionaries' intent, circumstances in Korea pushed the Korean church in a direction the missionaries had not intended.

Biblical Symbols and Nationalism in the Anti-Japanese Resistance Movement

The theological understanding of the early Korean Protestant Church was based entirely on the teachings of the first missionaries to Korea. They were

theologically conservative and antagonistic toward higher biblical criticism and liberal theology. Thus, the early church had an extremely other-worldly view of salvation. It did not consider the implications of the gospel for those suffering in this world. Political matters were not discussed in the churches. Considering the efforts of the missionaries to depoliticize the church, it's significant to note that Korean Christians played a central role in the March 1st Independence Movement of 1919.²⁷ That is to say, the missionaries' attempt to separate church and politics was not wholly successful.²⁸ Although the missionaries resolutely sought to keep the churches aloof from all political movements, it was in vain.

Even though the Korean Christians gladly responded to the message of the gospel, the progressive shift toward "this-worldly" disposition can be found in the anti-Japanese activities of the newly fledged church. After the Protectorate Treaty of 1905, the Korean Christians began to interpret their callings as increasingly "this-worldly" in purpose and scope. After the annexation in 1910, the national consciousness of Koreans was awakened more than ever. At the same time, many Korean Christians hoped that "in Christianity they would find the answer to national weakness and their personal insecurity."²⁹ These new "this-worldly" impulses stepped beyond approved doctrinal boundaries and these climaxed in the March 1st Independence Movement of 1919.

In 1918, at the end of World War I, Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), President of the United States, set forth 'the doctrine of self-determination' of small nations. The changes taking place around the world encouraged the Korean people to believe that a new age of peace had arrived. Thus, the people reached the consensus that now was the time to achieve independence. This group included Christian churches, nationalist leaders, and a few Buddhists, who were also encouraged by Korean nationalists abroad. On February 22, 1919, the Emperor of Korea, Gojong, passed away. His funeral was the event which sparked the national movement. Mourners gathered from all over the nation and many traveled to Seoul to pay their respects. It was at this time that the nationalists prepared the Korean Declaration of Independence. The declaration was signed by 33 influential leaders: 16 Christians (Protestant), 15 Cheondogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way) adherents, and 2 Buddhists.

The March 1st Independence Movement was carried out as an entirely voluntary movement of the Korean people. No foreign missionaries had any part in the preparation of the movement. To defend their innocence, missionaries

stated: "No missionaries could have such a foolish idea of fighting Japan, one of the world powers, without a single weapon."³⁰ American Methodist Bishop Herbert Welch (1862-1968), who was in charge of Japan and Korean mission, expressed discontent at the fact that the Korean independence declaration was read at many churches.³¹ Korean Christians played a pivotal role in the anti-Japanese movement. It was mostly Christians who planned and executed the fight for freedom. They also served as messengers across the country through the church which served as a nationwide organizational network.³²

Regarding the early Korean Christians, Brown wrote that they were theologically conservative. They did not have questions about biblical miracles and believed everything missionaries had taught them. He went on to say that "The account of the Garden of Eden, the experience of Jonah, the virgin birth of our Lord, the resurrection of Lazarus, and of the gates of pearls and streets of pure gold in the Heavenly City were taken as historical descriptions of actual facts."³³

However, the Bible and the Christian message were not apolitical or neutral to the political situation in Korea. Because the Korean Christians took the Word literally, they applied the biblical symbols directly to their historical experience. They interpreted the Bible stories as symbolizing their own experiences. Old Testament stories describing the national deliverance of Israel were taken to heart as promising Korean deliverance, with the Christians being at the forefront of the nationalistic movement.

A key aspect of the contextualization of the Christian message was the adoption of biblical stories. Two of the most beloved and frequently employed sermon texts were Exodus and the Babylonian captivity of Israel.³⁴ Korean believers whole-heartedly believed the God of Israel was with them. They identified themselves with Israel in the Book of Exodus. The story of Moses functioned as a powerful symbol to fight the oppressive evil force, the Japanese colonial power. Koreans read the plight of Israel in Egypt as their own and regarded the Japanese as the Egyptians and other Old Testament oppressors such as the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Korean Christians strongly desired liberation from oppression. In public prayers at church, they would often ask, "Send us a leader like Moses, who can lead us from the present bondage to liberation."³⁵

Coincidentally, Korea was then called 'Chosen' which paralleled with Israel, God's chosen people. The symbolic identification of oppressed Koreans with Israelites in Egyptian bondage gradually increased hope for freedom among

Korean Christians. They believed that if they turned to God, He would deliver them from the tyranny of the oppressors. In this sense, the metaphors and symbolic language of Exodus directly applied to the *Sitz im Leben* of the Korean people.

The Book of Revelation was another popular text among the Christians as it offered hope to a suffering people. Korean pastors often quoted from this book in church services. The depiction of the Roman Empire was a powerful symbol to describe Japan's political oppression. It promised the coming of the Messiah and the destruction of the colonial power, with the anti-Christ naturally symbolizing the Japanese oppressors³⁶ (Kim 1981:110; Kim and Kim 2010:219). These symbols were used by the Korean people to make sense of their historical situation. The language and symbols of Revelation had immediacy for the Korean Christians at that time. The cross was also regarded as symbolic of the people's suffering.³⁷ The Messiah and the second coming were the promise of a restored Korea, a Kingdom established in this world.

Furthermore, around the outbreak of the March 1st Independence Movement, a leaflet entitled *Tokripdan Tonggomun* (Notification Statement of the Korean Independent League) was distributed to the Christians who participated in the movement. It reads as follows:

Our esteemed and noble Independent League members, do not insult the Japanese, throw stones at them, or beat them with your fists. Christians should pray three times a day, fast on Sunday, and read the Bible every day. Read Isaiah chapter 10 on Monday, Jeremiah chapter 12 on Tuesday, Deuteronomy chapter 28 on Wednesday, James chapter 5 on Thursday, Isaiah chapter 59 on Friday, and Romans chapter 8 on Saturday.³⁸

The topics of the reading differed each day. Monday's topic was God's punishment against Assyria for destroying Israel. On Tuesday, it was the explanation for Judah's destruction. Wednesday's reading looked at the invasion of Israel and her suffering from other nations. Thursday was about encouragement for suffering Christians to pray and endure. Friday subject highlighted how God will save when a sinful people repents. Last but not least, the passage for Saturday mentioned how the present suffering is nothing compared to the glory that will appear in the future.

The leaflet clearly demonstrates “the strong influence of non-violence of Protestantism”³⁹ and the power of the biblical symbols for the participants of the March 1st Movement. The biblical symbols functioned as a catalyst for the anti-Japanese movement. These Scriptures served as a motive for Christians to continue to participate in the March 1st Movement without losing hope in the midst of suffering.

The language of the coming of Israel’s Messiah, “the new heaven and the new earth,” and “the new Jerusalem” might seem like distant or unreal language. For the oppressed Koreans, however, these “eschatological” symbols were powerful enough to make sense of their own history and to provide hope and vision for the future.⁴⁰ In the course of the anti-Japanese movement, this symbolic language became an important tool for the Korean Christians to perceive their historical experience under Japanese rule. The combination of these factors created a remarkable result in which Korean Christians could never become other-worldly, nor politically neutral.

In response, the Japanese police kept close watch on all public meetings and worship services held at the church and Christian institutions.⁴¹ Under strict surveillance of the Japanese police, every utterance of preachers and pastors was carefully scrutinized.⁴² It was not surprising that the Japanese colonial government banned the Korean church’s preaching from the text of Exodus and singing hymnals that could foster the spirit of freedom.⁴³ Simply put, Koreans had applied the Bible message to their present context.

Concluding Remarks

Protestant Christianity grew to be the most promising resource for Korea to withstand the oppression of the colonial power of Japan. From 1905 onwards, Korean pastors equated the struggles of Moses against Pharaoh with that of their own against the Japanese. There can be no doubt that this was in the minds of Koreans as they expounded the Bible story. They had a keen sense that what was happening in their day resonated with the experience of Israel in the Old Testament. Korean Christians clearly realized that scripture remained a dead letter without addressing their situation.

Thus, Christianity and Korean nationalism became inextricably linked, and the collaboration of the two paved the way for the rather quick and easy acceptance of the gospel message. Korean Christians, especially under Japanese colonial rule, endeavored to seek meaningful interpretations of life and the world. Answers to particularly pressing questions on oppression and suffering required relevant interpretations of the Bible. As for the Korean Christians' exposition of Scripture, they did not hesitate to read the Bible in the light of the events and circumstances of their time.

The biblical symbols were closely related to the socio-political experience of the Korean people. The metaphors and symbolic language provided the oppressed with a new perspective and a transforming power for their historical reality. This gave impetus to Korean Christians to save their nation from the Japanese imperial power. This also meant that they could never become completely other-worldly. Missionaries sought salvation through other-worldliness, but Korean Christians sought salvation through this-worldliness. The same political situation in Korea was the driving force behind the opposite actions between the two parties: Korean Christians and American missionaries.

History shows that nationalism and Christianity have always been "uneasy bedfellows." The relationship between Christianity and nationalism in most regions of Asia in the twentieth century was "in mutual opposition." In fact, outside of Korea, Christianity was branded as the "western colonial oppressor," leading to Asian nationalism assuming an "anti-Christian character."⁴⁴ However, Korea did not regard Christianity as a vanguard of Western colonialism, since Japan was the more immediate and threatening colonial power. Korea stands out as an exceptional case where Christianity and nationalism became complementary partners prompting the willing reception of the biblical narratives as a messianic message of much waited hope and liberation.

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A Formation of Christian Nationalism in Korean Protestantism after Liberation Period

Human Resources, Material Resources, and Policy Resources

Introduction

In 1945, there were about 5,500 churches and about 400,000 Protestants in Korea.¹ The Protestant population became about 600,000 in 1950, but the number of Korean Protestants was still under 5% of the Korean population. 70 years since Korean Protestantism became the largest and the most influential religion in Korea. After the first Protestant missionaries came into Korea in 1884, Korean Protestantism had experienced a remarkable growth and finally became the largest and the most influential religion in Korea. According to a 2015 census compiled by the Korean government, 19.7% of the population (about 9.7 millions) belongs to Protestantism, 15.5% to Buddhism (7.6 millions), and 7.9% to the Catholicism (3.9 millions).² The rest belongs to various new religions including Won Buddhism, Cheondoism, and Jeungsando.³

According to a survey by the Department of Public Information in United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIC, hereafter the USMG) in August 1946, 70% of Koreans preferred socialism, 14% capitalism, 7% communism, and 8% had no preference.⁴ Considering the illiteracy rate was about 70% of the Korean population during the Liberation period, there might be a possibility that only the intellectuals could respond to the survey. Even though there might be different interpretations on their backgrounds of the preference, it was true

that among the intellectuals, socialism and communism were more preferable to capitalism.

Korean society has become one of the most capitalized societies, and Korean Protestantism has become freed from being in the captivity of capitalistic spirit. Rather, Protestantism in Korea has pursued the fruits of capitalism in its structure, administration and message. Most mega-churches in Korean Protestantism have become corporate churches which embody the spirit of materialism and are consonant with global capitalism.

Confronted with the rapid shifting of ideological and religious landscape in Korea, we can raise some questions: What has happened in Korean society after Liberation for making this radical shift of religious population and ideology? How has Korean Protestantism become the most influential religion in Korean society? How has Korean society become an anti-communist capitalistic society?

This paper aims to describe some factors which had resulted into the growth of Korean Protestantism and the decline of socialism in South Korea after Liberation. The starting point of this discussion is as follows: During the Cold War period after the Pacific War, the US government and the USMG considered the communist group in Korea as the chief obstacle in constructing South Korea as the vanguard of anti-communism. The US missionaries in Korea, who worked with the USMG, introduced and recommended many Korean Protestants for some key positions in the USMG. Those Korean Protestants, preferred by the USMG, were not only to speak English and be familiar with western culture, but also had a strong anti-communist tendency. Korean Protestantism also had received some benefits from the USMG during the disposal process of the confiscated property after liberation, and had almost monopolized the distribution of foreign relief aids during and after the Korean War. Finally, some policies established and carried out by Rhee's government were friendlier to Christianity than other religions in Korea. With the favor of the USMG and of the following Rhee administration, Korean Protestantism became a major influential group in Korean society and put the firm foundation for catching up with its competitive religions, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Cheondoism, and so on. Three factors - human resources, material resource allocation, and policy making - were the major means which Protestant-friendly efforts during the USMG, the Korean War period, and Rhee Syngman's government were practiced.

However, this arguing position does not intend to deny other internal factors within Korean Protestantism for its growth, and Christian influence on the Korean

society before and during Japanese occupation. Neither does it insist that some external factors had taken key roles to the growth of Korean Protestantism and of capitalism rather than that of socialism or communism in Korea since the Liberation period. These three factors are not the necessary and sufficient conditions for the growth of Korean Protestantism and the decline of Socialism in South Korea. As for understanding the whole growing trajectory of Korean Protestantism, it is clear that we need to consider multi-related factors including inner, outer, and multi-layered ones.

To achieve the goal of this paper, we will trace its backgrounds and factors which had been related to the growth of Korean Protestantism during post-Liberation and Korean War period. Three factors, human resources, material resources, policy resources, will be examined focusing on the relationship among the USMG, the US missionaries, Rhee's government, and Korean Protestants. The following four sections will display the unfolding process how Korean Protestantism had achieved hegemony in Korean society after the end of the Pacific War: A Historical Background: the USMG and the US missionaries; Human Resources: the US missionaries and Korean Protestants in the USMG; Material Resources: the disposal of the confiscated properties after Liberation and the distribution of foreign relief aids during and after Korean War; Policy Resources: Rhee Syngman government and Protestant-friendly policies; Summary will be followed as a conclusion.

A Historical Background: The USMG and the US Missionaries in Korea

It was after Liberation that Korean Protestantism became an apparent part of the ruling establishment in South Korea. The USMG especially was the decisive factor in the expansion of Protestant influence in South Korea. To Korean Protestants, the USA was the Christian nation that had introduced Protestantism into Korea. The majority of Korean Christians had been pro-American-oriented since the late nineteenth century. In addition, many Protestant leaders took modern education in mission schools or in the USA with the support of the US missionaries and thus could communicate in English.⁵

The USMG welcomed the participation of Korean Protestant leaders and appointed many Korean Protestants to high administrative positions in cooperation with missionaries from the USA. After the ruling of the USMG, many Christians could charge leadership positions in all areas of Korean society. As the influx of Protestants into the USMG and other public circles continued, Korean Protestantism was integrated into the ruling establishment. Let us examine the process in relationship with the role of the US missionaries.

In 1945, the US armed forces established a military government that exercised governing authority over South Korea. John Hodge, the Commander of the 24th Corps of the US Army, arrived in Seoul and took over the administrative organization of the Japanese Government-General in Joseon (Korea). Because Commander John Hodge had been engaged in field warfare before coming to Korea, he did not have any enough information about Korea. Therefore, he planned to inherit the Korean personnel who had been working in and for the Japanese administrative system during the colonial period, and begin the military rule with those pro-Japanese collaborators. This administrative plan, however, was faced with strong opposition from most Koreans.⁶

Robert T. Oliver, once an adviser of Rhee Syngman the first President of ROK, points out several reasons of the difficulties with which the USMG had experienced as follows: (1) basically, the US Government did no sufficient preparation for the rebuilding of Korea; (2) the US Governmental decision regarding personnel to be used was inappropriate and unwise; (3) the USMG had no clear policy for handling with communists, who were fundamentally disruptive factors in South Korea; (4) both the Koreans and the Americans were almost ignorant about each other's people and culture; (5) Koreans generally dislike an imposed foreign government and resist it by all available means; (6) the USMG in Korea did not effectively control communist and populist cells that were widespread all through the country; (7) the USMG did not like so much the mass of the Koreans as pro-Japanese collaborators who were "successful" economically or educationally; (8) finally, there was jealously deep-seated resentment over the far greater speed and thoroughness of the rehabilitation of Japan under the MacArthur Military Administration.⁷

It was the US missionaries that complemented the lacked information on Korea during the USMG. Commander John Hodge and the USMG, greatly lacking the necessary information on Korea, gradually came to notice the practical value

of the US missionaries who had worked in Korea during the Japanese occupation. He opened doors for the US missionaries to return to Korea. In November 1945, John Hodge requested the US State Department to dispatch 20 missionaries (10 Protestants and 10 Catholics) to Korea.⁸ Without the permission of the USMG in Korea, the US missionaries could not enter into Korea to resume their mission works. Each denomination's board of foreign mission responded promptly to send its missionaries to Korea, where there had been no US missionary since 1942.⁹

After the Pacific War broke out virtually all the US missionaries had to leave Korea before December 1941.¹⁰ They were designated as hostile subjects of the enemy country, and thus all their rights were taken away, their properties were classified as enemy properties, and were confiscated and put under the control of the special appointees by the Government-General in Seoul. The compounds and school campuses owned by missionary organizations were commandeered. The Western missionaries who managed to stay until the last possible moment were mostly the missionaries from Northern Presbyterian Church of the US, such as Horace H. Underwood, Edwin W. Koons and Edward H. Miller, who refused to close down their educational mission endeavors, and some other medical missionaries like Archibald G. Fletcher and John D. Bigger.¹¹ After even these missionaries were deported by force in exchange for the Japanese residents in Great Britain and the United States in early July 1942, there were no Western missionaries left in Korea. Toward the end of the Pacific War all Korean Christian denominations were amalgamated into one unified church, as had been done in Japan.

The missionaries who were forced to return to the United States maintained their contacts and gatherings among them, and prepared to resume their mission works when the war was over. Some of them worked for the US government during the Pacific War. Their information was very valuable for establishing the Korean policies during and after the war, especially for some aspects on the issues of Korean independence. Horace H. Underwood played a very important role for the US government. He had reported various information on Korea during the meetings with intelligent agencies: Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), Military Intelligence Services (MIS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Office of War Information (OWI). He worked as interim staff at the Korea desk on the Board of Foreign Mission of the Northern Presbyterian

Church and later exerted a great deal of influence upon the direction of the mission work in Korea. He insisted that it needed to use the pro-American and pro-Christian attitude of Koreans.

Some other missionaries, such as Oliver R. Avison and Homer B. Hulbert, advocated in America for the independence of Korea after returning to the US. Oliver Avison formed an organization called Christian Friends of Korea to foster the support for the independence of Korea, and the core members of the organization came from those who had previously worked as missionaries in Korea.¹² During their staying in the US, those senior missionaries in Seoul and Gyeonggi area, including Horace Underwood, Oliver Avison, and Alice Appenzeller (daughter of Henry Appenzeller), supported Rhee Syngman.

Other second-generation missionaries also served as officers or agents for the US government. George M. McGune worked in the OSS Washington office. Clarence N. Weems Jr. (a son of Clarence N. Weems, 1875-1952 a Methodist missionary) worked in the OSS San Francisco office and Chongqing office in China during the war. After Liberation he served as an assistant of John Hodge in the USMG. Herold J. Noble, after finishing his doctorate degree, worked in OSS, ONI, the Department of States, and the Department of Army. After the end of Pacific War, he served as a political adviser of the USMG in Korea.

When John Hodge served as the Commander of the USMG, he used to mention that all Americans were missionaries. As did Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan,¹³ Hodge considered Christianity very important in the American activities in the third world. As the missionaries served as an interpreter, an official and an advisor in the various departments in the USMG, so-called "the politics of missionary" began in Korea.

Human Resources: The US Missionaries and the Korean Protestants in the USMG

During the period under the USMG, the Protestant churches in South Korea were able to grow and develop freely with the support of the USMG. After liberation, US missionaries and their descendants who worked with the USMG were a great help for Korean Protestantism. These missionaries and their descendants, who had worked in Korea during Japanese occupation, returned to become the

officials or advisors of the USMG. They recommended Korean Protestants who had close relationships to them as officials or advisors of the USMG and suggested the Protestant-friendly policy during the period of the USMG. They took on the bridge role for connecting between the USMG and Korean Protestants.¹⁴

From the early stages of the USMG, the second-generation of the US missionaries, such as George Z. Williams and Clarence N. Weems Jr., who worked as an interpreter, played an important role to introduce and recommend Korean Protestant for the USGM administration. Even though there were official tests for the public employment of administrative staffs in the USMG, the recommendation was the most important method to appoint the high administrative positions. This personal recommendation was an effective method to discern strong anti-communism, which was the most important qualification to work with the USMG. Once Koreans were appointed as high-ranking positions of the USMG, they would recommend other Koreans who had a similar religious, ideological and political background as their own staff.¹⁵ Those Korean administrative staff came to formulate a conservative domestic political group.

For example, George Z. Williams became an assistant to and interpreter for John Hodge. He was the son of Frank E. C. Williams, who had served as a missionary in Gongju, worked at the Department of Agriculture of the USMG. George Z. Williams played a key role in appointing Korean Protestants to high-ranking positions within the USMG, i.e., in appointing the highest Korean officer position for the police force. Jo Byeong-Ok, who became the Director of Police Affairs, was a graduate of Young Myeong Secondary School in Gongju which was established in 1906 by Frank E. C. Williams and Sharf Ellis. George Z. Williams and Jo Byeong-Ok were good friends from their childhood. In spite of only three months working for John Hodge, George Z. Williams considerably influenced on the political landscape during and after the USMG. He considered that the Korean situation was in opposition between radicals vs. democrats and, as a political conservative and anti-communist, supported Rhee Syngman as a Political leader in Korea.¹⁶ Clarence N. Weems, Jr., a son of missionary Clarence N. Weems, who had been engaged in the mission work in Gaeseong, also became an assistant to Hodge and helped deploy many Korean Protestants to the USMG. Henry G. Appenzeller and Horace G. Underwood, the sons of the first missionaries to Korea, and Harold Nobel, the son of missionary William N. Nobel, also received important posts in the USMG.

In this way, the missionaries and their Korean-born second-generation, who spoke fluent Korean and were familiar with Korean culture, played a key role in building the bridge between the USMG and the Korean Protestants. Among them two missionaries are needed to be referred: Horace H. Underwood, a Presbyterian missionary, and J. Earnest Fisher, a Methodist missionary.

Horace H. Underwood and J. Earnest Fisher played especially important roles during the USMG. Horace H. Underwood was a civilian officer with the rank of army major, who worked as a staff officer for Archibald V. Arnold, the Military Governor, and as an adviser of John Hodge, who exercised great influence on the USMG. J. Earnest Fisher, who had once worked as a specialist of Japan, Korea and the Philippines in the OSS Washington office during the Pacific War, served in the USMG's Department of Public Information. He was very close to John Hodge. During their works in the USMG, Underwood and Fisher vigorously recommended that the US missionaries and their descendants serve in the USMG. Underwood and Fisher had been professors at Yonhee Jeonmun (Yonhee College, now Yonsei University) during the Japanese occupation and their works on Korea were on the required reading list for the officials and staffs of the USMG. They recommended many graduates from the Christian mission schools to the USMG, especially those from Yonhee College. As the results, people even called the USMG "the Yonhee Jeonmun Government."¹⁷ Underwood also reported that John Hodge had a very friendly attitude to missionaries and their activities, and most important positions in the USMG were taken by the Korean Protestants from missionary schools. He mentioned the USMG as the "Chosen Christian College Government"¹⁸

With the strong recommendation of the US missionaries, many Korean Protestants, who had studied in the US and even served as civil servants for the US government during the Second World War, worked within the USMG. They served as assistant staffs, interpreters, and the directors of the Bureaus of Finance, Public Safety, Mining and Industry, Agriculture and Commerce, Public Health, Education, Justice, and Communication and Transportation. In 1946, 35 Protestants worked among 50 high Korean positions in the USMG. As many Christians worked as interpreters, advisors and directors in the USMG, they ended up exercising a certain influence on the post-Liberation political scenes through so-called "politics by interpretation" and "politics by advisors." In the process of supporting Korean Protestants, even though the political positions of missionaries were slightly

different, most Korean Protestants working in the USMG became the main stream of the conservative political party after the USGM.

Material Resources: Disposed Properties and Foreign Relief Aids

For the growth of Korean Protestantism and expansion of its influence, there were two opportunities. One was the disposed properties after Liberation and the other was the foreign relief aids during the Korean War period. Korean Protestant had almost monopolized the benefit with the support of the US missionaries and the USMG, and Rhee Syngman government respectively. The disposed properties and relief program became the main resources of the expansion and growth Korean Protestantism.

However, there have been some fragmentary data on the disposal of religious properties. The detailed data, which could be used for drawing the whole picture of disposed properties, have not been found yet, and there is little research on this issue.¹⁹ Therefore, we might confer that those confiscated properties were disposed in the context of USMG policy to secure the US hegemony in South Korea. That is, Korean Protestantism had been the most benefited group among the Korean religions during the disposal of the confiscated religious priorities.

One of the examples that clearly demonstrate such a favorable attitude of the USMG and the role of missionaries toward Korean Protestantism was in the matter of the disposition of properties formerly owned by various Japanese colonial components. Horace Underwood, as a Property Custodian in General Affairs of the USMG, cooperated with Methodist Church, Southern Presbyterian Church, Salvation Army, YMCA and so on, and in 1946 was appointed as an administrator of Presbyterian Mission Properties who charged all religious properties owned by Japanese before Liberation.

There were many properties that the variety of Japanese religious organizations had left behind. Those properties, established by Japanese religious organizations, were classified as the facilities like churches or schools. At the end of Japanese Occupation, there were 327 Shindo-sect temples (about 250 were in South Korea), 138 Japanese Buddhist temples (about 120 were in South Korea), 54 Japanese Christian churches, and about 1,000 Shindo shrines. There

were also some educational institutions (8 schools, 44 kindergartens, and 13 training schools), four hospitals, and 12 social welfare organizations established by Japanese Buddhism. One school and four kindergartens were run by Japanese Christianity.²⁰ Those religious properties were confiscated by the USMG and disposed during the USMG and the following Rhee's government.

Even though some buildings among those properties owned by Japanese were also disposed to other religions such as Daejonggyo, the properties of Japanese Shinto, Tenrikyo, and Johapgyohoe (Japanese Congregational Church that was active in Korea during the Japanese occupation.) were given to the Protestant groups.²¹ Youngnak Church, Gyeongdong Church, and the Museum of Christianity and Presbyterian Theological Seminary, both at Namsan in Seoul, were founded on the disposed properties. Korean Protestants were the most benefited group from the USMG during the disposing process of enemy properties. The representatives of refugee churches in Seoul, the core base of anti-communism, were established under the benefits from the USMG. As Japanese Shinto shrine temples transformed into Protestant churches and institutions, some Koreans would rejoice over these as God's special blessings as well as the victory of Christianity.

The relief work during the period of post-Liberation and Korea War was another opportunity for Korean Protestantism to expand its influence in Korean society. As most of the foreign relief agencies had Christian backgrounds, and as the US missionary directed the relief work of the Church World Service (CWS) in Korea, Korean Protestants began to monopolize the whole operational process of the relief and social welfare works in Korea.

After the outbreak of the Korean War, foreign relief agencies came to South Korea and began to play an important role in relief activities for Korean society and Korean people. The relief organizations provided emergency relief to refugees and other war-affected, operated orphanages and overseas adoption, dispensed assistance to war-widows, rebuilt and restored damaged houses, and carried out projects in areas such as education, public health, and community development. The majority of the foreign civilian aid organizations that came to Korea were churches or church-related Christian relief organizations from Europe and North America, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC), the International Missionary Council (IMC), the CWS, and the War Relief Service of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.²² Among about 40 agencies, the Church

World Service and War Relief Service of the Nation Catholic Welfare Conference played prominent roles in relief and restoration during and after the Korean War.

In February 1951, Henry D. Appenzeller took charge of the relief work of the CWS in Korea.²³ In result, his mission colleagues and Korean Protestant associates were engaged in distributing supplies, in assisting refugees and in their settlement with the cooperation of other foreign relief agencies such as War Relief Service Committee and American Friends Service Committee. As the areas of relief operations expanded, the CWS in Korea, operating under the guidance and support of the CWS in the USA, had 125 regional committees, comprising of county (gun) level units, throughout South Korea during the Korean War. These regional committees consisted of pastors and lay elders from the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Evangelical Holiness Churches as well as the Salvation Army, and they provided the direct distribution of the relief goods.

The relief activities, mainly controlling relief supplies, provided another opportunity for intensifying the anti-communism in the Korean society during and after the Korean War period. The foreign Christian agencies and the US missionaries, who charged the war relief supplies, which were the largest portion of financial resource at that time, took the Northwest refugee Christians as their partners for the war relief activities.²⁴ The CWS founded in the US in 1946 was interested in the refugee anti-communist Christians from North Korea. The CWS had a meaningful role in the formation of anti-communists with a close partnership with Northwestern refugee Christians through relief goods and mission funds. Han Gyeong-Jik, an interpreter and an associate of the US missionaries, was the representative of the Northwestern refugee Christians and took hegemony within the Korean Protestant churches. With the support of the US missionaries and through the war relief activities, anti-communist Korean Christians took the leadership within the Korean Protestantism, which became the core of anti-communist movement after the Korean War within Korean society until now.

As most of the foreign relief agencies were either Christian mission associations from Europe or North America, or had Christian backgrounds, the operations for relief and social welfare in Korea reflected strong Christian influences. These social relief and outreach programs played such important roles during the 1950s that the Christian churches came to be known as social relief agencies to the whole of Korean, and not just to the Korean Christians. With the vast support

and assistance from the foreign churches, the churches in Korea entered a period of the most active social mission outreach in their history. However, this does not mean that the impact of these foreign relief agencies on Korean society and Korean Christian communities were always positive. The process of distributing the relief goods sometimes became the source of trouble and scandal in the Korean Protestantism.

Policy Resources: Rhee Syngman Government and the Protestant-Friendly Policies

Rhee Syngman was elected as the first President of South Korea and had exercised his power for 12 years, with the strong support of the USMG, most US missionaries and the conservative anti-communist Protestants in Korea. The USMG backed Rhee Syngman's anti-communist policy and most missionaries at Yonhee College such as Horace Underwood and J. Earnest Fisher supported him. Also, a great number of refugee Protestants who fled from Northwestern Korea actively participated in political activities to eliminate leftist elements in South Korea.²⁵ When Rhee Syngman emerged in 1948 as the first President of the Republic of Korea with the support of the USMG and the anti-communist Protestants leftist elements in the church were purged. The leaders of the USMG in Korea especially considered that it was their mission to protect democracy from totalitarianism such as communism, and some even said that the "founding of the country should be based on Christian principles."²⁶ Only Rhee, among all Protestant political leaders, had an opportunity to try to realize Christianity as the guiding principles for founding a country.

Rhee Syngman had observed the Christian ritual during the official national events.²⁷ At the opening ceremony of the first National Assembly of the Republic of Korea in May 1948, Rhee, as the Speaker of the National Assembly, asked Lee Yun-Young, a member of the National Assembly and Methodist pastor, to pray as the first order of the ceremony. When Rhee was being sworn in as the Speaker of the National Assembly, he did it "before God, the deceased patriots and thirty-million Korean compatriots." As he was elected as the first President of the Republic of Korea, he again took the oath at the inauguration ceremony "before God and fellow Korean compatriots." After this, all the national

ceremonies of the First Republic were observed in a Christian way, while national governing institutions and systems reflecting Christian values began to appear, and many Protestants were appointed to the key posts in all departments in his administration. From the very beginning of the formation of the Republic of Korea, Christianity penetrated deeply into the national institutions and society of the newly founded nation.

The Christian influence on the Rhee Syngman government was manifested clearly in the high number of Protestants among the high officials of the government. 44 out of 208 members of the National Assembly, that is about 21%, were Protestants. Considering the fact that the Protestant population was less than 5% of the total Korean population, this was indeed a very high proportion. The proportion of Protestants in the executive branch was even higher. The analysis, that 38% of the 242 ministers and deputy-ministers of the 19 departments of the First Republic were Protestants, explains well the role and the comparative importance of the Protestants in the first national government of the Republic of Korea.²⁸ Rhee Syngman described the situation as follows: "The influences of the one million Christians are felt in the government, in the National Assembly and throughout the whole country."²⁹ Christianity became the spiritual foundation of Korea under the Rhee Syngman Administration. It had been a mere sixty years since Protestantism was introduced to Korea. However, the high proportion of Protestants in the Rhee government also meant that Protestants were not free from blame for the injustice and corruption in that government.

Moreover, a series of new Protestant-friendly practices were carried out in early 1950.³⁰ Christian prison ministry, Christian chaplaincy in the armed services and the salute to the national flag (by silently beholding it with a right hand on the heart, instead of military style salute or bow down salute in Japanese Shinto worship) could be referred as the examples of Rhee Syngman implementing the Christian principles in the national reconstruction. The military chaplaincy was the most representative example of the Christianization of national institutions under the Rhee Syngman government. With the introduction of the military chaplaincy in 1951, the number of Christians in the Korean military had grown rapidly. For example, in 1954, 24% of the entire Korean military were Christians (Protestant 20%, Catholic 4%), and this was indeed a very high percentage compared to that of the Korean Christians in the entire country. Other religions, however, were excluded from military chaplaincy from the beginning, for it was

a program of the US Armed Forces. In the 1950s, world-famous missionaries frequently visited Korea and led large-scale evangelical gatherings. Rhee Syngman supported these Protestant gatherings. After the Rhee's government, the outreach of Korea Protestantism took many forms. Christian universities became leading educational institutions in Korea. Church-sponsored hospitals and clinics had consistently led the way in health care delivery for the Korean people. Among the many special programs were those that assisted workers in factories, children in need of adoption and girls from the countryside in search of city jobs. The churches sponsored extensive ministries to students on campuses. Christian radio stations carried the message into every corner of Korea.

The Rhee Syngman government would accept churches' requests without exception whenever there were important social issues. The Constitution articulated the freedom of religion but religious equality was not guaranteed in terms of policies. The USMG and the Rhee Syngman government maintained Japan's regulations against Buddhist and Confucian facilities and suppressed these religions. The government's preferential treatment of Christianity was obvious and visible. During the USMG and Rhee's government, Protestantism was treated as a kind of national religion.

Conclusion

We have examined the historical backgrounds and factors for expansion of the Protestant influence in Korea. The US occupation was the decisive factor in the growth of Protestant influence in South Korea. During the post-liberation period, Korean Protestantism was able to grow and develop freely with the support of the USMG and that of the US missionaries. Korean Protestants were the only qualified group for supporting the USMG, for they on the whole had been the most pro-American Korean since the late nineteenth century. Moreover many Protestant leaders obtained modern education in mission schools or in the US with the support of the US missionaries. During the USMG, Korean Protestants had received a special benefit in the area of human resources and material resources. The following Rhee administration after the USMG had established and practiced some Protestant friendly policies as well.

The three benefit areas for Korean Protestantism are human resources, material resources, and policy resources. Those three resources were secured as follows: (1) the USMG faced with the lack of information on Korea; (2) US missionaries, working in the USMG, provided the needed information and carried out their influence on making policies toward Korea; (3) The US missionaries recommended Korean Protestants to be appointed important positions in the USMG; (4) The US missionaries provided special benefits the Korean Protestantism during the disposal process of confiscated properties; and (5) Rhee Syngman government, after the USMG ruling, carried out Protestant-friendly policies.

After the post-Liberation period, the Protestant hegemony and the influence within Korean society had been expanded within the three areas of human, material, and policy through the fourfold cooperation among the USMG, the US missionaries, Korean Protestants and Rhee Syngman government. These four groups are four concentric circles. With the backing and support of the USMG and the US missionaries and finally Rhee Syngman government, Korean Protestantism took the majority of political, social and economic positions and power. With exclusive benefits for Korean Protestants, such as the disposal of confiscated properties, the operation of the relief work, and some Protestant-friendly policies by Rhee's government, Korean Protestantism was allowed the opportunity for expanding its influence on all the areas of Korean society.

Of course, there have been many answers for explaining the rapid growth of the Korean Protestantism. These interrelated factors could be considered as probable factors for the rapid expansion of Korean Protestantism, and the decline of socialism in South Korea after Liberation. In this paper, however, the relationship between the growth of Korean Protestantism and the decline of socialism cannot be dealt with. There had been a competitive relationship between the socialist group in South Korea and the refugee Christian group from Northeastern part of North Korea which took the hegemony with Korean Protestantism and became the advanced guard for attacking the socialist and communist groups in South Korea. The selective affinity of growth of Korean Protestantism and decline of Socialism in South Korea is mentioned very shortly. This theme is needed to be presented with more detailed and empirical arguments as other related research.

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A Reflection on the Growth and Decline of the Korean Protestant Church

The sudden politico-economic changes in Korean society and the commitment of the Korean Christians had created very favourable conditions for Protestantism. However, those conditions now disappeared, and the church must overcome its inability to accommodate itself to the new changes. One of the impending tasks of the Korean church is to set qualitative goals and gain the costly respect and credibility of the Korean populace.

Korean Churches and Evangelism

Christianity has now become a major religion in Korea, in spite of its relatively short history: 230 years for Roman Catholicism and 130 years for Protestantism. Most churches in Asia find it difficult to engage in evangelism, partly because many Asians believe that their own traditional religions are better than Christianity, but also because the majority of Asian countries have experienced the negative effects of Western colonialism. Incidentally, Korea was not colonized by a Western country; this may not be the sole reason we have seen substantial growth of the church in Korea. According to the most recent government statistics, collected in 2005, the Christian population in Korea was 29.2 percent of the total population: 18.3 percent Protestants and 10.9 percent Catholics. The next most prominent religion was Buddhism, at 22.8 percent.

However, the Protestant population has declined over the past 10 years, since 2005, while the membership of the Catholic Church has grown rapidly. This has

attracted the interest of many academics. Scholars are investigating this religious phenomenon in order to analyze the reasons behind this growth in Catholicism and decline in Protestantism.

This article is written with the intention of sharing the unique experience of the Korean churches in terms of church growth and decline, hoping that it will provide other contexts with some insight. In order to do so, both socio-political and theological approaches to the history of the Korean Protestant church are used to find out the main reasons for the church growth. In addition, the following five types of evangelism, as set out by the Church Growth School, have been borrowed and will be used to analyze the main reasons for the church growth.¹

1. Presence type (P-1): non-verbal witness through *diakonia*, Christian morality, social participation in social justice and peace action, or solidarity with the poor.
2. Proclamation type (P-2): proclaiming the gospel in a direct way or through mass media.
3. Persuasion type (P-3): invitation to a deep fellowship with Christ, nurturing, and persuasion to commit oneself to Christ.
4. Power Evangelism type (P-4): healing and counselling, or showing the power of God.
5. Proclamation Community Formed type (P-5) : training task force teams and church planting.

Successful Settlement: 1884-1909

The major traditional religions of Korea were Shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism, until Christianity came in. From the end of the 18th century, some Confucian scholars accepted Roman Catholicism through some of the Chinese translations of Catholic teaching. The belief spread among commoners and women. During the 19th century, several periods of official persecution produced more than 10,000 martyrs.

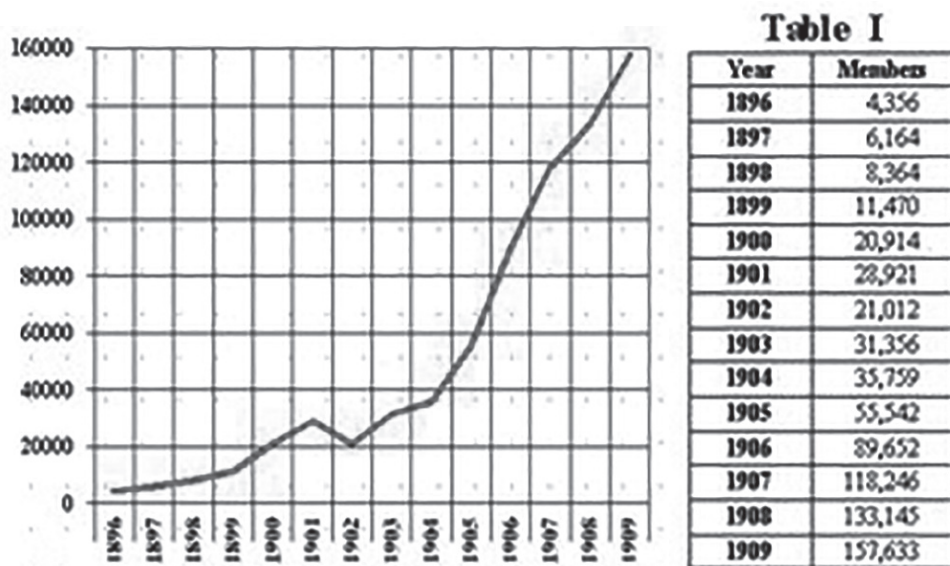
Before the first Protestant missionary came into Korea in 1884, a few Koreans had already received Christianity in Manchuria with the help of the Rev. John Ross, a Scotch Presbyterian missionary. They translated the gospels and the New

Testament into the Korean language. The Koreans also spread the gospel into Korea, risking their lives, and even planted the first Korean native church

At the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910, missionaries said that Korea was the most rapidly growing mission field in the world. Protestants alone reached nearly 200,000 persons in only 25 years. What made such growth possible?

1. The first non-theological reason is that the Protestant missions to Korea came in with no imperialist, colonial tag. Instead, they brought the motif of emancipation for women and the humble, and some value of the modern culture for the intellectuals, establishing a high standard of ethical life for the society. These factors provided a very favourable condition for mission. The preaching of biblical egalitarianism accelerated the dismantling process of the highly stratified class system and gender discrimination. The church requested believers to live a puritan style of life by prohibiting concubinage and smoking/alcohol, forbidding the abandonment of wives, and emphasizing parents' duty to their children. The Protestant church also promoted the formation of modern culture with education and medicine. In the early stage, the Korean King Gojong allowed only Western doctors and teachers to come into Korea. His decision was a way of accepting Western technology while avoiding a strong resistance of Confucian scholars against Western culture. The American Boards of Mission also favoured this as a wise method to avoid probable religious persecution in sending their missionaries. This factor greatly reduced the resistance of the traditional religions against Christianity.
2. The second non-theological reason is that Protestants came in at a time when Korea's religious and cultural heritage was crumbling. At the end of the 19th century, Koreans were surprised to see Japan's victory over China and Russia, and the Japanese protectorate to Korea. The Koreans began to question the old Confucian value. This sort of unstable socio-political context became a spiritual seedbed for mission. Graph 1 shows that the Protestant membership rapidly increased from 1,000 to 4,000 after the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) and from 35,000 to 55,000 after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05). Some theological and ecclesiological reasons for church growth in the early period are much more crucial than others, because they characterized the features of the Korean Protestant church.

GRAPH 1: PROTESTANT CHURCH GROWTH IN KOREA, 1896-1909



3. The third reason is the wise mission policy of the early Presbyterian missionaries. They adopted the so-called Nevius Mission Policy in 1890. The aim of the policy was to establish a self-propagating, self-governing, self-supporting native church as soon as possible.² According to the principles, each one of the native believers had to be trained as an energetic worker for their neighbours' conversion. To be a communicant, a Christian had to win at least one convert. That is why the Presbyterians grew faster than the Methodists in Korea.
4. The Great Revival of 1905–1907 swept the whole country. The experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit brought spiritual rebirth to the Korean church. The motivations of the early Korean church members were mostly extrinsic to Christian faith. Poor people came to church to get economic benefits and protection from local officials by Western missionaries. Intellectuals accepted Christianity with patriotic motivations. Yet the revival awoke the deep and real meaning of Christian faith. It also promoted the formation of the indigenization of Christian culture, such as simultaneous audible prayer, dawn prayer meeting, all-night prayer meeting, rice offering, day offering for evangelism,³ and weekly Bible class. During the revival, Protestant membership doubled, from 55,542 to 118,246.

5. Finally, the reason for the growth is the initiative of the Korean Christians. The Korean Protestant Christians are even now very committed to Christ. They willingly devote themselves to their local church community. They naturally accept that observing the Sabbath, giving weekly offerings, faithful tithing and contributing financially to the work of the local church is a Christian duty which they must perform, and also a token of their faith in God. This religious commitment originated from the earliest period.

In the early period, Korean Christianity did not polarize evangelism and social action. The church growth originated from the emancipation motif, the modern value, the Christians' moral life, the revival experience, Bible study and the prayer culture. The "Presence" type (P-1) and the "Proclamation" type (P-2) of evangelism prevailed.

Japanese Domination: 1910-1945

During the Japanese occupation, the Korean church suffered oppression by the colonial rule, as Christian faith in God conflicted with the divine emperor ideology of Japan. The Korean church was a strong cradle of the patriotic national movement and was also closely connected to the British and American churches. The Japanese policies to the Korean church strongly influenced the church's growth and decline. As Graph 2 shows, the growth-decline curve is repeated four times. From 1910 to 1937, Protestant membership doubled from 177,692 to 374,653. Yet church membership rapidly decreased after 1938

GRAPH 2: PROTESTANT CHURCH GROWTH, 1910-1942

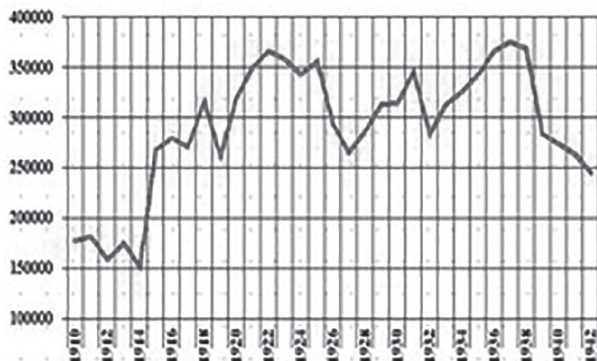


Table 2

| Year | Members | Year | Members | Year | Members |
|------|---------|------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1910 | 177,692 | | | 1931 | 345,261 |
| 1911 | 181,269 | 1921 | 349,399 | 1932 | 283,117 |
| 1912 | 157,902 | 1922 | 366,270 | 1933 | 312,746 |
| 1913 | 174,495 | 1923 | 357,881 | 1934 | 325,736 |
| 1914 | 151,496 | 1924 | 342,716 | 1935 | 342,176 |
| 1915 | 267,434 | 1925 | 355,385 | 1936 | 366,305 |
| 1916 | 279,586 | 1926 | 293,470 | 1937 | 374,653 |
| 1917 | 270,698 | 1927 | 265,075 | 1938 | 368,433 |
| 1918 | 315,377 | 1928 | 286,249 | 1939 | 283,543 |
| 1919 | 262,141 | 1929 | 312,645 | 1940-41 | — |
| 1920 | 319,359 | 1930 | 314,534 | 1942 | 245,000 |

1. The most powerful factor for church growth in this period is no doubt the fact that Protestantism was a delivery room for the patriotic independence movement. For instance, after Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, the Japanese fabricated the case of Governor-General Attempted Murder in order to exterminate any root for the national movement. One hundred and five Korean leaders were prosecuted after being severely tortured; 85 percent of them were the Protestant church leaders. The Protestant church was also a prominent leader of the March First Independence Movement in 1919. This movement was accompanied by a great peaceful nationwide demonstration of millions of people for six months. Among the 33 national leaders who signed the Letter of Declaration for Independence, there were 16 Protestants, 15 Chondogyo leaders, and two Buddhists. Around 40,000 people were arrested and 6,000 people were murdered. Though the Protestants were less than 2 percent of the population, around 25 percent of those arrested were Protestants. Graph 2 shows that the Protestant population grew rapidly from 1920 after the brief decrease of 1919. Before that event, the Protestant church was just a foreign religion; afterward, it was at last the national religion that had gained the costly respect of the Korean people.
2. The Korean Protestant church became strong and autonomous from the Western missions. The Presbyterian Church in Korea established its General Assembly in 1912. The Korean Methodist Church became independent in 1930. They worked hard for evangelism through revival meetings, Bible classes, Sunday schools, medical and educational missions, and more.

They even sent Korean missionaries to China, Russia, Japan and Manchuria.

3. Under the Japanese domination, the Korean church clung to the last hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ. This kind of pre-millennial eschatological faith encouraged the believers to fervently conduct evangelism. The church also offered spiritual power to console and soothe the minds of people who were in despair and suffering. In many cases, revival meetings were accompanied by miraculous healings.
4. Korean Christianity peacefully co-existed with traditional religions. In the early days, Korean Christians accepted persecution in humility as a minority religion. However, with time, Korean Christians have engaged in various forms of interfaith dialogue and have learned to coexist with people of other religions in their family, among friends and as neighbours, while bravely witnessing to their faith, particularly through their moral example. It is only in recent times that Korean Protestantism has been criticized as being exclusivist.

There are some reasons for the decline in membership of the church during this period. From the mid 1920s to 1945, 2.5 million Korean peasants who were deprived of their land emigrated to Manchuria, Japan, Russia, and Hawaii. This affected the church's decline. However, the church sent pastors to those migrant areas, and developed the enlighten movement for rural communities. In addition, the growing socialist movement, accepted by the younger generation as an alternative national independence movement after the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, criticized pro-Americanism, irrational mysticism and the otherworldliness of the church. as a result a large number of young people left the church.

The Japanese army invaded Manchuria in 1930 and inland China in 1938, rushing into the Pacific War. From 1930 to 1945, the Korean peninsula became the warfare supply base for Japan. The Japanese government forced the Korean church to participate in the Japanese Shinto Shrine worship. In fact, it was an ideology attempting national integration and mobilization for warfare. It was also the idolized emperor's worship. In the meantime, there were many conflicts in the Korean churches, between the conservative and the liberal theologies within the Presbyterian churches, between the Presbyterian and the Methodist churches, between the nationalistic Korean churches and the foreign missionaries. In

addition, there was inter-regional conflict. The Korean church failed to respond effectively to the disunion policy of Japanese authority and its coercion for the Japanese Shinto shrine worship. The Presbyterian Church in Korea, which had resisted the shrine worship, finally surrendered to the Japanese in 1938. All the denominations were dissolved or integrated into the Japanese Union Church. The Protestant population decreased back to the levels of the year 1915. In the process of the anti-Shrine worship movement, around 2,000 Korean Christians suffered torture and imprisonment, and around 50 became martyrs.

During this period, the types of "Presence" (P-1), "Proclamation" (P-2) and "Power Evangelism" (P-4) appeared.

Recovery after Liberation and the Korean War: 1945-1960

In 1945, the Korean peninsula was divided into north and south soon after the liberation from Japanese domination. Christianity was persecuted in North Korea, while the South Korean church largely grew with the special favour of the American Military Government (1945–48) and the subsequent government (1948–60).

1. The first non-theological reason for the growth of the church was the sociopolitical and military structure, which provided a favourable condition for the church. Protestants actively participated in the political activities and Korean church leaders also skillfully utilized the pro-Christian regime for the benefit of the church, such as the monopoly of chaplaincy positions in the prisons and the army, and preferential disposal of former Japanese religious property to the church. From 1945 to 1950, the Protestant population doubled from 240,000 to 500,000.
2. The second non-theological reason is the anomic situation of the Korean society, which took place after the Korean War (1950–53). During the war, three million casualties occurred, the whole country and key industries were devastated, the majority of the churches were scorched, and many leaders were killed and kidnapped to the north. One million refugees came from the north. The refugee Christians from the north spread the gospel and built up their churches upon settling down.

They also provided comfort communities for other refugees. In addition, a large amount of relief material from Christian nations and churches during the war assisted victims and resulted in the growth of the church. By 1960, the Protestant population had reached 623,000 (a growth rate of 24.6 percent over 10 years).

3. It is important to remember that the Korean church continuously sought to spread the gospel throughout the Korean population. For example, famous international evangelists, such as Rev. Billy Graham, held large revival meetings with the support of the Korean churches. In 1955, the Presbyterian church set out a Five-Year Evangelism Plan for church planting in the 490 towns and urban areas where no local church existed. Other churches also made similar efforts, with a tremendous effect.
4. During this period, the Protestant churches and denominations experienced divisions. Korean Protestant sects sprang up rapidly, reaching up to over 200 sectarian or cultic groups. This sort of factionalism resulted in the total increase of the Christian population.⁴

In this period, "Proclamation" (P-1) type and "Power Evangelism" (P-4) type were influential. Yet the Korean Protestant church lost its pre-eminence in terms of the prophetic role due to its dependence upon the authoritative political power, projecting a pro-government and pro-America image. "Presence" (P-2) type weakened as a result.

Explosive Growth during Industrialization and Urbanization: 1960-1995

A military government regime took power through a military coup d'état in 1961 and powerfully drove an industrialization policy. This resulted in a mass rural-urban migration. In 1960, the urban population was 39.15 percent but by 1990 it was 81.95 percent. The mass migration created large slum areas around cities and destroyed the traditional extended family structure. The gap between the haves and the have nots became greater. In the urban areas, many people felt rootless and longed for intimate communal support.

1. The Protestant church found a great opportunity for church growth in the process of the industrialization and urbanization of Korean society. Churches promoted evangelistic activities and church planting in urban areas. These urban areas seemed to welcome church visitors from large denominations, which set numerical goals and put all their efforts into achieving them.

For instance, an inter-denominational national evangelization movement took place in 1965. In the first stage, church ministers gathered together for prayer meetings according to their regions. Thereafter, they mobilized their congregations in a place for prayer meetings and trained them for evangelism, also paying home visits. In that year, there were 2,239 meetings and 40,000 new members were added.

According to Graph 3, the Protestant population in 1966 was 0.9 million (3 percent of the population), while four years later it reached 3.2 million (10.2 percent). This figure shows that industrialization and urbanization have had a great influence on Protestant church growth. In 1980, Protestant membership reached 5.34 million (14.3 percent).

From 1980 to 1990, 2.7 million new members were added, reaching 8.7 million (19.7 percent of the population) by 1995.

GRAPH 3: PROTESTANT CHURCH GROWTH: 1950-2005

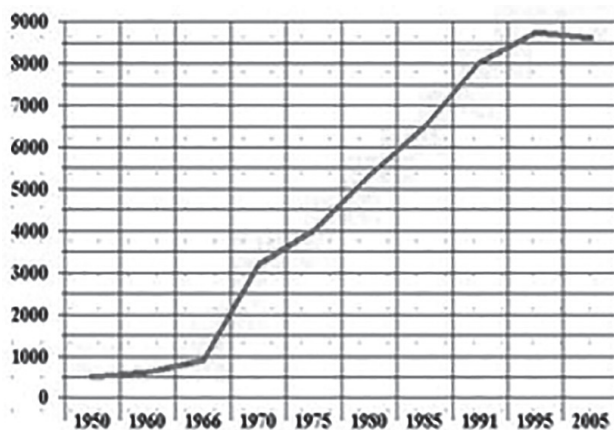


Table 3

| Year | Members | Growth Rate | Ratio to Total population |
|------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1950 | 500,198 | | 2.4% |
| 1960 | 623,072 | 24.6 | 2.5% |
| 1966 | 905,000 | 45.3 | 3.1% |
| 1970 | 3,192,600 | 252.8 | 10.2% |
| 1975 | 4,019,000 | 25.9 | 11.6% |
| 1980 | 5,337,000 | 32.8 | 14.3% |
| 1985 | 6,489,300 | 21.6 | 16.1% |
| 1991 | 8,037,500 | 23.9 | 18.5% |
| 1995 | 8,760,300 | 9.0 | 19.7% |
| 2005 | 8,616,000 | -1.4 | 18.3% |

2. One of the notable results of church growth in Korea is the emergence of Protestant mega-churches. Among the 50 largest churches in the world, 23 of them are in Korea. There are 15 mega-churches, each of which has more than 10,000 adult worshippers. The largest Methodist church in the world is not in England, the largest Presbyterian church is not in Geneva, and the largest Pentecostal church is not in South California. They are all in Seoul, Korea.

The growth of the mega-churches has now become a model case that most Korean medium-sized or small churches are looking for. For example, the Yoido Full-Gospel Church (YFGC) started in a slum area in Seoul with five members of humble origin in 1958. Its membership grew to 800 in 1962; 18,000 in 1973; 503,000 in 1986; and 709,000 in 1997.

Rev. Young-Hoon Lee, the present senior pastor of the YFGC, claims six reasons for the development of that church: a strong positive message, powerful healing ministry the Prayer Mountain movement, baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, home cell group meetings, and the use of mass media.⁵

The YFGC has been a persuasive power for poor and marginalized people. The founder, Pastor Yong-Gi Cho, appealed to them with the promise of spiritual salvation, physical healing, material blessings and prosperity in their life here and now. His message addressed exactly what the urban populace desired. The emergence of the Korean mega-churches was a result of modernization, which was accompanied by industrialization and urbanization. The government

ideology of economic development was closely related to the numerical church growth strategy in Korea. The market enterprise culture developed the “bigger is best” syndrome. This capitalist culture inspired an egoistic local church-ism and church competition. The size of the church is understood as a measure of success. In the religious market, “religious institutions became consumer commodities.”⁶

The Korean mega-churches adopted Church Growth Theology, developed bureaucratic systems to earn better efficiency, and utilized the best technology to control the spirituality of the people (closed-circuit television service, internet broadcasting station, satellite service, and so on). “The dynamism of the mega-churches is due to the ability of the charismatic pastors.” They displayed their special gifts to lead their congregations to transcendent religious experiences and to the belief in divine guidance.

One strong impact of modernity on religion is “its privatization” and “no institutional loyalty.” To overcome these problems the mega-church leaders systematically developed their own effective use of small cell strategies. Pastor Yong-Gi Cho divided up his congregation into homogeneous cells of 5-10 members with common orientations or occupations within geographical areas. The cell leaders were lay women who were well trained. In 1985 there were no less than 50,000 cells in the YFGC. The cell system has kept religious commitment among the congregation. To sum up, the particular features of the Korean mega-churches are a strong charismatic leadership, diverse sorts of cell system, and modern technological pragmatism.

3. Since the 1970s, the educational level of Korean pastors has become higher, and their concerns in pastoral and church growth strategies have also been heightened. Pernoctacion prayer meeting, Bible study, disciple training and reinforcement of the home cell system of the parish, lay training as well as various programs were developed. In the 1970s, the Korean church extended its mission work, including military mission, police mission, hospital mission, school mission and urban industrial mission.
4. University mission organizations such as the Campus Crusade for Christ, the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, the Navigators—international organizations, Joy mission, University Bible Fellowship—Korean inter-denominational organizations, and so on developed methodologies of evangelism, Bible study and cell organizations, all greatly contributing to church growth.

5. In 1970s and 1980s, some of the progressive Christians based on the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) and the Urban Industrial Mission (UIM) took leadership in the human rights and democracy movement against the military dictatorship government. They also became pioneers in initiating the reunification movement between North and South Korea. Since the mid-1980s, the liberating tradition of Protestantism has been succeeded by the minjung church movement. The minjung churches mainly belong to the Presbyterian Church in Korea, the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) and the Methodist Church in Korea. They regard today's minjung as the least, such as single parents, differently abled people, daily workers, ex-convicts, the unemployed, prostitutes, the urban poor, prisoners of conscience and migrant workers.⁷ They are working for unemployed and casual workers, the homeless, migrant workers, and international wives of Korean men.

Such activities of the minjung churches have not influenced numerical church growth, but they do show a practical way of promoting a preferential option for victims and suggest the direction of church renewal. After the democratization of Korea, the civil government borrowed the ideas of the minjung churches in constructing the national welfare system.

Despite the overall growth of Korean Protestantism during this time, holistic evangelism did not flourish. In spite of the development of church planting and good training courses for their new believers, the social responsibility and prophetic role was left to small groups of progressive Christians in the NCCCK, the URM and the minjung churches. The "Proclamation" (P-2), "Persuasion" (P-3) and "Proclamation Community formed"(P-5) types appeared strongly. Yet the "Presence" type(P-1) was still weak.

Decline after Industrialization and Democratization: 1995-2005

By 1995, Protestants reached the highest mark, but from 1995 to 2005, the Protestant membership decreased by 140,000. It is interesting to investigate why the Korean Protestant population started to decline. We may attribute the

reasons to economic growth and the democratization of Korea, as well as the internal corruption of the church.

First, many of the advantageous socio-political factors for church growth have disappeared. Today, religious pluralism prevails in Korea. Many people enjoy economic prosperity and leisure activities instead of religious practice, while the democratization of the country brought relative social stability.

On the other hand, the Protestant church is now losing its social credibility because of the immoral conduct of some church leaders, sectarian competition, low social responsibility, exclusivist attitude toward other religions, and the wide gaps between large and small churches and between urban and rural churches.⁸ Another factor is the fact that Korean Protestantism is unable to adjust to the political developments after 1998, when the opposite party came into power after 32 years of military dictatorship and five years of the conservative party's ruling. The civil society had grown enough to request clear transparency of the religious institutions. However, the majority of church leaders were afraid of the Sunshine polity for North Korea and progressive reforms, which led to many young people leaving their conservative churches.

Yet the secularization theory that modernization weakens the influence of religions on society does not seem appropriate in the Korean religious context.

TABLE 4 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RELIGION

| | | (Unit: Percent) | | | |
|----------------------|------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------|--|
| Year | 1985 | 1995 (growth) | 2005 (growth) | Growth (last 20 years) | |
| Religious population | 42.6 | 50.7 (8.1) | 53.7 (2.4) | 11.1 | |
| Protestants | 16.1 | 19.7 (3.6) | 18.3 (-1.4) | 2.2 | |
| Buddhists | 19.9 | 23.2 (3.3) | 22.8 (-0.4) | 2.9 | |
| Roman Catholics | 4.6 | 6.6 (2.0) | 10.9 (4.3) | 6.3 | |

※ Source: Korea National Statistical Office.

※ The Korean Roman Catholic Church announced that its membership was 4.46 million and 9.5% of the population.

Table 4 shows that the religious population in Korea is steadily growing in spite of modernization. The rate of the Roman Catholics to the population increased by 4.3 percent in the last 10 years, yet the rate of Protestants decreased by 1.4 percent.

Seung-ho Kim argues that the inter-relation between city population and the number of churches has a great influence on church growth and decline.⁹ The increasing number of pastors and their competitive church planting in the cities were favourable factors for the growth of church members during the time of rapid urbanization of 1960 to 1990. Yet they have produced a contrary effect since 1990, when the city population began to move to suburban areas. In contrast to the Protestant churches, the Korean Roman Catholics had not achieved such explosive growth before 1990. Yet since then, their membership has rapidly increased, without any significant change in the number of churches and priests.¹⁰ Kim argues that the Korean Protestant churches need to stop producing more seminary students than needed and must carefully plan church planting.

Conclusion

The growth of the Protestant church in Korea was astonishing and miraculous. The reasons are largely divided into the external socio-political ones and the internal spiritual and theological ones. It is true that the sudden politico-economic changes in Korean society created very favourable conditions for Protestantism. Korean history, which is full of suffering, we believe, probably became the spiritual blessing for the Korean church. However, without the church's efforts and its passionate spirituality and perseverance, such growth would have been impossible. As the apostle Paul says, planting and watering is our job, while we must let God take care of the growth.

We cannot choose just one of these tasks, however. Planting and watering work together. In the early stage, Korean Protestantism preached the gospel and at the same time provided the liberation motive to the poor and marginalized people. It also carried out a prophetic role against the social injustices of the Japanese colonial rule. The church gained the respect of Korean peoples through holistic evangelism and the growth of the church.

In the 1970s and 1980s, in the face of industrialization and urbanization, the Korean Protestant church carried out active evangelism and church planting, achieving rapid growth. Yet most of the Korean churches clung to quantitative growth; these number-driven churches lost their sense of social responsibility.

On the other hand, the URM, the NCKK and the minjung churches led the democratization of the country, the human rights movement, and minjung mission, but they were a minority in the Korean Protestant church. After Korean churches became rich (even though 40 percent of the Protestant churches are poor), churches lost spiritual power and social credibility. The purpose of church growth is to serve the expansion of the kingdom of God, but if the church loses its purpose, numerical church growth will only matter for its institutionalization.

The church should be ready to adopt better methodology, while training believers to always witness to their faith. The evangelistic methods that were used in the time of industrialization are now inefficient.

The quality of a Christian's life has an influence on church growth. However, church growth can happen with or without the quality of the church. Poor quality necessarily causes a reduction in members in due time. This is exactly one of the reasons why Korean Protestant membership has declined. One of the impending tasks of the Korean church is to set qualitative goals and achieve qualitative growth. Another task is to accept the ways of holistic evangelism. Korean lay people have a passion for evangelism, but their methods are narrow and ineffective. I think what is needed is to recover our calling as agents of the kingdom of God, and the real meaning and proper methods of evangelism.

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Love your Enemies

Universal Christian Virtues versus Korean Christian's Participation in National Independent Movement under Japanese Colonial Regime

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Mt. 5:44)

Introduction

"Love your enemy" (Mt. 5:44). It is a representative expression that Biblical authors in the first century had used to interpret Jesus' unlimited love (agape) for the world.¹ It is clearly shown on the Cross where Jesus voluntarily accepted his death in accordance with God's will amid the violence of Roman authority and Jewish religious leaders. Jesus did not take any physically violent action or revenge against those who arrested him. Rather, he commanded the people to love and pray for them (Mt. 5:44). The authors showed three ways to achieve this command specifically; turn the other (left) cheek, give your cloak as well, and go also the second mile (Mt. 5:38-41).

Adherents of Jesus for the first three centuries imitate Jesus' such behaviour dying for God amid persecution of the violent authority. We call classically those Christians martyrs. Thus, it may be fair to say that this becomes a principle or superior norm that Christians have to follow living in this world though the world might be evil. On the basis of this understanding one who read Acts 1:8 in that time, "but you shall receive power (du,namin) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses (moi ma,rturej) both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth", he/she might envisioned him/herself to be a potential martyr because the term of

‘witness’(ma,rtuj) was used as the same word of ‘martyr’. For them, therefore, the power received from the Holy Spirit is not a secular one bringing every worldly success by any means but an ability to accept voluntary death for the sake of their faith in Christ. Namely, the power the Holy Spirit bestows upon the people, is an ability of taking death in which new life paradoxically can be given to birth not an expedient of bringing worldly socio-economic success or political authority.

This phrase “love your enemy”, however, does not mean to cover all evil doings without any judgement with justice. It is not an exemplum of non-resistance against the evil doer or system. Rather, it is indeed an act of non-violent resistance against the evil system or power-holder who persecutes and kills the faithful in justice challenging them. As Walter Wink fairly pointed out that to love your enemy is an act of “nonviolent struggle for justice”² recognizing that “the enemy, too, is a child of God”³ to open a space of reconciliation between the perpetrator/persecutor and victim/persecuted in hostile history. As Jesus achieved God’s will taking violent death on the cross, if we perceive ourselves as his true disciples imitating his life and death, the phrase “love your enemy” should be our principle of life though it is a quite difficult command to practice in our real life.

During the Japanese colonial regime, 1910-1945, ruling principles for colonized Korean people took at least three stages: military rule to 1919, cultural rule to early 1930s, and rule on a war footing to 1945. The first stage of colonial regime, especially, was truly a period of a brutal reign of terror controlled by gendarmerie armed with guns and swords. Under this fierce situation, Korean nationalists put up a resistance assassinating Japanese colonial leaders, governors, and pro-Japanese persons whether it was successful or not. Even strong Christian nationalists conducted and engaged those resistances. However, for the Christian nationalists, who were reading the Bible and kept God’s teaching in mind certainly revealed through Jesus Christ, concerned the way of resistance applying the teachings. Their questions would be: ‘what is the true meaning and understanding of the phrase “love your enemy”?’ It is true that practically Japanese colonial authority was counted as the current enemy for them. At this juncture, to what extent can armed resistance using physical violence be allowed to the Christians participating in the independent movements to gain their human dignity and liberation from the inhuman reign of colonial power. Between ‘flight’ (non-resistance) and ‘fight’ (violent-resistance), is there any alternative third way to follow Jesus’s way against the evil?

This paper seeks to find an answer to these questions. Before going ahead to our context specifically, it will confirm a principle through a reading of Christ's life and death, which was interpreted by the biblical authors. It will be presented as a principle paradigm, 'dying for God: an act of non-violent resistance'. Then, this paper moves to our historical context in order to compare this principle to the post-Constantine paradigm in which this paper argues it as 'killing for God: violent revenge'. It will be presented as a distorted paradigm. Given this paradigm shift of Christianity, this paper implies it to the Korean context, especially Korean Christians' participation in the independence movement during the Japanese colonial regime as an exemplum practice of the principle. Through this research, we expect that we have a principle as all Christians have to take when we face with violent situations. It is 'dying for God, an act of non-violent resistance'.

A Principle: Dying for God, an Act of Non-Violent Resistance

It may not be difficult to agree that communities of Jesus' adherents in the pre-Constantine periods in Roman society are hold three characteristics: Diversity in the structure of the communal living and using materials for their worship, Minority in membership of the society, and accordingly Powerlessness in social and political stance. These three elements may be an essential figure of the Christian communities' identity in the first three centuries. Therefore, under this figure, one way that they could take, when they faced with persecution of Roman or hostile of Jewish authorities, is to accept death, dying for God, imitating Christ's death on the cross.

It is indeed Christian communities' interpretation of non-violent reaction that Jesus peacefully accepted violent death on the cross rather than using divine power by calling up "more than twelve legions of angels" (Mt. 26.53) and pleading with the Father for forgiveness of his persecutor (Lk. 23.34) rather than revenge. Persecuted Christians in the early period did not curse their oppressor, but calmly accepted their fate, thanking God for giving them the holy opportunity of martyrdom. A violent response against opponents evokes a deeper violence. It is truly the nature of violence. In accepting death without violent reaction by imitating Jesus on the cross, they halted violence making a touchstone of reconciliation.

Here, it is worth noting that those interpretations about Jesus' life and violent death on the cross were initiated and settled in Christian communities during the persecution before Constantine's conversion. Whether the persecution took place through state authorities or public antagonism, under oppression, pre-Constantine Christians did not dream of 'earthly revenge' against their persecutors. Rather, they clearly proclaimed the spirituality of the Cross, that is, his death for others (self-sacrificing, atonement), reconciliation, and liberation. The oppressed Christian's weapon for overcoming rigorous persecutions was not the sword against others but death for others just as Jesus clearly showed his disciples and followers by his public life and crucifixion. This paradox of life and death in Christian tradition, that death in Christ is the gate of eternal life, was the core element of their interpretation of Jesus' death and life, and this clearly came true and was proclaimed by his resurrection.

Specifically, in the pre-Constantine periods, though adherents of Jesus who died for God under persecution of Roman authority and named as martyrs were depicted as "the foot soldiers of God" in an eschatological cosmic war armed with the weapons of "faithfulness and endurance" expecting their participation in ultimate Christ's victory,⁴ they practised no physical violence against their opponents. Rather they accepted the death they faced with "extraordinary patience"⁵ in "joy, peace, harmony, and love".⁶ For them, the "strange victory" of Jesus on the cross in which violence was sealed or halted in his voluntary death proclaiming forgiveness for those who "condemned, executed, betrayed or deserted him" gave a model which Christian should imitate.⁷ The interpretation of the early Christians within the first three centuries for their fellows' deaths caused by persecution was, therefore, focused on imitating Jesus who proclaimed and achieved God's will through death.

Given this understanding, dying for God imitating Christ became a Christian principle in the pre-Constantine periods to achieve the command, "love your enemy". It is indeed an act of non-violent resistance against harsh persecutions under the unjust secular power base of the Roman system. However, this principle which various Christian groups in that time sought to follow was shifted when Christianity was secured by state/imperial power after Constantine's conversion (or tolerance) in 313 onwards.

A Distortion: A paradigm Shift from Dying for God (Non-violent Resistance) to Killing for God (Violent Revenge).

The position-shift of the Church from persecuted lambs to persecuting lions⁸ took place after the edict of Milan in 313 when Roman society entered into the process of Christianization, and more concretely towards the end of fourth century, in 380, with the emperor Theodosius' legislation on Nicene Orthodox Christianity which required all Roman citizens to become Christians and to accept the Nicene Creed.⁹ After becoming a state-sponsored religion, Christians were no longer at risk of persecution because of their faith. Rather, the legitimacy of Christianity in the Roman society gave Christian authorities the power to kill those who did not belong to that authority. Since then, in Christian literature, especially in the accounts of Christian martyrdom, the element of "killing others for the faith"¹⁰ has emerged along with the traditional feature of 'dying for the faith'. The face of Christianity was thus changed from the persecuted to the persecuting. The essential figures of Christian community's identity in the pre-Constantine periods, 'diversity, minority, and powerlessness', were transformed into the figures of 'uniformity, majority, and powerfulness'. Taking this shift, to sustain the uniformity of one catholic, orthodox, and apostolic Christian faith, legitimated and state-sponsored Christians were willing to kill other Christians as heretics and pagans.

What we see here is a development of the function and nature of Christianity's universal virtue, "love your enemy". The functional progress led Christian authorities to another power practice apart from that which had led Christians to die under secular persecutions. Church authorities had to distinguish orthodox Christianity from various types of Christian groups, identifying one group as legitimate and at the same time, branding others as illegitimate. In the process of this selection, the state's power played a vital role in both the picking out of the 'heretical' and then the threat of legitimated violence to deprive those heresy-branded groups of all authority and where necessary to deprive them of life under the name of conducting love. Regarding, however, the event of Jesus' crucifixion in which he accepted his death in accordance with God's will without any violent resistance or revenge, it may be fair to say that to use physical violence to kill someone for God is an obvious distortion of the principle as we have seen above.

We can easily find these Christian power practices controverting between orthodoxy and heresy such as Donatism, Arianism, and Pelagianism in the fourth and fifth centuries.¹¹ For example, after Emperor Constantine's conversion, the Emperor immediately intervened in the theological struggles among Christians, issuing edicts against the now-heretical Arians. Thereafter Arians experienced a rigorous persecution by the state-sponsored orthodox Church. Their books were ordered to be burnt and they were not allowed to build churches anywhere within the Empire.

In North Africa, the Donatists were another persecuted minority.¹² In their view, the persecution of this 'minority-ship' symbolised them as true disciples of Christ. They declared, "The Church which suffers persecution must be considered as the truly catholic Church, not the one which is responsible for persecutions".¹³ Though numerous Donatists suffered martyrdom on the basis of their deep Christian conviction, their deaths were not regarded as true martyrdom by the catholic majority. Especially, Augustine theologically legitimated the use of force justifying the persecution of the Donatists when he witnessed the Donatists in his own town being "brought over to the Catholic unity by fear of the imperial edicts".¹⁴ Augustine's argument on the acceptability of coercion¹⁵ exercised by the state in the service of the Church has often been reused in subsequent centuries and provided the legal basis for the persecution of heretics and pagans. For instance, Thomas Aquinas, the greatest medieval theologian, declared that obstinate heretics "deserve[d] not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be severed from the world by death".¹⁶ Since the argument formulated by Augustine in the fourth and fifth centuries had been accepted by the established orthodoxy of Western Christendom, bishops, councils and popes asked state authorities to eliminate heresies from Christian territories and to punish heretics. One of the logical consequences of these requirements was codified in the fourth Lateran Council of 1215. In accordance with the theory and practice of state-sponsored persecution of heretics and pagans, for instance, the Jews underwent a rigorous repression through massacre and expulsion in numerous areas of Europe.¹⁷

The Reformation period was no exception to the practice of Augustine's theory of coercion and Thomas Aquinas' death penalty for heresy. Early Reformers, such as John Wycliffe and Jan Hus, and later Protestants such as Martin Luther and Jean Calvin and their followers were persecuted and even killed. The persecutors

were the Roman Catholic Church and her sponsoring state authorities on the grounds of exterminating heresy for the health of all. However, the Reformers also shifted their position from persecuted lambs to persecuting lions when they obtained power under the aegis of local states and were the majority.¹⁸ After 1525, for example, Luther agreed with the use of state-force to remove false religion, that is, Roman Catholics, Jews, and radical reformers such as Anabaptists, from Protestant territories. In Geneva, Calvin accepted the burning of the anti-Trinitarian heretic Michael Servetus in 1541. The list is long on both sides. As Paul Middleton neatly pointed out, "Christians created other Christian martyrs"¹⁹ in the Reformation period. As William Monter rightly observed, in the Reformation period, the execution of heretics turned out to be a "form of state-building".²⁰ This means that any heresy execution which was conducted by or under the aegis of state-sponsored religious authorities was closely related to the majority's desire to gain or maintain absolute socio-political power in their territory.

At this juncture, it is worth noting that those controversies during the pre-Constantine periods were only controversies at the level of theological interpretation. There was no actual violence to kill others for the faith among various types of Christian group during those periods. However, the power to kill non-orthodox Christians by those of orthodox faith was actualised from Constantine's Edict of Toleration in 313 onwards, when only one type of Christian group was granted, legitimated, and empowered by the state/empire as orthodoxy. Wherever orthodox Christianity determined to achieve "unity and concord" of Christianity within that legitimated orthodoxy, there could be many sorts of violence against others who were outside that bounded group of the true Church.²¹ This suggests that 'killing for the faith' could be actualised only when one group becomes the state-sponsored majority in a society. This metamorphosis of the idea is verified through church history, especially in the Crusade, Reformation, and the nineteenth century's imperialist mission enterprises. How far does this go from Jesus's death on the Cross? It may be fair to say that where the violence of killing others exists and conducts, there is no place of love.

A Practice: “Love your enemy” in Korean Context under Japanese Colonial Power

Protestantism in Korea settled down into the local context during a period of national crisis occasioned by an Asian power. Indeed, Protestant Christianity in Korea appears to have functioned as a foundation for overcoming the national collapse, especially after the Protectorate Treaty in 1905 and the Annexation in 1910 forced by Japan. Unlike Catholicism, which was still often regarded not only as an agent of western imperialism but also as a heterodox doctrine opposed to the modernising ruling principle of the government, Protestantism in Korea was positively and closely associated by Koreans with nationalism throughout the Japanese colonial regime.

In particular, during the early harsh ‘military’ rule from the Annexation in 1910 to 1919, when any political organization and action was banned by an iron fist military policy, Koreans used the Protestant churches and mission schools as the largest Korean community at the time for their socio-political activities. This meant that the most vital category of people to be put under the Japanese control at that time were nationalist Korean Christians. It is clear that under Japanese rule Protestantism in Korea and Korean nationalism were positively and closely associated each other. Naturally, prominent church leaders became national leaders, though many of them collaborated actively with the Japanese in the last two decades of Japanese colonial rule in Korea, an issue which has left bitter memories.

In the view of the Japanese government authority, therefore, the Protestant Church in Korea (hereafter PCK), which worked as the well-organized headquarters of national liberation, was the first and major obstruction to their rule of Korea. Indeed, ‘Protestantism allied with nationalism’ was the core identity of the PCK under Japanese colonial rule. Recognizing this identity of the Korean Protestant Christians, the Japanese government undertook a variety of suppressions and persecutions to destroy the nationalism of Korean Protestant Christians.

After the proclamation of the annexation of Korea by Japan in August 1910, the Government-General of Japan easily foresaw Koreans’ resistance and wish for independence, and immediately undertook to remove anti-Japanese movements in various ways. For the Japanese colonial authority, as Count Terauchi, the first Japanese governor-general of Korea, highlighted in his speech on 17 December

1913 in Tokyo, Protestant Christians as “the most powerful force” in Korea must be kept under “especial watch”.²² Though Korean Christian groups were perceived as the “most hopeful” body for colonised Koreans, they were “the most worrisome element” in the eyes of Japanese colonial authority.²³ We can hear a witness from one of the survivors amid severe and brutal violent suppressions and persecutions of Japanese colonial power that he could endure “72 types of cruel torture”²⁴ standing strongly on the spirit of the Christian faith drawing on Job’s trials and Stephen’s martyrdom.²⁵

Further persecution of nationalistic Protestants occurred after the March First Movement in 1919 which declared Korea’s fervent desire for independence. Though it was a pan-Korean nationwide movement in which over a million Korean people had been involved within two months of the start, the PCK clearly played a core role in leading the movement, providing leadership and organizational networks from the outset. Sixteen of the thirty-three national representatives who signed the Declaration of Independence were Protestant Christians, as among 7,835 major participants on the first day of the movement, 1,719 (22%) were Protestant Christians.²⁶ Not only as participants, prominent PCK leaders served to mobilise, organise and facilitate communication enabling the movement to spread quickly and coherently.²⁷ Borrowing Park Chung-Shin’s argument, the PCK perfectly provided all three elements of “leadership, activists, and organization” that are essential for such a nationwide mass demonstration to occur.²⁸

At this juncture, it is worth noting that the March First Independence Movement was fundamentally grounded on the non-violent resistance which was clearly proclaimed in the three covenants appended to the Declaration of Independence though there had been serious bloody clashes between Korean demonstrators and Japanese military and police force since Japanese forces started an armed crackdown against the movement.²⁹ The non-violent basis of the movement is said to show the strong influence of Protestantism³⁰ and the teaching of Cheondogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way).³¹ More concretely, the ‘Dokripdan Tonggomun’ (Notification Statement for the Participant), a sort of Code of Conduct, supposed to be distributed especially to the Christians during the early stage of the movement prohibited the partakers from making “any insult and violence of beating or stoning” of Japanese, and required “three-time-prayer every day, fast on Sunday, and Bible reading provided”.³² Taking

this non-violent, peaceful way of the movement, Protestants took part in the demonstrations to restore “freedom bestowed from Christ following God’s will”.³³ Even Rev Shin Seok-Gu, one of the thirty-three representatives, confessed that he had participated in the movement because he had realised his ‘dual sin’ in accepting the “loss of the nation” and in making “no efforts for its restoration,” after hearing God’s voice during day-break prayer.³⁴ Given the facts, it might be said that the PCK’s major motif of participation in the demonstration was their religious consciousness and the way they took for the movement is based on Jesus’s command, “love your enemy”, non-violent resistance as their principle. It also clarifies that there was little gap between religious identity as a Christian and ethnic identity as a Korean. Their involvement in the independence movement was a way of participation in Christ’s suffering on the Cross. As emphasised by the Protestant missionaries who witnessed Japanese forceful suppression in Korea at that time, the wholesale arrest and beatings of pastors, elders, other church officers, and lay Christians was “simply because they are Christians”³⁵. This observation brings to mind the martyrs’ identification as Christian in front of interrogators in the early Roman period.

Though the March First Movement in which the PCK had played a crucial role providing the ‘leadership, activists, and organisation’ on the basis of non-violence had politically failed to gain Korea’s total independence from Japan, it had resulted in a change of Japan’s colonial policy from ‘military rule’ based on a gendarmerie-police system to a ‘cultural policy’ (*bunka seiji*), under which in April 1919 Koreans were allowed limited rights to publish, assemble, and organised the Provisional Government in Shanghai, China where became a base of continuous independent movement during the colonial period.

Conclusion

In the last scene of the famous movie, “the Mission”, screened in 1986, we can see two different reactions carried out by Father Gabriel and Mendoza against the Portuguese aggressors to defend the Guarani converters and the mission field where they have built. While Mendoza organised the natives to resist with weapons against the violent attacks, Gabriel marched with the native believers amidst severe gun fires and bombings holding a cross and signing praise without

making any violent action. Then, which one can we take as a Christian between defensive armed struggle and non-violent resistance envisioning death to defend or secure life of the weak/marginalised/persecuted? Otherwise do we run away from the situation? Can we reckon which action is right or wrong? If we say that defensive attack or just war have to be allowed to secure life, to what extent can we use violence? It is quite difficult to make clear answers to these questions which can be commonly agreed. However, as this paper argued above, we have a principle as a Christian to take when we are faced with that situation, which Christ evidently showed us dying on the Cross.

“Love your enemy”.

Also, once again, we have to confirm that this is not an act of store up the evil or wrong doings but an alternative way avoiding dichotomy of black and white decision, fight and flight, as Walter Wink highlighted. It may be a radical way of resistance without making violence in order to open a space of reconciliation between God and human beings who were in an ungodly status, and among human beings who are in conflict or under oppression. It is not only an ideal principle which is not able to achieve in this world but a requested principle to carry out in our earthly life as Christians in the pre-Constantine periods implemented it imitating Christ. It is indeed proved in the Korean context under Japanese harsh colonial regime though this principle/norm has been distorted in our history when the Church gained a state-sponsored power after Constantine. Indeed, there is no place of love where violence is occurred.

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PART II

*Hungarian Reformed
Churches
during Communism*

Overview of the Hungarian Reformed Church's 'Official Theology' Before the Collapse of Communism

The “Theology of the Servant Church”

A systematic centralization took place in the political life of Hungary after World War II, which ended in a total dictatorship. Therefore when we talk about the so-called official theology of the Reformed Church we have to notice that the theological work was not realistic, nor autonomous. This kind of 'theology' belonged solely to the church leadership and their ruling theologians, with the primary aim to maintain the ambiguous church-state relationship in favour of the Communist Regime¹ – however, with the hope that the Church might preserve its existence. To avoid misunderstanding about the use of the word of 'theology', we often label it the official theology, whereby we have to make the following comments: 1) After the Agreement of 1948, the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary took over the 'responsibility' of spiritual leadership and 'productive' theological work, which however never reflected the Hungarian Calvinist theological thinking. 2) This kind of official theology grew out of political ambition, and therefore it was not primarily based on Christian doctrine, nor entirely motivated by Christian social-ethical principles, but this 'servant theology' was composed under the pressure of political circumstances. 3) The context of the church became the text, and even a pretext (false excuse) for theological thinking.

We have to make a short reference to some phenomena which will allow a clearer picture of the sources of the theology of the 'servant church', especially for an understanding of how and who this theology really served. One phenomenon was the collectivization which began in 1949. Collectivization was a continuation of the 1945 land reform, and this was plainly a part of the class struggle against the well-to-do landowners and farmers. Impossible compulsory quotas were imposed on those who were not willing to surrender their estates. The Protestant churches willingly took their share in centrally written sermons to support the actions of the Party. Meanwhile, by the liquidation of the small and middle landowners and their properties, the strongest basis of the Reformed Church fell apart.² That fact certainly resulted in the beginning of the decline of the Reformed Church at that time.

In parallel to the official theology of the Reformed Church, the continuance of different theological trends which began before World War I did not come to an end, although they were put mainly to one side, and their possibilities were restricted. Their significance was in their effect on the theological thinking among those who were not satisfied with the official theology of that time, although the theology of the servant church willingly used - in some cases - the older theological language as well. Those who could not identify with the ruling theological trend had no publicity at all and if they tried to raise a critical voice they were labelled as 'political reactionaries'. Therefore, there was another phenomenon: the series of show trials of the early fifties which gave an assurance that the Party had gained enough power to settle accounts with those who opposed them, namely the "class-aliens" of the new Communist order. Even after the acceptance of the new constitution by the Hungarian Parliament in 1949, which declared the basic civil rights and duties in light of the freedom of conscience (including the freedom to exercise religion with the separation of state and church), a State Office for Church Affairs (Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal) was yet established in 1951³.

It later became evident that the AEH planned and executed the Communist Party's attacks against the church, whereby the final aim was not less than to liquidate the church. This was done on three levels. The first level was the psychological, since the head of the AEH was above the bishop and in practice that meant that he was the head of the church. Without him no effective action could be taken in the church. This was known by the pastor of the smallest village, to

the bishops of the General Convent. The second area was the economic. The ÁEH apportioned and passed all annual budgets of the church. The ÁEH paid the full salary of the high church leaders with all their expenses, the seminary professors and the full budget of any publications. A total financial dependence was worked out which resulted in almost full control of church activities. The third area was the political. Every church law had to be approved by the government. The ÁEH had an absolute veto in the General Synod. The ÁEH office was under the State Security Department (Államvédelmi Osztály, ÁVO), which later was renamed as the State Security Office (Államvédelmi Hivatal, ÁVH⁴). This AVH functioned as a political gendarmerie and executed the tasks of the ÁEH with selective cruelty in all possible ways.⁵ One of the first tasks was to work out the directives of church politics according to the above mentioned system. The spread of the atheistic worldview and the transformation of the Christian society were a priority. According to the view of the ÁEH the existence of the church depended on following the guidance of the Communist Party, whose basic principle was the fight against a religious worldview. The system was worked out to the smallest details. Church politics was planned nationwide and internationally. The system found troops of collaborators in the church who became espionage agents. On the organisational level the ÁEH had a "Protestant department" and "Catholic department," whose major task was to put forward the actual church politics as was determined by the Party.

For the so called West, the goal of communication by the Party was to always state in the headlines that the Church was free in Hungary, and the Party made sure that only a carefully selected group of church leaders could go abroad to represent and give that appearance. The committee of the elders was changed to include those lower class people who represented the proletariat in the church, even with no church background, and they could become the ringleaders of the Communist propaganda. The same happened in the case of the higher levels of church leadership. As we have seen earlier, the new bishops and head curators were selected according to the same principle, namely, those who were willing to become subservient supporters of the Communist ideology in the church. We also have to mention the highly developed and very wide connections⁶ of the ÁEH whereby it could control almost all areas of life. The effectiveness of the ÁEH was due to the countryside and international net of spies who had to give information regularly about people under observation. A wide scale of functions

can be distinguished among this secret work. There were silent observers, who were giving information only in a written form. If the secret observations were not successful, and if they did not know enough about a person's thoughts, then the task was to make friendships and the spies would worm themselves into the observed person's confidence. In most cases the only successful method was the provocation with lies and intrigues, and in that way the selected people could lose their closer or wider social esteem. One of the major rules was that the officially formulated accusation never could be a concern against the person's political or religious views.

The above mentioned tactics were well supported by the Party policies by 1957. They found that the useful method against the church was not the direct opposition and persecution, but rather it was more effective if the Party controlled the aims of the church and church politics. In this way the Party was always one step ahead of the church and the church followed the Party and not vice-versa.⁷ The first area for enforcement of the tactics of the Communist Party was the (re)education of the youth. All steps of re-education had to circle around the aim of the liquidation of religious convictions, which was the spawning place of reactionaries – according to the Communist Party's thinking.⁸ A comprehensive psychological terror characterized the educational work from the elementary schools to university level. The good quality of teaching and academic freedom disappeared from the schools, and this was succeeded by the communist ideology. Loyalty to the Communist Party and ideology was the measurement of getting into the levels of education and receiving diplomas. The propaganda practices did not leave untouched even the very few schools, colleges and academies of the church which could stay under church control.⁹ The Party concentrated its espionage agent work with great circumspection in the church schools. Since the education under church control did not fit into the plan of the Communist Regime, the Party wanted to have assurance that the re-education in these schools would bear fruit and would result in a contribution to strengthen the Party and its interests.

The Party found a way to systematize and hold together the troops of collaborators in the so called "Peace Movement of Priests and Pastors" (Papi Békemozgalom). This movement was formed officially by those clergymen who did not agree that the church should be in opposition to the (church) politics of the Party. The most important aim of the Peace Movement of the Priests and Pastors

was to extend the influence and leadership of the Party, to create and strengthen the basis for working class power in the church by the leaders of the church. In this way the movement became one of the means of the state to transform the life of the church toward its own political purposes. The pastors and priests were under a continuous re-education, therefore they could become propagators of the Communist-Marxist ideology in the congregations. The Peace Movement of the Priests and Pastors, and also the Peace Assemblies, were the frame and forum for the acceptance of the Marxist ideology and activities. The Peace Assemblies were planned to the smallest details by the ÁEH representatives of each county. The main theme of the lectures, the lecturers, the commentators and the content of the comments, were all planned and designed beforehand. The designers of the "Peace Movement of the Priests and Pastors" were sensitive enough to delegate their representatives to go abroad, thus spreading their propaganda of Hungarian Socialism at international conferences, whereby this peace movement gained international recognition¹⁰ as well.¹¹

The beneficiaries of the functions of the ÁEH were the faithful servants of the ideology of the Communist Party and its purposes. One of the most significant groups was comprised of the leaders of the Hungarian church, who were happy to receive high awards from the "Hungarian Workers Party" for their direct or indirect role in the activities of the ÁEH.¹² We can also take into account - to a certain extent - as beneficiaries, those pastors and priests who were supportive and loyal enough to the Party's ideology. However there was a characteristic distinction among them: 1) we can find pastors who were supportive to a "necessary minimum"; and 2) we can find those pastors who were enthusiastic and zealous in their assistance, which was well demonstrated in the way they preached of the Gospel (in a socialist manner).

However, we can find a great number of pastors and church leaders who refused loyalty and service to the Party's ideology and they became victims. They were ready to undergo persecution, jail, and even death for their faith.¹³ Their awards were: selected cruelty from the state, but appreciation and love from the congregations. Their story is far beyond the boundaries of this study. They were the ones of whom "the world was not worthy."¹⁴ The victims' list is longer than those who lived in that time. The new generation who grew up in the poor nourishment of scientific socialism are victims as well, and their children, too, who form the majority of the present society with their injured souls.

The above given introduction to the purpose and function of the ÁEH clearly suggests that the official theological teaching could not avoid the transformation according to the atheistic and communist ideology. Since the physical destruction of the church buildings was impossible (because they wanted to maintain a façade), the annihilation of temple of the soul was the aim, and the rebuilding of the soul of a person is always a greater challenge. The official theology of the Reformed Church of Hungary at this time was introduced by the changing of the guard, in church leadership. We can sum up in two characteristic names the different “theological” elements, although both names cover the same content. The church leadership taught about the purpose and task of the church under the title of the Theology of the Narrow Way until 1956, and after 1958 the title was changed to the Theology of the Servant Church. Istvan Szabó’s work puts the content of the ‘Theology of the Servant Church’ in the following framework: 1) The church and state interrelation was classified by subject matter; 2) The aspect of service (diaconal) was made universal and totalitarian; 3) The acknowledgement of the decisions of church politics in all recognized theological work (in other words, the application of this theology of the servant church).¹⁵

The Theology of the Narrow Way

The vision of the Theology of the Narrow Way as a point of departure of the new theology is associated with Albert Bereczky’s name¹⁶. The main disposition of the new theology was God’s self-revelation in history. The socialist historical and sociological reality was given by God after World War II. So Bereczky saw God’s judgement in the catastrophes of the war (judgement on the old feudal system and Nazism), and he saw God’s act of mercy in the liberation by socialism. Bereczky without doubt declared that according to the political reality the church was linked to the Eastern block by God’s mercy. As we have shown earlier, the confession of sins and repentance was one of the first tasks of the church to be able to receive God’s liberating mercy in socialism. The rhetoric of church politics by the use of the notion of the “narrow way” was very misleading. First of all, because it is rooted in Scripture (Mathew 7, 13-14),¹⁷ where the understanding is to follow the narrow way of the decision of faith. Secondly, the use of the notion was abusive because it was already a phrase used by the pietistic movement of

the revival groups, with a different understanding than Bereczky. In a different way, Bereczky's politics wanted to free the church from its sinful past (repentance) and fulfil the task of the church on the narrow way by means of its prophetic task in the new socialist order. We can see that the church leadership's attempt at first was to not become identical with the world.¹⁸ That attempt became very ambivalent when the application of the narrow way's theology became the same path as the ideology of socialism. That process can be well detected in the different "teachings" of other church leaders, like János Péter and Tibor Bartha.¹⁹ Bereczky himself was convinced by the time of 1950, that the major tasks of the church on the narrow way was confession and obedient service. Therefore, "the believer can demonstrate that he/she is a useful member of the socialist society."²⁰ That view was even strengthened later by Bereczky himself when he wrote about the narrow way as follows:

The way of our people never leads us back to the past but always onwards, towards the future. Our way is always, everywhere and in every respect, a narrow way. We therefore, continually face the question: how can we keep to this way faithfully and how can we walk in it obediently, both as regards the inner, specific mission of the Church and as regards the service of the timely causes of man's earthly life, of men and people, of the world which is the object of God's love?²¹

This theology of the narrow way was used to prepare the next step toward the theology of the serving church. The specific mission of the church was to fulfil the new "exodus," namely to lead the people of God to the Canaan of socialism by using religious rhetoric.

The Elements of the "Theology of the Servant Church" in the Light of the Notion of Service

The word service seemed to be the watchword which became the "right" formulation to explain and justify in theological terms the necessary transformation in the church, which however resulted in the alignment of the church to the communist ideology. Under the slogan of service, a double

guarantee²² could be confirmed: (i) The church (leadership) gave assurance of its commitment that the socialist life style would be desired by and realized among the believers. That was called the service of teaching. (ii) The state, in turn, guaranteed that it would strengthen the position of the (new) leadership in the church.

This double guarantee helps explain the ambivalent nature of this theology. For it was teaching the people to acquiesce to atheist socialism, while meanwhile using biblical phrases about service. We should not lose sight of the fact that we are facing cooperation with an atheistic ideology, whose final purpose was to liquidate Christian thought and life.

The following services were distinguished²³ in the church after the contract with the socialist ideology in light of the "Agreement" of 1948: 1) Sacerdotal service was the mediatory service of the church for the sinful people. 2) The service of teaching created the arena and forum of orientation and support of ministers in their ministry, concerning how to deal with issues of relevant public services. 3) Service of orientation refers to the justification by God through Jesus Christ and the justifying Word of God. Jesus Christ, who gave his life for our justification and salvation, is present to lead us in the midst of everyday life. If the church does not recognise this fact, Bereczky said, then it would be facing two temptations: a) by not recognising the sins of the age the church would preserve and defend what God has judged and condemned; b) the church would accommodate to the changes of the saeculum in a such a way that the sacrifices and the values given by God would be left unused. The frame of interpretation for all of this was socialism, "where times required new people and new people needed new hearts"²⁴. 4) The prophetic service should also be fulfilled according to Jeremiah 1,10: "today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant." Péter's interpretation of Jeremiah meant that the Reformed Church of Hungary arrived at an historical turning point where the church had to give a hand (to the Communist Regime) to destroy and to build.²⁵ Colijn also calls attention to Bereczky's view on the church which doubtfully states that the church cannot fulfil its prophetic task, since the church is not really a church.²⁶ 5) The above mentioned lack of the prophetic service of the church suggested another theme to the new theologians: the service of intercession or substitution. Since after the "Agreement" (1948) a number of pastors did not agree with the truth of the new social order, it was

said that this service was most needed on behalf of the church leaders. However, it is now clear that the substitutionary death of Christ was reduced to a political interpretation. 6) The next category was the service of the whole nation. Colijn simply cites Bereczky to describe what it meant: "For the Marxist we (the church) have to become Marxist!"²⁷ Bereczky earlier explained more gently the same thing: "We confess the faithfulness of our church to the wellbeing of our nation. The joy of our nation is our joy, all the burdens of our nation are our burdens. We are willing to offer any service and sacrifice for the nation's sake."²⁸ 7) Under the service (diaconia) of society and politics we find a hermeneutics which christologises the political position of the leadership of the church. The rich theological meaning of diaconia and all the related theological notions, such as: the diaconia of the Triune God, Jesus Christ's kingship, and also serving lordship, the saving work of the Shepherd, were all reduced according to the requirements of the socialist context. That resulted in a view where Christ as Kyrios in the original sense could not be pictured in absolute authority but Christ's obedience could be emphasized where the word 'Christ' could be changed for the word Church, whereby the purpose was obedient suffering. In this way the church gives testimony to God's cosmic love.²⁹ Practically, that meant that the church ultimately gave up its existence. In the words of Békefi, this was explained as follows:³⁰

If the church understands that she is in the world to carry out Christ's diaconia, she will die of that, because she will not be needed anymore. For the church does not exist to assure her own existence to eternity but that by sacrificing herself, by sharing in Christ's suffering a new creation will come, in which there will be no temple, but where God dwells in the universality of the people: in the city without temple. (...) let us learn that such a world is made by his salvation where finally the Son himself will be submitted to the One who had cast all things under his feet and where God will be all in all.³¹

If we take into consideration the purpose of the Marxist-Leninist ideology with religion³² we can fully agree with the analysis of Szabó, when he says that Bekefi's train of thought was in harmony with that purpose. Namely, that the church with its obedient suffering takes part in the liquidation of the church. Since the Kingdom of God is realized in the new socialist order, the church must die in its

suffering (like Christ died) in order to reach the land of plenty, namely, socialism. The *ecclesia crucis* was left without the *ecclesia triumphans*, since Békefi did not find it important to point to the resurrection as the central meaning of the existence of the church, with Christ present through the Holy Spirit.³³

“Grace that Works within also from Outside”³⁴ – The Role of Common Grace³⁵

The subtitle itself refers to János Victor’s articles from the time of the theology of the servant church. Victor’s articles became an often used and abused reference for the proponents of the theology of the servant church. Our intention is to introduce the theological elements of Victor’s view, rather than to evaluate any position in the debate concerning Victor’s direct or indirect role, as a founder of theology of the servant church.³⁶

The background of the article was a conference in Prague, where Bereczky received an honorary doctorate from the faculty in 1952. The participants of that event from international and inter-church circles did not show a sign of the former tensions and conflicts that had occurred between the churches. (These tensions were obviously the consequences of the Trianon Peace Treaty and its afterlife between the two World Wars and after World War II.) Victor came to the conclusion according to his experiences of the meeting that the reconciliation was imposed upon the Christian Churches because it was carried out by the secular, political and ideological factors as a mutual appeasement. The new order of socialism made that happen and the struggle for peace between the churches was successful. The theological realization following from that experience, was: 1) the church should not overestimate its ministry when it states that through its work the Word of God captures the human heart in such a way that all our outer attitudes necessarily turn in the right direction. Victor calls attention to the conviction that sanctification can arise only from rebirth, which is that half of the truth which can be misused in a way that “we overestimate the significance of our ministry in a sense that we forget about other means and methods of God which He can use to transform the attitudes of people towards one another, and towards the direction of His will.”³⁷ This is the heart of the article, from a rhetorical point of view. Szabó points out that in the above mentioned statement by Victor,

his main question is: while we emphasize the renewing and morality-forming significance of the Word, we cannot exclude influences coming from outside.³⁸

Victor answers the dilemma:

The person who does not recognize, with grateful and humble heart, the fact that God works in the lives of humans outside His Word as well, and that numberless morally good acts can proceed from that, such a person has not understood the majestic testimony of the Word about God's 'universal grace'. Among the factors that God's 'universal grace' uses to transform the moral lives of men, we can find, in distinguished position, the political, legal social economic orders that humans live in. And this order does not only form one's outward deeds, but one's thinking, emotions and spirituality as well. Yes, there is something indeed that forms humans from outside.³⁹

In the following part of the article Victor contrasts capitalism with socialism in favour of socialism. Victor's intention was to clarify the relationship of the world and church. He found his clarification in the theme of Grace that Works Within also from Outside, and these effects have to be revealed in the church's public use of ministry. He recommends following the example set by the apostles:

(the apostles) who did not consider what exclusive or not exclusive, what long lasting or limited significance their ministry would bear in the moral lives of their fellow men. (...) The basis of their ministry was not their rational consideration, but the decision of their faith. (...) This ministry that we are entrusted with, if we do not fall into the mistake of overestimating its significance, will be in harmony with the work of God which he does through other means of His in the lives of the people.⁴⁰

Szabó calls attention to Victor's purpose in light of his earlier writings,⁴¹ that the Christian church has to recognise in the midst of great historical changes that God's general grace in the world and outside the church is not only present, but social changes are to be seen as God's plan, thus justifying the new social order by this.⁴²

Victor in the series of studies on common grace, himself gives warning of the danger of formally applying 'grace that works within also from outside' or

‘common grace’ to justify social changes. First he outlines the Calvinist locus classicus⁴³ that human nature is corrupt, but God’s grace sets a limit to the power of sin. Then sin influences all life, but it does not destroy everything. Humanity cannot do anything good by itself, yet Reformed confessions⁴⁴ speak about the good deeds of humans, which are imperfect and burdened with sin. If some things in life are still more or less void of corruption it is due to God’s grace. Special grace includes only the elect, whereas common grace includes all people.

According to Szabó’s evaluation, Victor acknowledged that the formal application of common grace or the theme of Grace that Works Within also from Outside, when used for the justification of social changes, could lead to the German Christians’ position in the time of Hitler. Therefore Victor argues that both manifestations of grace are attached to Christ.⁴⁵ From his article it is obvious that special grace in the church and common grace outside the church need to be harmonized.⁴⁶ Victor’s article can be questioned on many points, but it is also true that he was cautious and careful with the formulations of common grace. Victor stopped at a certain point, whereas other church leaders like Tibor Bartha⁴⁷ twisted and overdeveloped his thoughts into propaganda.

The ‘Reformed Confessors’ of 1956 – Attempts for renewal

The year of 1953 opened the way for changes in the Hungarian society and also in the church. The famous year of 1953 is connected to the death of Joseph Stalin. Things changed under the leadership of his successor, Khrushchev. The denunciation and exposition of Stalin’s dictatorship led to changes of internal and external affairs, and these effects were experienced in Hungary as well. Changes were taking place in the upper leadership of the Hungarian People’s Republic. Imre Nagy⁴⁸ replaced Mátyás Rákosi as prime minister in the summer of 1953, although Rakosi remained General Secretary of the Party and was able to undermine most of Nagy’s reforms. The changes were due to open the way for reforms in most communist countries as a consequence of a moderate liberalization. Nagy’s purpose was to develop socialism according to his reforms in light of the existing laws. He dissolved the internment camps, re-examined

the 'show trials', and put an end to the collectivization. Even with the welcoming of the reforms by the majority Nagy was not able to achieve essential changes for two reasons. First, the inner opposition of the Party and the circle of Rákosi could undermine Nagy's attempt with the help of the State Security Office (ÁVH). The international changes put Nagy seemingly in a position of right-wing opportunism, and he was deprived of all his offices in April 1955. The international changes were due to the fact that Austria became a demilitarized and neutral country, which had raised Nagy's hope to see the future of Hungary as the same. Austria's neutrality had changed the cold war military planning. Hungary's strategic importance increased, with the result that Hungary signed the Warsaw Pact on May 14, 1955 by means of the new prime minister, András Hegedűs. In the rapid changes of the situation Nagy managed to hold together a circle of reform-communists, which was one source of the tension leading to the revolution of 1956. The increasing international tension, the uprising of Polish workers in Poznan (Poland), had caused Moscow to change its policy. Party chief Mátyás Rákosi was replaced by Ernő Gerő, and János Kádár received the second place in the Party. With the loss of the credibility of the former leadership, Imre Nagy again became a member of the party. These events inevitably lead to the 1956 uprising.⁴⁹

At the time of the revolution of 1956, a silent and growing resistance in the church became most visible by the 'Reformed Confessors' in the form of a declaration against the policies of its leaders. The declaration was entitled: "A Statement of Faith, 1956."⁵⁰ It was written in similar intention and style as the Declaration of Barmen in 1934. Since the WCC's Executive Committee had a meeting in Galyatető (Hungary) in the summer of 1956, copies of the Hungarian declaration were handed over to the representatives of the meeting. The Statement of Faith denied the highly praised superiority of the Marxist-Communist ideology and denounced any theology which would support it. The declaration stated as follows:

'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb. 13: 8)
 1. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath (John 3: 36)
 (...) We reject as false teaching the tenets that Redemption works through profane history by introducing permanent developments

in a positive direction. This type of soteriological sanctioning of Historical Materialism and its false optimism contradicts the Bible and denies the truth of the Gospel. The historical philosophy of Historical Materialism in this theological disguise is anti-biblical. Our official Church government affirmed this false Materialism in Christian doctrines (...) 3. (motto: Rom. 13: 1 and Acts. 5: 29) We believe that our present political authority is appointed by God and we have to be obedient towards it in due respect, and also remember it in our prayers, in all matters that do not contradict God's law.(...) We confess that our former social order has been condemned by God's righteous judgement. But we also confess, in the light of the Gospel, that the present State and social order bear the marks of sin as well. Just as any other State or social order, the order we live in has numerous features which cannot be approved by the church.⁵¹

The above cited part of the declaration as a protest against the dictatorial behaviour of the clique of church leaders, had the effect of a bombshell. The attempt to return to the Reformed Presbyterian principles in church government affirmed the task of the church. The reception of the Hungarian status confessions by the General Secretary of the WCC, Vissert't Hooft was not surprising, since they were informed about the events of the revolution of 1956. The Hungarian representative at the meeting, János Péter the leading bishop, simply saw the declaration as a sign of disobedience, the acceptance of which by the Reformed Church of Hungary was not possible for anyone. As a matter of fact the declaration was signed and in this way won support by 160 pastors as a voice of criticism. Now it is generally accepted that the declaration had a great part in preparing the Revolution, as it appears in Gombos' memorable words: "The tradition of Hungarian Calvinism was an organic element in the spirit of the Revolution, because one root of Hungary's ideals of liberty goes straight back to the political struggles of the seventeenth century..."⁵²

In the crisis and Revolution of 1956, the Reformed Church of Hungary was left without any effective leadership, while bishop Bereczky the president of the General Synod, was incapacitated by an illness. The other two bishops were passive as well for different reasons. On the famous date of the Revolution, October 23, 1956, only one person, László Pap was acting in the name of the Reformed Church of Hungary; he was a professor and deputy bishop and was not one of the ruling clique. He was highly regarded by laity and ministers of the church.⁵³

On the day of the Revolution the 'Reformed Confessors' in the Reformed Church of Hungary formed a "National Committee of the Reformed Church" as a support for the revolution. One of the aims of the committee was to provide sufficient leadership in a time when the official hierarchy had either resigned or been dismissed. They had to attempt also to prepare a general election in the church. The committee called back Bishop László Ravasz to active service, who became the leader of the church and the Renewal Movement along with Pap. In their broadcast on October 30, they asked people to show soberness, calmness and maturity. The Action Committee was working well after the second Soviet military intervention which began on November 4th, which suppressed the revolution and the fight for freedom. The committee sent a circular to the church sessions to find out if they would support the Renewal Movement. Two-thirds expressed unflinching support, while they assured that the sessions would respect the 1948 Agreement.⁵⁴

After the reestablishment of the Communist dictatorship of János Kádár the new prime minister severely punished those who had taken part in the revolution. There was a fierce wave of assertions, imprisonment, torture and executions from which the church was not spared. Pastors and the laity of the Reformed Church were arrested as well, some were deported, some were hanged.

After the initial revenge and terror, the Kádár regime consolidated its grip on the country and restarted by the old methods⁵⁵ the so called 'normalization' of state and church relationship. One of the most difficulties for the church was that the espionage agent system reached its 'golden age' after the Revolution of 1956. That was true not only in the secular circles but in the church as well, since the church was the most frequented area where the so called reactionaries (from the state's point of view) could become active. Many pastors were members of the spy net, willingly or unwillingly.⁵⁶

The immediate changes after the Revolution for the Reformed Church meant the arrival of new leadership. Tibor Bartha became the president Bishop of the General Synod and the life of the Church bore the stamp of his leadership for a decade, from 1958 to 1968.

“A Peculiar Hungarian Theology”

The first ten years of the Bartha era was determinative for developing and applying the themes of the Theology of the Servant Church, which were often stretched into extremes. In this way a genuine “Hungarian Theology” – as Bartha called it - was forming in the furnace of the new theologians. This continuance of the Theology of the Servant Church always was in the status of development and ignored the consensus ecclesiae and coniuratio testium. Here we have to notice that the Renewal Movement of the Reformed Church of Hungary had managed to shake the progression of the theology of the servant church by their critiques and refusal to accept it. However, by their method of oppressions already mentioned, the old and new set of church leaders managed to silence the critical voices.⁵⁷

A new theological theme was crystallizing, called “Evangelical Calvinism,” by the time of the early eighties. Under the new theme they argued that the previous thirty years of the Reformed Church of Hungary had not resulted in the decline of Reformed identity, but in the rise and consistent carrying out of the original Reformed intention.⁵⁸ The Calvinist heritage and pietism of the Reformed Church of Hungary was seen in Bartha’s view as a social–ethical concept. One of the most important elements in that concept was the recognition of responsibility as humanity’s active behaviour, for which the major source is rooted in our election by God. Therefore : “ (...) the Gospel makes God’s people stand on the side of social justice. Furthermore she [the church] was the first in her attempt to reflect on the facts of social progress from a theological point of view, and to build the relation of the church to a new social world system, that is socialism.”⁵⁹ The new watch word was: “Go ahead like Calvin!”⁶⁰

Remarks Concerning the Religious and Theological Life of the Church at the Periphery During the Years of Communism

General Remarks

The church at the periphery was the church marginalised by the ideological-political system of that time.⁶¹ We do not aim to give a detailed historical-

theological description of the subject. Our aim is rather to give a short comprehensive reference (since the subject would deserve a study of its own) about the living theological and religious life of the Reformed Church of Hungary in opposition to its official theological work. This latter was maintained by the mostly uncritical, ideological practice by the theology of the 'servant church' leadership and its circles during the time of Communism. The majority of the Reformed Church of Hungary was squeezed into a ghetto situation during this time. As we could see from the introduction to this chapter, the official theology was mostly the theology of the church leadership, and the effects had a very ambivalent nature. On the one hand, the meaning of theology went through a radical transformation whereby the major focus was directed by church political aims. On the other hand, it became obvious that such a quasi theology is not able to serve the God-given aims of the church. The theology of the servant church was a display-window theology and its effect was limited on the followers of Christ. Pásztor's remark needs to be taken seriously, when he draws attention to the fact that one cannot get a clear picture about the life of the Reformed Church of Hungary during the decades of Communism only from the officially published source of the church-leadership of that time. One also needs to study the everyday life of the church, mostly depending on the oral history from the witnesses of those times, the sermons, memoirs and letters. When one does not recognize the importance of these less official sources, other aspects of the self-recognition of the Reformed Church of Hungary will always be missed.⁶²

Before 1975

A formal, official church decision was made by the declaration of the 'Fraternal Message' (Testvéri Izenet, 1950), that the life and influence of the church voluntary associations should be ended, and by means of the Missionary Regulation (Missziói Szabályrendelet, 1952) the leftover outreach (evangelistic and diaconal, etc.) activities of the church were also liquidated. Any church activities besides the regular worships services could only be practiced secretly in small circles. In other words, the church could not reach beyond its own walls, and even within the walls there were 'informers'. It was also clear that to rise on the ladder of success was only possible by means of increasing one's loyalty to the church-

leadership at any time during Communism. The exposed and subordinate position of the Reformed Church of Hungary resulted in different levels in the church to be able to maintain its everyday life. Appeasing became a concomitant feature in a number of cases with various intensity, in order to “survive.” The different levels were well distinguished: 1) there were small groups of pastors who held a critical position in opposition to the church leadership’s view; 2) others did not make any public standpoint concerning the delicate questions; 3) part of the pastors held the same view as the church-leadership, namely that the Reformed Church of Hungary was obliged to maintain the well-being of socialist system in Hungary; therefore the service by the church to Communism and the justification and affirmation of its decisions and acts were necessary because the situation was at first seen as a judgement and later even more emphatically as grace given by God. In this short section we aim to give some remarks about the church life which was led by the attitude of the first two groups just mentioned (while the rest of the chapter is about the third group’s servant church theology).

Basically in the smaller parishes the Reformed congregations had a relative autonomy (ghettoised church) to practice their religious belief in their local settings, if they did not show notable resistance to some basic rules which guaranteed that the desired image of loyalty to the Communist ideology was not harmed. Numerous directives were given by the church-leadership to the pastors, elders and the congregations about the actual political, social, economic and ideological questions and also the official standpoints of the church in these matters. The enforcements of these directives were necessary in the so called representative sermons, elders meetings and their minutes or conferences.⁶³ The refusal of the application of these guidelines led to legal proceedings by the higher church and state authorities. For example, it could easily happen in a number of cases that the representative sermons were written and handed in to the authorities, but were never preached from a pulpit. Or, for example, the records of the elders meetings only formally fulfilled the requirements and directives of the church-leadership, but in reality the situation was different. In a number of congregations this led to a double life, according to the restricted possibilities which could be somewhat different in the local contexts. A number of collections of sermons⁶⁴ give testimony to this situation during the times of Communism (obviously only published after 1989) which well demonstrates that the pastors did not entirely follow the church leadership’s orders in the everyday church life, and they even made a notable effort

to find answers for the challenges solely from the Scriptures. The oral tradition⁶⁵ also gives evidence that a number of small pastor-circles were formed (illegally) to reflect on the different areas of theology which could enrich the pastoral work in the congregation. The theological work in these groups greatly differed from the officially organised meetings and conferences, both in the themes and answers, and any publicity for these small study group meetings was impossible.

After 1975

After the Helsinki Accords⁶⁶ (1975) the situation of the countries of the Warsaw Pact (Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance) started to ease, which resulted in more activities in the inner life of the church. Basically we can differentiate two levels where notable changes were experienced: a sociological and a political. From an analysis of the different time periods of the Reformed Church of Hungary during Communism, the period 1968-1985 is called the time of instrumentalisation (when the state used the church) and the period of 1985-1989 is called the time of disintegration (when state control of the church was eased). One also has to face the fact that the forced collectivisation, as well as the process of urbanization and industrialisation, created a very critical situation in the Hungarian society whereby the problems of families breaking up, alcoholism, an increasing number of suicides, corruption of the work ethic, and an increase of crimes among the youth were all taking place. The context of the church already showed the sign of serious problems in society.⁶⁷ The church recognised its duty which needed to be actualised in its social mission. The changes resulted in an increase in the local mission activities among the youth from the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, just as well as mission and diaconal outreach among the addicts, disabled people (blind, deaf and dumb), among the gypsies, among the physically handicapped, and the church also organised telephone counselling. The discrimination against the active church members was also lessened during these years.

In the times of disintegration (1985-1989) the centralized control started to loosen in the area of economics, as well as in the social and political spheres. Many signs of the desired democratic changes were taking place. From the beginning of the nineteen eighties onward, democratic opposition parties were formed.

The strict church politics was eased according to the changed circumstances. For example, the ÁEH new well that in order to keep the loyalty of the church leaders they needed to be more tolerant. A further weakening of the position of the church was not necessary anymore in order to continue the existence of the ÁEH.

The loosened control of the state over the church was experienced in number of ways. For example, the official church journal (titled: Református Egyház) in its exegetical studies and sermon outlines no longer showed any (party) political tone in their application of the interpretation of the Scriptures. Other scholarly journals (Confessio and Theológiai Szemle) started to publish occasionally the papers of the ignored theologians,⁶⁸ who had supported a critical tone in opposition to the leaders of the church. Major theological themes, for example the ordination of women, could publicly and freely be discussed.⁶⁹ Some of the pastor-circles could become more and more active and could raise their critical voice in a number of questions. The so called Andor Enyedy Pastor Circle (Enyedy Andor lelkész-kör)⁷⁰ from the second half of the nineteen eighties could make a number of appeals to the church-leadership in various aspects of church public life about the status of the pastors who studied theology part-time. The circle also raised criticism about the proposed law concerning abortion and about the laws concerning religion⁷¹ (1989). They also had a sharp critique about the pressure of the state on the election of office bearers in the church (1988-89).⁷²

With this introduction of the other side of the Reformed Church of Hungary during the time of Communism, a time when the leading characteristic of church life was its survival attitude, we aimed to demonstrate the living theological side of the Reformed Church of Hungary. It will be the task of the coming chapters to reveal how the number of initiatives from the church's marginalized status could become determinative and have a positive influence on the whole of the Reformed Church of Hungary after the changes of 1990.

Concluding Remarks: the Reformed Church of Hungary (1945-90)

Our remarks can gathered as follows: 1) the identity crisis of the Reformed Church; 2) lost Christology for ecclesiology; 3) the sociological aspect in relation to the Reformed Church of Hungary.

1) The identity crisis of the Reformed Church of Hungary, besides all the positive signs between the two World Wars, did not come to an end. One set of causes we already discussed were the different theological trends, as they appeared in different movements and associations in the Reformed Church of Hungary. Most of them were contradictory by nature, although they all represented their program in order to solve the identity crisis. Some of them tried by evangelisation, others by awakening, and some called attention by means of direct political programs, while others by the propagation of evangelical Calvinism. On the one hand, the folk-church setting or Cultural Protestantism was far too big a challenge for them. On the other hand, the reality of the church, as a consequence of secularisation, showed the marks of disappointment, unconcern, and apathy, and all good intended efforts in the church were paralyzed. This was not only true for the common believers but also for the pastors of the church.

The existential need and the low values in the Reformed Church of Hungary provided a fertile ground for the Communist Regime's church politics in which the collaborators of the church were ready to maintain all the purposes of the Communist ideology almost without any critiques. The ambivalent nature of this kind of church politics was obvious. On the one hand, the aim was to liquidate religion and the church. On the other hand, the church became a means of the socialist propaganda, which was known by the creators of the "official theology" of the Reformed Church of Hungary and its leaders. The question about the church leaders' choices cannot be seen as "discretion and valour"⁷³ – as Trevor Benson suggested, but rather "weakness and cowardice" – as Szabó has pointed out.⁷⁴

Cowardice was conjoined with lies and falsified theological work, which represented an identity crisis of the Reformed Church of Hungary on a wide scale.⁷⁵

The church leaders' attitude was shaped by the atheism of the Communists. The responsible church leaders did not question the existence of God but they lived in the church and led the church according to aims of an atheistic ideology, where God was not seen as the Kyrios. We also have to remember that there was the other theological attitude of the 'Reformed Confessors', which was critical of the official theology of the time, although it could not have publicity because of the given circumstances but its existence is unquestionable after 1956. It will be an important task to show whether this movement will be able to play a determinative role after the changes of 1989.

2) The identity of the church has to be seen as transcendent, which is rooted in Christ *extra nos*. Any national-confessional identities such as Hungarian-Reformed, etc. would be lost without that basis. Jesus Christ's attributes, his being truly divine and truly human (inconfuse and indivise - Chalcedon, 451), clearly requires that. The essence of the Church can only be pictured in this 'duality'. Ecclesiology's interrelation to Christology is obvious by the notion of *sóma Christou*. Christ is the head of his church (the soma) –and the reality of this connection means that the body (church) cannot have another head, political or otherwise. The believers' identity with Christ will be pictured in their service of Christ. That obedience is primary in the following of Christ, which also determinates the believer's life in the world by the preaching of the Gospel with his/her whole life. That is the only service that the church can do for the world in opposition to the teaching of the 'theology of the servant church's' concept of service. Therefore the church has a pneumatical reality and an institutional reality. The church's essence is also realized as an eschatological 'event' and existential character in time and space. These attributes have to be seen together. False Christology provides false ecclesiology, as is detectable in the teachings of the 'theology of the servant church' in Békefi's interpretation.⁷⁶

Christology was lost (in the full sense of theology /ecclesiology/) according to the 'official theology' of Reformed Church of Hungary. In this way an existential crisis of the Reformed Church was unavoidable, and the influence of this on the time after the collapse of Communism is significant. The ground for the relevance of the Donatist Factors was prepared by means of the negative course of events in the life of the Reformed Church of Hungary.

3) The secularization of church life and the sociological aspects were unique in the setting of socialism compared to western society. The Reformed Church of Hungary would not have been able to avoid facing secularisation if socialism had not happened in Hungary. The western European churches' experiences are clear evidence of that. Some of our ecclesiological difficulties are also based on the fact that the official theology of the last decades did not allow the facing of secularisation. On the one hand, facing secularization would have harmed the aims of church politics, and would have given an actual opportunity for the attempts by those who were a minority in their theological thinking. On the other hand, the whole program of the 'peculiar Hungarian theology' (worked out by

Tibor Bartha and Elemér Kocsis) would have resulted in a different understanding (a socialist one) of the concept of mission as *missio Dei*.

We also have to highlight that the church in the Communist society was exposed to all the negative ethical tendencies whereby this society could be maintained and be under the control of its leader. For example, the mechanism of the net of spies, the carefully planned and worked out Communist propaganda on every level of society, also in relation to the church (ÁEH, ÁVH), was not without consequences in the peoples' life, mentality and worldview.

References

- 1 The unconditional serving of the Communist Regime's goals is illustrated by the praise of Mátyás Rákosi, who was the party head ("the best disciple of Stalin"), on his sixtieth birthday: "Since the liberation we have learnt and are continuously learning new lessons taught to us primarily by his life, teaching and example. (...) We are increasingly aware of the great gift which was and is given to us by his wisdom, humanness and knowledge. He is the great statesman whose wise and strong hand leads the life of the country." Albert Bereczky, "Rákosi Mátyás születésnapjára," *Magyar Nemzet* (March 8, 1952), 1, also see A. BERECHKY, *A keskeny út* (Budapest: Református Egyetemes Konvent Sajtóosztája, 1953), 297.
- 2 GLATZ, Ferenc: "Az újabbnkori Magyar kultúra és a református egyház," *Confessio* no 1: 34 (1988), 31-42.
- 3 Act 1 of 1951; by the government decree in 1957 (No. 1045) it became a department of the Ministry of Education. The explanation of the establishment of the State Office for Church Affairs was that the new office assured the collaboration of the state and the different denominations according to the paragraph (54§.) of the new constitution. The State Office for Church Affairs (ÁEH) was for a short period ceased during the revolution of 1956. It was reestablished in 1959. The final closure of the AEH only happened in 1989. See KÓPECZI BÓCZ, E.: *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó, 2004, 14-20.
- 4 Kiszely's book on the history of the ÁVH starts his introduction with the following significant motto from Joel 1, 2-3: "Hear this, you elders; / listen, all who live in the land. / Has anything like this ever happened in your days / or in the days of your forefathers? Tell it to your children, / and let your children tell it to their children, / and their children to the next generation." The ÁVH (previously the ÁVO), The State Security Office (ÁVH) was set up in September 1948, under the control of the Interior Ministry. Its legal predecessors were the Political Security Department (PRO, 1945) and the State Security Department of the Interior Ministry's State Police (ÁVO, 1946), which had been headed by communist officials even in the assumed coalition period. The PRO's main task had been to purge Hungary of the remnants of Nazism. Its brief was extended after the November 1945 general elections to waging a struggle against 'reactionary elements'. Its headquarters were at Andrásy (later Sztálin) street 60 (6th District), which had earlier been the 'House of Fidelity' where Ferenc Szálasi's fascist Arrow-Cross Party had been based. Later it moved to the tower block in Jászai Mari square (5th District), popularly known as the 'White House'. The ÁVO and later the ÁVH played a decisive part in preparing and conducting show trials during the struggles accompanying the communist take-over. Their activity was supervised and controlled by members of the Soviet state security service, the NKVD (later the KGB), acting as advisers to their leaders. After the communists took power in 1948, the ÁVH was treated as the army or 'fist' of the ruling Hungarian Workers Party, HWP. The ÁVH, at the peak of its power (1949-53), functioned as a separate authority formally responsible to the Council of Ministers (government). However, its sole chief in reality was the party general secretary, Mátyás Rákosi. Apart from the security police, the ÁVH included an 18,000-strong Army Border Guard (the 'Green ÁVO') and the military intelligence. It also contained an Internal Force, a corps for keeping order within the service, established after the Soviet pattern. The ÁVH assumed the task of guarding important party and state buildings and several forced-labour and internment camps, including Recsk and Kistarcsa. Between 1950 and 1953, the ÁVH took proceedings against about 650,000 people. The dreaded Gábor Péter, who headed the organization from 1945 until his arrest in January 1953, carried out faithfully every order from Rákosi. In 1953, Imre Nagy's first government attempted to place the ÁVH

under Interior Ministry control again. During the 1956 revolution, the deep antipathy for the Stalinist system felt by Hungarian society manifested itself most of all in the hatred of the ÁVH and the lynching of some 'ÁVO' men. Some ÁVH units and officers fought against the rebels alongside the Soviet troops. The Nagy government fulfilled one of the main demands of the revolution on October 28, 1956 by disbanding the ÁVH. This was confirmed on 7 November by the Kádár government in an Interior Ministry order, although most of its members continued to work for the state-security (later the political investigation) department of the police until 1961. KISZELY, G.: *ÁVH - egy terrrorszervezet története*. Budapest, Korona, 2000, 44-77.

- 5 KÖPECZI BÓCZ, E.: *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó, 2004, 26-108.
- 6 The ÁEH functioned country-wide under the direction of ÁVH, which was in Budapest. They were responsible for the theoretical working out of the different actions of ÁVH, just as well as for the solving of problems and the analysis of the different written reports, which were the result of the observations by the secret agents. Besides the Budapest centre of ÁVH, it had representatives in every County Council. According to Edit Köpeczi Bót, the hand-written notes would be worth studying as a separate phenomenon. One can often find the following commands as the solution to a problem: "call that innocent pigeon for a questioning"; "if his/her personality becomes burdensome, we must liquidate him/her"; or, "detect his/her connection." KÖPECZI BÓCZ, E.: *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó, 2004, 56-57.
- 7 The cited principle of the communist party is from the analysis of the local work group of Somogy. See Magyar Országos Levéltár XIX-A-21-d 001841 / 1957 (2.d.) in KÖPECZI BÓCZ, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, 31-34.
- 8 See Magyar Országos Levéltár XIX-A-21-e (3.d.) KÖPECZI BÓCZ, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, 38.
- 9 As we have mentioned earlier, one of the many social changes in Hungary was in the educational system. Most schools in the country were church related. After the "Agreement" (1948) the Reformed Church lost over thirteen hundred elementary schools, over twenty high schools, and several other collages of higher education. Only four high schools were left, three teachers' colleges and four theological seminaries. By the time of 1952, the Reformed Church lost its teachers' colleges, three of its high schools, and two of its theological seminaries. These facts clearly show the violation of the "Agreement" (1948) by the state with the help of the church leadership. The Synod session of the Reformed Church of Hungary on October, 24, 1951 with little disagreement agreed to the violation of the "Agreement." The church schools, colleges and seminaries which were the bulwark of Hungarian Calvinism for centuries, were swept away. The Sárospatak Reformed College was affected in a long-term way by the closing of its theological seminary in 1951 and continued with the drastic transformation of the Sárospatak Reformed High School into the Rákóczi (state) High School. The newly reorganized Rákóczi High School was run according to the atheistic Marxist-Communist ideological pattern, and was thus very far from what would have been desired by the family of princes it was named after.
- 10 According to the different documents of the Ministry of the Interior there was a purposeful building of the international net of spies through the code-named agents. The area of their work was not only the Socialist countries but also the imperialistic countries of the West. After the revolution of 1956 the international connections grew in significance, since the Reformed Church of Hungary (the new leadership) first represented itself at the WCC conference. The

leader of the delegation was Tibor Bartha, and they were aware that at the plenary section the WCC wanted to deal with the case of the Hungarian Protestant leaders who were alienated from the church because of their roles in the “counter revolution.” The delegation made clear for Visser’t Hooft that the Hungarian delegation would counter-attack and even leave the conference if the case was to be discussed publicly at the conference – so the theme was dropped from the plenary agenda. In this way it happened that leaders like H. Berkhof offered the help of the WCC for the protestant churches of Hungary at this time of great pressure, not knowing that the Hungarian WCC delegation was not the right group to offer such help to. See Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történelmi Levéltára, O-13586/2. in FODORNÉ, *Történelmi Lecke*, 146-147, 79.

- 11 KÖPECZI BÓCZ, E.: *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó, 2004, 58-100.
- 12 Among the many we only name those who were mentioned earlier in the dissertation: Albert Bereczky, bishop of the Reformed Church of Hungary; Tibor Bartha, assistant professor of the Theological Faculty of Debrecen; László Márton Pákozdy, professor of the Theological Faculty of Debrecen; Lajos Vető, bishop of the Lutheran Church of Hungary, etc. See Magyar Országos Levéltár XIX-A-21-d 0057-1/1957 in KÖPECZI BÓCZ, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, 115-116.
- 13 Among many others, prominent pastors such as Béla Pap and István Pogyor were murdered; Pap disappeared without trace and Pogyor died in custody under suspicious circumstances. Others were forced to resign or were removed from their parishes. Imre Szabó and Károly Dobos, ministers of prominent Budapest churches, were exiled to remote village parishes, their only “sin” that they had helped other people who had been forcefully deported from the capital city. During the Communist regime of forty-five years, 133 of the church’s 1,200 ministers and countless laymen suffered deportation, prison, or removal from office. A number of publications give evidence to martyrdom among the Hungarian Protestants in the Carpathian Basin area, between 1949-1990. The following are the most well-known and important: FORGON, P.: *Ott voltam, ahol a legszebb virágok nyílnak*, Budapest, Kálvin Kiadó, 1992.; HORKAY, B.: *A Keleti Baráti Kör: Képek a kárpátaljai ébredésről*, Published by the author with the support of the Kom Over En Help, 1998.; KOVÁCS, Z.: *Bilincsen is békeességben Istennel: Szibériai rabságom története*, Budapest, Ref. Zsinati Iroda Sajtóosztálya, 1990.; SZILÁGYI, S.: *Boldog rabságok*, (München: sine publ. 1986); VISKY, A. (ed.): *Bilincseket és börtönt is*, Kolozsvár, Koinónia 1996.; BÁRCZAI, Gy.: *Sorsok a református egyházban 1948-1988*, Bern: sine publ., 1989.; HARGITA, Á.: *Tűzoszloppal jéghegyek között: Zimányi József életútja*, Fundamenta Alapítvány, 1995.
- 14 Heb. 11: 38.
- 15 BOGÁRDI SZABÓ, I.: *Egyházvezetés és teológia a magyarországi református egyházban 1948-1989 között*, 68.
- 16 The expression *The Narrow Way* (A keskeny út) is Bereczky’s, which was also a title of one of his volumes in 1953. It was a collection of sermons, lectures, articles etc., rather than a systematised theological exploration of the theme.
- 17 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”
- 18 BEREZKY, A.: *Eligazodásunk*, in: *Az út*, (28, November, 1948)

- 19 PÉTER, J.: *A Magyar református egyház útja*, and KOC SIS, E.: Bartha Tibor püspök munkássága a Magyar református teológia szolgálatában, in: *Református Egyház* (1982, June), 121. First use of the citation is in COLIJN : *Wer mag wider uns sein?*, 71.
- 20 BERCZKY, A.: *Keskeny út*, Budapest, Református egyetemes Konvent Sajtóosztálya, 1953.
- 21 Hungarian Church Press, 1955, XII. 15. VII/22-24. 4 First use of the citation is in COLIJN: *Wer mag wider uns sein?*, 72.
- 22 BOGARDI SZABÓ, I.: A belső vérzés hosszú időszaka - A „szolgálat teológiája,” mint a magyarországi Református Egyház nyomorúságának tükröződése, *Confessio* no.1, 1990, 111-119. See also BARTHA, T. - MAKKAI, L. (eds.): *Studia et acta ecclesiastica* vol. 5, Tanulmányok a magyarországi Református Egyház Történelméből 1867-1978, Budapest, A Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinati Irodájának Sajtóosztálya, 1983, 563-602.
- 23 Jos Colijn lists the following services in the life of the Reformed Church of Hungary according to the publications of that time. See COLIJN, J.: *Wer mag wider uns sein?*, 75-78.
- 24 BERCZKY, A.: Eligazodásunk, in: *Keskeny út*, Budapest, Református egyetemes Konvent Sajtóosztálya, (1953), 414. See also in a similar tone; PÉTER, J.: *A magyar református egyház útja, Második püspöki jelentés*, Budapest, 1952.
- 25 PÉTER, J.: *A magyar református egyház útja, Második püspöki jelentés*, Budapest, 1952, 9-11.
- 26 BERCZKY, A.: *Die ungarische Christenheit im neuen ungarischen Staat*, Zürich, 1948.
- 27 BERCZKY, A.: *Die ungarische Christenheit im neuen ungarischen Staat*, Zürich, 1948, 22.
- 28 BERCZKY, A.: Nyilatkozat az egyházi alkalmazottak eskütételére, in: *Református Egyház* no. 21, (1949), 17.
- 29 BÉKEFI, B.: Diakóniai feladatunk egyházunk új helyzetében, in: *Református Egyház* no. 16, 1951, 18-20. and BÉKEFI, B.: Diakóniánk, mint Jézus Krisztus diakóniájának része, *Református Egyház* no. 18, (1951), 4.
- 30 For the first evaluative use of the Bekefi's citation, see BOGARDI SZABÓ, I.: *Egyházvezetés és teológia a magyarországi református egyházban 1948-1989 között*, 100.
- 31 BÉKEFI, B.: Diakóniai feladatunk egyházunk új helyzetében, in: *Református Egyház* no. 16 (1951), 18-20.
- 32 See above in the subtitle: Marxism – Leninism: A System against the Eternal One, which Thought Itself Everlasting.
- 33 BOGARDI SZABÓ, *Egyházvezetés és teológia*, 100-101.
- 34 One of the most famous articles of János Victor, 'Grace that Works Within also from Outside', in *Református Egyház* no. 4 (1952), 1-3. The article became an object of debate (after 1989) on the question how much it could serve the theoretical theological basis of the *Theology of the Servant Church*. Jos Colijn seems to suggest as one of the possible misunderstandings. (See in Jos COLIJN, *Wer mag wider uns sein?*, 66. Leaving out the word also already changes the intention of the article, as in Tibor Bartha's article (*A Magyarországi Református Egyház Diakóniája*) The same mistake appears just as well in the English translation of Bartha's article by János Pásztor (see in 'The Theology of the Servant Church and the Theology of Diaconia in the Protestant Churches and Their Consequences in Hungary During the Time of Socialism', *Religion in Eastern Europe* (1995, no. 6: 26).

- 35 Here we refer to another article by Victor: "Általános kegyelem," *Református Egyház* (1954, no 12-14).
- 36 Szabó makes a comprehensive evaluation of Victor's views in light of the Victor's theological life-work – although Victor had not fully explained what he meant on this issue. Bogárdi Szabó, *Egyházvezetés és teológia*, 70-85. We can agree with one of Szabó's conclusions that as Victor's article was often referred to as an approval of the theological basis for the theology of the servant church, and Victor never abandoned his theological view, which finally seemed to lead to the theology of the servant church. Indeed, he often used the propagandistic rhetoric of the collaborating church-leaders.
- 37 VICTOR, J.: Kívülről befelé is munkálkodó kegyelem, (Grace that Works Within also from Outside), *Református Egyház* no. 4 1952, 1-3.
- 38 BOGÁRDI SZABÓ, *Egyházvezetés és teológia*, 76.
- 39 VICTOR, J.: Kívülről befelé is munkálkodó kegyelem, (Grace that Works Within also from Outside), *Református Egyház* no. 4 1952, 2.
- 40 VICTOR, J.: Kívülről befelé is munkálkodó kegyelem, (Grace that Works Within also from Outside), *Református Egyház* no. 4 1952, 3.
- 41 VICTOR, J.: Kívülről befelé is munkálkodó kegyelem, (Grace that Works Within also from Outside), *Református Egyház* no. 4 1952, 1-2.
- 42 BOGÁRDI SZABÓ, *Egyházvezetés és teológia*, 78.
- 43 See CALVIN, J.: *Institute* 2. 1. 2.
- 44 Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer 62.
- 45 BOGÁRDI SZABÓ, *Egyházvezetés és teológia*, 82.
- 46 Victor emphasised Kuyper's understanding of *common grace* where the work of grace is modelled by circles centered around Christ. The last circle is the common grace which contains the church as well. At this point, Victor turns Kuyper's theory up-side down, saying that: "...common grace is the prerequisite of special grace... therefore special grace would not be understandable without common grace." (See VICTOR, J.: Az általános kegyelemről, *Református Egyház*, 1954, no.12 and 13.) However, Kuyper clearly distinguished *special grace*, *common grace* and *mutual grace*. And in his theory of the state, a *free church in a free state* is connected to the sovereignty of *mutual grace*. (A KUYPER, *A kálvinizmus lényege*, Budapest, 1922.) See Bogárdi Szabó, *Egyházvezetés és teológia*, 80., espc. footnote 243.
- 47 János Victor pointed out that the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ secures for humanity that all embracing grace of God which renders possible the conduct, development and ascent of human life. Thus serving general human life in love is just as much a service under the sovereignty of Jesus Christ as our ministration within the church." Hungarian Church Press, 1955. XII. 15. See in Colijn: *Wer mag wider uns sein?*, 80.
- 48 Imre Nagy (June 7, 1896 – June 16, 1958) was a Hungarian politician, appointed Prime Minister of Hungary on two occasions. Nagy's second term ended when his non-Soviet-backed government was brought down by Soviet invasion in the failed Hungarian Uprising of 1956, resulting in Nagy's execution on charges of treason two years later.
- 49 ROMSICS: *Magyarország története*, chapter V. and VI.

- 50 The full text of the declaration is available in English: NÉMETH, G.: Persecution, Resistance, Betrayal: the Liberation Theology in the Reformed Church, in: PUNGUR, J. (ed.): *An Eastern European Liberation Theology*, 111-114.
- 51 NÉMETH, G.: Persecution, Resistance, Betrayal: the Liberation Theology in the Reformed Church, *An Eastern European Liberation Theology*, 111-114.
- 52 GOMBOS, Gy.: *Szűk esztendő, A magyar kálvinizmus válsága, 1959, A történelem balján*, Budapest, Püski, 1992., see also the edition in English: NÉMETH, G.: *The Lean Years, A study of Hungarian Calvinism in Crisis*, New York, The Kossuth Foundation, Inc., , 1960, 93.
- 53 LADÁNYI, *Adalékok a magyarországi Református Egyházban az 1956 – 1957-es esztendőben történetekhez*, 47-51.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 65-77.
- 55 For example the Presidential Council ordered summary jurisdiction. Death penalty was given not only for murder, but also for possession of arms, robbery, looting, going on strike or even instigating strike and later for almost every kind of expression of criticism. A new organ, the Hungarian Revolutionary Defence Armed Force, was established mainly by former ÁVH officers and unemployed party functionaries who numbered about twelve thousand members.
- 56 The recruit was to be an espionage agent, in basically the same way as we described early. KISZELY, G.: *Állambiztonság 1956-1990*, Korona Kiadó, 2001, 97-141.
- 57 BOGÁRDI SZABÓ, *Egyházvezetés és teológia*, 108-109.
- 58 BARTHA: *Evangéliumi kálvinizmus, Református egyház no. 5*, 1982, 98.
- 59 BARTHA: *Evangéliumi kálvinizmus*, 98. We also have to mention that on the same track Bishop Elemér Kocsis was a maintainer of Bartha's thought. Kocsis developed the social-ethical perspectives of *the theology of the servant church* more universally.
- 60 The formulation is originally from G.W. Locher. See in COLLIN: *Wer mag wider uns sein?*, 92.
- 61 The Hungarian theological work has not notably dealt with this question so far, therefore we face a lack of historical research. Also the shortage of the documents, which is obvious from the nature of their context, makes any research on the theme difficult. Hopefully the informal sources will also be more and more published.
- 62 PÁSZTOR, J.: *Misszió a XXI. században*, Velence: Somhegyi Kiadó, 2000, 19.
- 63 Emília Szatmáry, in her Master's paper introduces the nature and results of these directives by the church leadership, as viewed through the papers, representative sermons, and elders meetings' minutes, as written by the pastors and other church members of the Reformed Church County of Borsod, from 1956 to 1970. SZATMÁRY, E.: *A Borsodi Református Egyházmegye gyülekezeteinek helyzete az igehirdetések és gyülekezettörténeti vázlatok tükrében a szocializmus első két évtizedében – avagy a túlélés technikája*, Research Paper for the Master of Theology Degree, Sárospatak, 2005.
- 64 RAVASZ, K.: *Krisztussal a viharban*, Budapest, Kálvin Kiadó, 1997. CSERI, K. (ed.): *Adventől adventig*, Budapest: Református Zsinati Iroda Sajtóosztály, 1989. This collection of sermons consists of 73 sermons by 48 pastors from the decades of Communism. See also, SZABÓ, I.: *A bűnösök barátja*, Kiskunfélegyháza: Parakletos Könyvesház - Egyesült Protestáns Egyház, 1998. CSERI, K.: *Ábrahám öröksége*, Budapest, Kálvin Kiadó, 1993. JOÓ, S.: *Jézus Követésében*, Budapest, 1996.

- Joó, S.: *Megragadott a Krisztus*, Budapest, 1997. Joó, S.: *Ne félj csak higgy*, Budapest, 1998. Zergi, G.: *Az élők csomójába kötve*, Sárospatak, 1999. JUHÁSZ, I.: *Jézus Krisztus a gyülekezetben*, Baratos, 2002., VICTOR, J.: *Csendes percek I, II*, Kolozsvár, Koinónia Kiadó, 2007.
- 65 NEMES, Cs. – TAMÁSI, J. (eds.): *Tűz-láng-pár, Németh Géza és Némethné Kriza Judit emlékezete*, Budapest, Dunamelléki Református Egyházkerület, 2008, 135-245. In this publication one can find a number of interviews about the church life during Communism. Also see Marianna Misák, *Egyházpolitika a szocializmusban, amiről szólnak a könyvek és, amiről nem* Master Degree Research Paper, Sárospatak, 2007, 31-91.
- 66 Here we refer to the first revision (1975) of the original adoption of the Declaration of Helsinki (1964), especially to the final Act, the 'Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States', which enumerated the following 10 points: 1) Sovereign equality, 2) Refraining from the threat or use of force, 3) Inviolability of frontiers; 4) Territorial integrity of States; 5) Peaceful settlement of disputes; 6) Non-intervention in internal affairs ; 7) Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; 8) Equal rights and self-determination of people; 9) Co-operation among States; 10) Fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law. SZÉKELY, J. (chief ed.): *Helsinki Záróokmány, Britannica Hungarica* (vol.8), Budapest, Magyar Világ Kiadó, 1997, fifteenth edition, 528.
- 67 LADÁNYI, S.: Ravasz László, *Református Egyház* no. 5, 1990, 101-103.
- 68 For example, Ervin Vályi Nagy, "Isten dicsősége és az egyház küldetése," *Theológiai Szemle* (1978/ 11-12) 335-339 or "Eligenedés és Közösség," *Theológiai Szemle*, (1980), 205-209. In 1984 an accurate book could even be published about the twentieth century Western theological movements. Ervin Vályi Nagy, *Nyugati teológiai irányzatok századunkban* (Budapest: Református Zsinati Iroda Sajtóosztály, 1984).
- 69 KÜRTI, L.: A Biblia a nők lelkési szolgálatáról, *Confessio* 4, 1980, 3-12. LENKEYNÉ SEMSEY, K.: A nők ordinációja mellett, in: *Reformátusok Lapja* XXV (1981), NAGY, A. M.: A nők társadalmi helyzete, általában és kiemelkedő szerepe az Öszövetségben, in: *Theológiai Szemle* (1982), 13-19.; RÓZSAI, T.: Felszenteljünk-e nőket?, in: *Reformátusok Lapja* XXV (1981), 5; TÓTH, K.: Nők a Teológiai Akadémián és a lelkési szolgálatban, in: *Református Egyház* (1981), 188-189.
- 70 The *Andor Enyedy Pastor Circle* originated in the Reformed Church district of South Borsod (Borsod is a county of North-East Hungary). By 1989 this circle had named itself after Bishop Andor Enyedy. After awhile part of that group desired to meet more regularly and then became known as the Bábai Circle. This circle got its name from one of the places in Borsod county called Hejőbába, where Rev. István Török (not to be confused with Professor István Török the dogmatitian) was the local pastor and became the organizer and maintainer of the meetings. MISÁK: *Egyházpolitika a Szocializmusban*, 91-108, 95.
- 71 István Török's letter to the President of the Hungarian Parliament (March 7, 1989) was also published in the journal called: *Confessio* no.2 (1989), 123-124.
- 72 MISÁK: *Egyházpolitika a szocializmusban*, 91-108.
- 73 BENSON: *Discretion and Valour, Religious Conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe*, 256-288.
- 74 BOGÁRDI SZABÓ: *Egyházvezetés és teológia*, 30.; n 65.

- 75 KOVÁCS, Á. Whose Civilization Is Europe Today?: Encounters between Hungarian Reformed Faith and Secular Worldviews. In: Pieter Vos, Onno Zijlstra (ed.) *The Law of God: Exploring God and Civilization*, Studies in Reformed Theology. Leiden: Brill, 2014. 105-132. esp. 111 ff.
- 76 VÁLYI NAGY, E.: Ekkleziológiai kérdések a mai teológiában, in: *Theológiai Szemle* no. 5-6 (1981), 142-148.

Self-identity of the Hungarian Reformed Community

I believe that when an individual or a community tends to talk a lot about their own identity, trying to define for themselves or others who they really are, we can be sure that there is something wrong with their self-image. Those with a healthy self-image do not dwell on this subject. For them, this is simply not an issue, they just live their lives. The characters in a classic psychological story come to mind, in which two people meet, one of whom has a full beard. The one without the beard asks the bearded man::

‘Tell me one thing: when you are asleep, is your beard under or over the blanket?’

‘I have no idea, I have never really thought about it before.’

The pair say goodbye. They meet again two weeks later. The bearded man has lost a lot of weight, he can barely walk straight.

‘ You won’t believe it but I haven’t been able to sleep ever since you asked me that question. I keep thinking before falling asleep whether my beard will be under or over the blanket.’

Well, the situation is somewhat similar when a person keeps talking too much about their own identity; it suggests they do not know who they are exactly and what they want. They cannot find their place in life and in the world.

There are certain natural stages in person’s life when this soft of uncertainty is obvious: these are the stages of getting used to adolescence, adulthood and old age. During these times, they have to go through intense sufferings before they are able to find their way and place. For our church, the issue of identity has come up in such a drastic and urgent manner during the past decades because there

used to be an external identification on the part of the state and its ideology. This ideology labelled Reformed faith and Reformed Church representatives as having a clerical and idealist world view. Since there was hardly any free communication between individual denominations, we - although aware of the fact that there are differences between Reformed and Catholic views - tended to overlook such differences, and they did not come up as a problem. No new denomination or church appeared in society. Due to changes in society, however, this external uniformization disappeared. As a result, the pre-existing but so far suppressed internal church tensions became more apparent, and the various directions in thinking and in piety began to drift further apart. The appearance of new, unknown or little known denominations and religious groups shook up the public opinion of the church as well as society, reshaping the religious layout that had seemed rock solid and unchangeable before. So this is the situation today in which we may and we must ask the questions of who we are and why so.

Having a self-identity naturally entails *identifying with* something. From the Reformed perspective, this is easier to accomplish for a church that adheres more strictly to tradition. Even in this case, however, it probably still holds true that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. Yet I think that Reformed mentality is haunted by the feeling that it should not be attached to a mere tradition, because that is not what real faith, real piety is about. But Reformed faith must not be synonymous with moving around in a vacuum, void of any traditions. The motto "*ecclesia semper reformari debet*" that is, "the church must be reformed constantly" does not mean that each believer, each new church generation has to start from zero. Instead, the question should be put this way: *Which tradition do we identify with, and to what extent?* On the other hand, it has become clear that for the intelligentsia that can more or less identify with Reformed faith, the point of connection is frequently the realm of childhood or adolescent memories. A continuity of identification is rarely the case. Without going too deep into the analysis of the reasons, it can be stated that identification with Reformed faith as a whole, with the structure of the Reformed Church and the build-up of its congregations and church organization is greatly fragmented, hardly visible at all. What has changed is perhaps the fact that while in the past tradition was really something that a person was born into, today, with the appearance of diversity, the concept of *elective tradition* has been introduced, which may sound absurd and contradictory, but it still exists. It means that a person wants to choose the

tradition they can identify with, one that can carry their life. Identification also entails *recognition*. This is similar to the way a believer reacts to the statements Jesus uttered about himself. In these statements - I am the good shepherd, I am the way, the truth and the life - Jesus makes us recognize something that we can identify with, something that gives meaning to our lives, something that can fill a space in our feelings and thinking that either used to be empty or was filled with something that failed to provide reassurance and a solution. Searching for one's identity begins when it is not obvious any more that - in this case - only Reformed faith exists. I myself was born in a small village, and I must confess that for a very long time I was certain that all Hungarians were Reformed, because in my village only Reformed people lived. How was I to know that there was anything else out there? But now I know. A search for identity goes hand in hand with pluralism, and it can have a positive outcome: conscious Reformed faith. People can react to pluralism by refusing to acknowledge anything that is different from them, but this deprives them of the chance to have a faith that has been tested and is growing. It is only a faith that has been tested that can say: I know there are other options, but I will stay where I am. This attitude is analogous to the Way the First Commandment talks about other gods. There is no theoretical debate or roundtable discussion whether there are other gods. It does not deny their existence, it simply says: If I, the Lord, am your God, you need no other gods; so the commandment asks us to choose the redeeming God.

Among the classic features of a church, the Reformed tradition tends to emphasize the universality of church. This is what made it differ from the self-identity of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church. The centre of the self-identity of the Orthodox Church is the sanctity of the church: *ecclesia sancta*; while the Roman Catholic Church's attitude focuses on the unity of the church - *ecclesia una* - especially the unity that is manifested in its unique nature. The Orthodox tradition concentrates on the doxological nature and function of the church the church as the church building of the Holy Spirit the Roman Catholic thinking of the Middle Ages emphasizes; the sacramental nature of the church - the church is the body of Christ in the meaning of *Christus prolongatus*, the Christ that lives on as a necessary supplement to the Head; but for Reformation it was the universality of the Church that was important. Neither Luther, nor Calvin ever gave up that claim. They considered the church to be God's people, the spatial and temporal limits of which are akin to the spatial and temporal limits of the created

world. Let us just think of the way the classic question and answer No. 54 of the "Heidelberg Catechism" talks about the church: 'What do you believe concerning "the holy catholic church"?' 'I believe that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race - [spatial limit] -, from the beginning of the world to its end - [temporal limit] gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life. I would like to highlight this feature because I believe that even today many Protestants still believe in the notion and prejudice that the movement of Reformation resulted in the division and eventual split of the church, leading to the foundation of various new denominations. Well, let me repeat: Reformation never gave up the claim that it was the renewal of the holy, universal church. We should never, under any circumstances, forget about this. There have been and there are still temptations to create one new denomination after the other because of unresolved doctrinal or even organizational and power issues. The fact that when we talk about Reformed identity, we mean the universality of the church, I consider to be an incredibly significant factor, which is a mark of identity that can be claimed without any sense of inferiority or inflated self-confidence.

On several occasions, our church has Organized trainings for the pastors participating in worship services broadcast on radio or television. The institute that provided the trainings wrote a short study in which they summarized their experiences. The' trainers had the following to say: *"Neither the participants in the current training, nor those in the previous one were able to answer questions like 'What does it mean to be Reformed today? 'If you came across ten people and they asked you what was good about being Reformed, what would you say? ' or 'How would you explain to an alien from space what the Reformed faith is all about and in what ways it differs from other religions? We feel it is a huge problem if there are no good and modern answers to these: and similar questions, answers that are relevant in today's world and understandable to everyone."*

After the changes in society, bur church also experienced a tumultuous period of changes in leadership and organization, but I am not certain that this brought about any real clarification, an important aim of which would have been the determination of a format that could facilitate the individual and communal confession of Reformed faith. It is always easier to state what we are not and what we do not wish to become, but it is a lot more difficult to pinpoint what we do want, what we see and find our identity in. In my opinion, the Reformed faith has

certain pivotal and unique tenets. We do not consider these to be eternal and unchangeable, because Reformed faith and Reformed creed are characterized by an attitude that does not see the process of learning from the Word of God as a completed process. Therefore it is perhaps no accident that there is not a single from the age of Reformation today that is accepted by a Reformed church anywhere in the world. I am not talking about the Apostle's Creed, but about those creeds that were written in the age of Reformation. There have been attempts from time to time to adopt such creeds, but these never succeeded in the end. Perhaps this constitutes a problem, perhaps it does not. If one were to say that the lack of a "once and for all" creed is not a tragedy, this attitude would somehow reflect the fact that a creed and the experience of faith should always remain an act that is characterized by relevance, which is never satisfied with taking over yesterday's faith and upholding the realizations of the past, but wishes to redefine for itself its own faith over and over again. Not to offend anyone, but I find it somewhat comical when a person in his old age publicly repents his sins committed as a teenager. It must have had its relevance at one point, but today he should rather talk about the present. It had to be confessed in front of the Lord, and also in front of the congregation, if you wish, but if we keep confessing our sins of yesterday and the day before yesterday, we lose our respectability and credibility.

Well, our Reformed faith has its pivotal tenets that in my view give a shape to our sense of identity. The emphasis of God's glory, of God's fundamentally different nature is an element of Reformed teaching that should never be given up. God cannot be identified with anything else but himself. I do not think that the motto "*Soli Deo Gloria*" is a mere phrase of piety. Instead, it is a statement of unimaginable consequences for every era, including our supposedly rational and sensible world and Society today. Because, although in a lot of senses today's man is indeed very rational, able to think in a sensible and very "technical" way, our world is filled with the small gods that the First Commandment talks about. Let us just think of phenomena and expressions in which secularized men or humanity is glorifying things or people. What do these people of rational thinking get really excited about? Well, let us be honest, not about the Reformed church. The Reformed church is a source of excitement only when someone announces their resignation or gives a statement on current affairs. But in general it is not our church that gives people a thrill, but rather a sports event or a concert,

something that tries to replace what sanctity means and can mean, and so people create their own saints and sanctities. They create their own cult: if they refuse the cult pertaining to church life, they build up their own instead. And it leads to expressions like: social progress, development has its victims. Road traffic has its victims. Let us Stop and think for a moment about what this really means. It is as if we are trying to give some meaning to senseless and inexplicable destruction and death by talking about victims, victims of road traffic, instead of talking about the carelessness of those responsible. We talk about victims of progress instead of pointing out the inhumane and unprofessional behavior of those whose decisions and actions have led to the birth and ultimate death of such "victims."

This seemingly godless world is not only filled with gods where *they are* promoted in the name of some religion, they are everywhere. When the Reformed faith claims "Glory to God alone," it means that God can be identified with nothing but Himself, and this statement can be of an incredibly great service to its peers who consider themselves to be rational and enlightened, because it points out that this world is indeed the world created by God, in which all other gods can only rule because people believe in them and take them upon themselves. God cannot be resolved in any physical, spiritual or intellectual reality of the created world. He cannot be put into any conceptual, intellectual or emotional categories. This Reformed emphasis is relevant today because there are countless attempts to identify God with the perfect harmony of impersonal existence, with the silence of the soul, or with history; or to elevate to a divine level certain phenomena of the world where it can dominate a person's life exclusively.

Let us stop here for a moment. It is my belief that in order to have a Reformed sense of identity, we must definitely clarify and emphasize the fact that according to the Reformed faith, the place of the church is not between God and the world. It is not the church facing the world, but rather the church is in the world, facing God. Just like the so-called world. I do not mean to blur the differences between the church and the world, because there are obvious differences between the two, but these differences do not mean that the church is positioned between God and the so-called world, but it stands together with the world under Christ's reign, before the Lord. If we forget about this, two temptations arise within the Reformed church that are very difficult to resist. One of them is the *ministerial*

temptation of the Reformed church, and the other one is the *prophetic temptation* of the Reformed church.

The *ministerial temptation* means that we believe it is the duty of the church to stand between God and the world and mediate between the two. This way the Reformed church can become clerical, despite claiming the opposite in its creeds and church regulations, but in this case desire and reality are not one and the same. In this regard it does not matter whether clericalism originates from official church bodies or elected church officials or from groups claiming to be bottom-up initiatives representing the real church. It is my belief that fundamentalism - both in the Reformed church and elsewhere - is nothing but bottom-up clericalism, a bottom-up "ministerializing" temptation, when a certain individual or a group of people stand between the supposed world and God, with the aim of mediating between the two. In order to resist this temptation, we need a sobering prophetic speech. However, prophetism can also constitute a temptation for the church, if it begins to believe that it is in possession of the knowledge that enables it to lecture and reprimand others, when it identifies its own word and own will with God's word and God's will.

Karl Barth, in his formidable work *Dogmatics*, provides an interesting example to illustrate the way he sees the role and place of Christian man and Christian congregations. He says we should use the imagery of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic mass. The role of the Christian, he writes, is not that of the person reading the Scripture and performing the sacrifice, but that of the altar boy. The only starting point we can have is believing, truly believing that Christ, after His resurrection and transfiguration, is seated at the right hand of God, He is in charge, and under His direction we can only be altar boys, yet we have a very important role. Because what is the role of the altar boy? To ring the bell, and to ring it at the decisive moment. What Barth says, therefore, is that the bell has to be audible and timely. Two characteristics that are worth keeping in mind. We must be audible, we must be heard, and things should happen at the right time, we should speak up and act in a timely fashion. Well, if the church considers itself to be the "altar boy of Christ", then it is not positioned between God and- the world. While it is different from the world in this respect, it is still present in it, calling attention to what is happening. '

The role and place of the church, if it takes its mission seriously, are not characterized by holy anger, but rather a sense of sobriety, modesty, Objectivity,

humaneness and topicality. The Reformed search for truth is not goal-oriented. We must accept the fact that we cannot accomplish everything. The fact that not everyone pays attention to us, not everyone takes what we say seriously, not everyone is interested. Stating the fact, however, that our Search for truth is not goal-oriented is not a call for negligence, instead, it is a way of surrendering the claim of exclusivity. When determining the marks of our Reformed identity, I believe it is indispensable to answer the questions of where we are, what we want and who we are, because the only question can be this: Do we know what we have been called to do, and are we acting according to this calling? No reference to the Reformation, Calvin, Melius or anyone else will determine whether we are a Reformed church or not. Instead, the only thing that can determine that is whether the characteristics that belong to the Reformed identity can be recognized in us. A unique feature of Reformed faith is that its identity is never considered to be a given, to be something that has already been completed, and it does not say that we, the church are basically one and the same with the Kingdom of God: Our identity can be found along the lines of the promise that He has made Who says: "I am the way, the truth and the life." And only the wandering people of God can walk on this road, living its life with self-identification and self-recognition.

A further unique and fundamental tenet of Reformed faith is the central importance of the Scripture. This entails a concentration on the Scripture, the Book of Books, the document of the history of God's covenant, and in and through this concentration we can find reference points to what is happening here and now. Just as it can never become a mark of identity that we are here to erase the past completely by making a clean slate, it cannot be a mark of Reformed identity that we are here to "go straight ahead back to the past." We have seen examples and attempts to do that, and it is a possible option, but in the end, it will not be justified by the Word of God.

When discussing our marks of identity, we must not forget about the relationship of the gospel and the law. It is crucial to emphasize the difference between the two, because if we fail to do so, we create a false blurring of the elements of the Biblical revelation. If the Bible is reduced to a mere book of laws, it does nothing but harden and repel, making people feel hopeless and disillusioned; it has no attraction. And the preaching of the gospel without mentioning the law is the false and Simplistic portrayal of "free grace," which has nothing to do with the will of the holy and merciful God. The gospel, to put

it succinctly, is the statement of the fact that *you are free*. The original meaning of the law is the call for you to *remain free*. The gospel tells us that man does not have to fight for his own freedom because it is a gift from God. It is man's duty to preserve and protect the freedom that God has given him. Just as the law and the gospel speak together, the Word and the Holy Spirit work together in the individual, in the church and in the created world. The reign of Christ is realized in this world through the Word and the Spirit. It is important to view the two together because otherwise we find ourselves in the realm of either rationalism or that of "experience Christianity." It is the movement of the Spirit that makes the Word relevant, otherwise it remains mere words that can kill, while the Word lends credit to the experience which otherwise evaporates and turns into infatuation that can be manipulated easily.

A unique feature of Reformed thinking is the fact that it puts great emphasis on the need for joint testimony. The community of a congregation is not a place where a number of religious geniuses, the fervent facilitators of the holy cause, strong-willed people are able to take matters into their own hands at any time. A congregation, apart from listening to the Word, is a place where people listen to each other as well, because it is only through this that a jointly undertaken testimony can be achieved. However, this joint testimony, to connect it the idea of *universal ministry*, must never become an alibi for dilettantism and mediocrity, a playground of manifold powers operating under the motto of "we are all experts." This joint testimony must not mean that each and every Reformed person has to think about everything the same way. It is a misleading attitude if we claim that there can be no differences of opinions among us. I think we should take to heart the remark that István Török made: It is not the debates themselves that are problematic, but the way we debate. We can only perform a testimony by practising our responsible Christian freedom, where it is not experts guiding minors; but everybody serves by using the gift received from God.

I know that what I am talking about is a reality only in a handful of places. Although we claim to believe in the principle of *universal ministry*, when it comes to practising it, we are in trouble. The responsible service of Christian freedom is supposed to benefit those as well who are under the reign of Christ, but outside the walls of our church, including the practice of intercessory prayer for those who do not pray, as well as undertaking responsibility in specific political and economic issues. We do not have to be leaders in such actions, but we must take

our part in this responsibility by getting rid of an indifferent attitude that belittles all human efforts. The knowledge that we are the wandering people of God in this world is sobering and it is also a commitment because we can be assured that the world is operated by the love and wisdom of He Who has been merciful to us. This knowledge lends seriousness to our responsibility, breaking us free from the power of the temptation to despair or become disillusioned, and I believe that this mark of Reformed identity is just as important as the previous ones.

Bishop
Albert Bereczky
(1893-1966)
A Life Full of Questions

Bishop Albert Bereczky (1893-1966) was undoubtedly one of the most significant, controversial, and yet ambivalent persons of the Reformed Church in Hungary during the 20th Century.¹ If we call the period between the two world wars the “Ravasz-era,” then the first half of the 1950s can definitely be characterized by the name and activity of Albert Bereczky. After Ravasz’s retirement, Bereczky followed him in the bishopric seat of the Danubian Church District, then in the presidency of the Synod and Convent of the Reformed Church in Hungary. His office term was overlapped with the harshest anti-church policies of the Communist State led by Mátyás Rákosi.

The Bereczky’s contribution to these policies are still debated.² Did he act on conviction or was he only the unconscious tool of the communist political interest? Did he save the Reformed Church from a much greater peril, like total eradication, or would there have been another way for the church instead of what Bereczky described as “the narrow road of the obedience by faith”? This study gives a short introduction to the main stages and formative events of Albert Bereczky’s life and activity, while represents the main opinions concerning his motivations.

Albert Bereczky was born in Budapest in 1893. According to his baptismal records kept in the Roman Catholic Parish of Bakáts tér, his father was Endre Bereczky, a Reformed landowner, while his mother was the Baroness Mária

Pongrácz, the descendant of an impoverished aristocratic family. According to the aforementioned record, his godfather was Count Albert Apponyi, the famous politician and diplomat of the era. It was rumored throughout Bereczky's life that he was the illegitimate son of Count Apponyi, which belief was confirmed by Bereczky himself on several occasions.³

After the death of her husband, Bereczky's mother moved to Dunabogdány where she married the local Reformed pastor, Géza Kovács. His stepfather's positive pastoral example was important for Bereczky to become a pastor himself.⁴

Bereczky pursued secondary level education in the Reformed high schools of Kunszentmárton, Kecskemét, and finally in Pápa, which became one of the most significant places of his life.⁵ There, he not only made a life-long friendship with Zoltán Tildy, later his influential political sponsor, but also met János Victor, the young secretary of MEKDSZ, the evangelical movement for students. Victor's evangelical thoughts made a huge impact on the young Bereczky. Victor acted as a spiritual father for him even during Bereczky's time as a bishop.⁶ Bereczky also became friends with Imre Szabo, later dean of the Budapest Church County. During the interwar period their friendship made them good co-workers in order to increase the Reformed Church's significance in Budapest. In the early 1950s, however, Szabo turned out to be the natural leader of Bereczky's opposition within the Synod, in what resulted in Szabó's coerced deposition and relocation from Budapest to a remote Eastern-Hungarian village, where he died within three years.⁷

After Bereczky finished high school he applied to the Pápa Theological Seminary, mostly at his evangelical friends' urging. During his seminary years, Bereczky went through a conversion experience in a MEKDSZ summer camp and became a passionate member of the revival movement, while he looked at the official church more and more critically.⁸

In 1916, he finished his seminary education in Pápa. He studied in Basel, Switzerland for a short time, then he got married and was sent by Bishop Elek Petri to Salgótarján with the assignment to plant a new congregation in the fast growing industrial city.⁹ Serving in the miner communities of Salgótarján, Bereczky got his first personal and positive experiences in a congregation where the majority of the members belonged to the worker class. During the short and chaotic reign of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (21 March 1919 - 1 August 1919) following the

collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Bereczky and his small family had to flee from Salgótarján. They moved to Dunabogdány where Bereczky replaced his stepfather as a pastor until 1924, when he left for the prominent and reform-minded congregation of Pécel.¹⁰ Pécel was the home of Pastor Gyula Forgács's "Pécel Circle," a movement of pastors and laypeople who discussed the post-war challenges of the Hungarian society, politics and church in an evangelical-revivalist manner. In the 1920s Bereczky became known and respected as a devoted member and passionate preacher of the revival movement, meanwhile he also functioned as a prolific publicist for many revivalist publications. His love for the press followed him throughout his life: he edited many publications and authored hundreds of newspaper articles.¹¹ Bereczky left his ministry in Pécel in order to become the Director of the Sylvester Press and Publishing Company, co-founded by his closest friend, Zoltán Tildy. The Sylvester Press, specialized on the publication of Gospel tracts and other revivalist literature, went bankrupt shortly after its new headquarters was finished in Budapest in 1930.

After the failed business venture, Bishop László Ravasz assigned Bereczky to be the pastor of a mission congregation in one of the socially challenging worker districts of Budapest, the so-called "Tutaj Street Congregation," which later moved to the Pozsonyi Street. By his warm and open personality, moving sermons, cutting-edge church planting methods and, last but not least, his sensitivity to social issues, Bereczky turned the mission congregation into one of the most flourishing congregations of Budapest within a decade. He organized Bible study groups according to the diverse age and societal clusters of his parishioners and established social institutions for the accommodation of young apprentices and impoverished elderly. By the support of his old friend from Pápa, then Budapest Dean Imre Szabó, the congregation finished the building of a new capacious church complex on the banks of the Danube (Pozsonyi Street) in 1940.¹²

In 1944, after the occupation of Hungary by Nazi Germany, Bereczky joined the resistance movement at the influence of his friend, Zoltán Tildy. Tildy already belonged to the left wing of the Independent Smallholders Party and as such became a Member of Parliament from 1933 on. Cooperating with the resistance, Bereczky became a prominent participant in the Reformed Church's attempt to save Hungarian Jews from transportation to extermination camps. The rescue work was coordinated by the "Good Shepherd Mission Committee," established by Bishop László Ravasz in 1942. The committee's original mission was the spiritual

and social care of converted Jews, but during the last two years of the war its main focus became rescuing as many Jews as possible by issuing Christianization documents. Officially, the "Good Shepherd" was led by Gyula Muraközy, Ravasz's second in command. The Committee's fieldwork was done mostly by József Éliás, a young pastor and Jewish convert himself, who became a close confidant of Bereczky during this time. In August of 1944, approximately 1300 Jews (40% of the baptized Jews in Budapest) were baptized at Bereczky's Pozsonyi Street Congregation in order to protect them from deportation.¹³ Furthermore, with Bereczky's approval, the congregation's "Kaláka" teenage circle also played an active role in the rescue missions.¹⁴ According to the church's secretary: "The greatest wave of baptisms took place during the summer of 1944. Mostly the Old and the Young and women came, since the men have been already taken away. /../ It was not about faith any more. It was about saving their lives."¹⁵

Bereczky also played an active role in the information network between the cells of the resistance and Governor Miklós Horthy, while he personally delivered Bishop Ravasz's protestation letter against the deportations to the Reformed and Lutheran bishops.¹⁶ During the last days of the siege of Budapest, at the highpoint of Nazi terror, Bereczky hid Tildy and his family at the Pozsonyi Street church building.¹⁷ Right after the war he wrote an account about the rescue efforts of the Reformed Church under the title "Hungarian Protestantism against the Persecution of Jews."¹⁸ By the work of the "Good Shepherd Committee" about 60,000 Hungarian Jews have been saved during the war. Since he put his own life at risk, Bereczky was posthumously honored with the title "Righteous among the Nation" in 1997. Nevertheless, his significant contribution to the resistance movement and the rescue mission brought him substantial popularity and admiration right after the war.¹⁹

Bereczky joined the resistance movement by the impulse of his old friend, Zoltán Tildy. After the war, Tildy's political career was on the rise. Tildy served as the Prime Minister of Hungary from November 1945 until February 1946, when he was elected the first President of the Republic of Hungary until the communist takeover in 1948. Bereczky's deeper affiliation with left-wing politics can be accredited to Tildy. At the beginning of 1945, Bereczky also joined the Smallholders Party and became a member of the Provisional National Assembly as early as the April of 1945. Among many minor offices, Bereczky functioned as the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture in 1945-1946 and Chairman of the

Foreign Affairs Committee in 1946. By 1947, he belonged to the leadership of the Smallholders Party.²⁰

Named in full the "Independent Smallholders', Land Workers' and Citizens' Party" was founded in 1930 to represent the interests mainly of landed farmers. The Smallholders Party was the biggest left-wing bourgeois opposition and parliamentary party in the 1930s. It acted as an umbrella for people ranging from wealthier-landed farmers to the village poor and some urban strata, advocating land reform and other liberal democratic demands. After the first general elections after the war (4 November 1945) the Smallholders Party became the largest party in Parliament, with an absolute majority. Its leaders accepted the need for nationalization to limit the scope of big capital and supported the dissolution of the system of great landed estates, but insisted on basing agriculture on private landownership and maintaining a multi-party system of parliamentary democracy. The Hungarian Communist Party (MKP), led by Chief Secretary Mátyás Rákosi, used legal and illegal methods – which became famous later as "Salami Tactics",²¹ – to combat the Smallholders. By their Machiavellian adversaries the Smallholders' power began to break early in 1947, when charges of a conspiracy against the republic were fabricated to dissolve a secret organization known as the Hungarian Brotherhood, which could closely connected to adherents of the Smallholders Party.²² Through the show-trials of the Brotherhood's real and alleged members, the direction of the Smallholders got into the hands of its left-wingers, like Zoltán Tildy, who did not have other choice than to cooperate with the Communists. By the Summer of 1947, the only Smallholders Party politicians remaining were ones who unconditionally accepted the leadership of Rákosi and the Hungarian Communist Party. It was only a matter of time before Rákosi's Salami Tactics reached their fulfillment and the Communist Party transforms the young Hungarian democracy into a dictatorship by the intimidation and false accusations of opposition leaders, forced party mergers and even voting fraud²³ Finally, Rákosi's one-party system succeeded on June 12, 1948, when the Communists assimilated their last independent coalition partner, the Social Democratic Party. The communist takeover was complete.

Due to Bereczky's revivalist past, his achievements as a church-planter, and his newly-gained political authority and connections, Bereczky became the natural leader of those church-persons who criticized the inter-war conditions of the Reformed Church, expressed the church's responsibility in the political process

resulting in the lost world war, while they had a neutral or even positive attitude toward the socialist transition of Hungary. Discussing the possible orientations of the church in the newly-formed socialist society, Bereczky and his supporters inevitably challenged the church establishment of Bishop László Ravasz.²⁴

Experiencing the rise of communist dominance, it became apparent that it would only be a matter of time before the Ravasz leadership had to give way to those who could better serve the secular political interest. Bereczky had an active role in the negotiations, which convinced Ravasz to resign, and at that point Ravasz also gave his approval. Due to the circumstances, it was decided Bereczky was the right person to replace Ravasz in the leadership of the Reformed Church.²⁵

Karl Barth, one of the most famous theologians of the era, also argued for the election of Bereczky in an open letter. Earlier in 1948, Barth, accompanied by Bereczky, visited Ravasz personally and tried to convince him of the necessity of his resignation.²⁶ Barth was purposefully misled by Ravasz's opposition (namely János Péter), and totally misinterpreted the Hungarian situation trusting the Communist State would secure the independence and freedom of the church and its members. From 1951 on, Barth realized his mistake and started to use a more critical tone against the collaborative attitude of the Bereczky church government.²⁷

After the other candidates were convinced to withdraw, Bereczky was elected by the small majority to be the Bishop of the Danubian Church District at the end of 1948. In the following year, after the forced resignation of the Bishop of Debrecen – Imre Révész – Bereczky became the President of the Synod and Convent, the Reformed Church's highest legislative and administrative body.²⁸

During Bereczky's church leadership, the Communist State implemented its anti-church policies step by step. By the nationalization of the church's educational institutions, the abolition of missionary organizations, the relocation, suspension, forced retirement and intimidation of disloyal pastors, the church was forced into the margin of the Hungarian society within one decade. The Reformed Church lost almost all of its 400 years-long political and, most importantly, educational and cultural role within the Hungarian society.²⁹

Bereczky, even before his time as a bishop, already took part in the work of the preparatory committee for the nationalization of religious educational institutions.³⁰ Under strong political pressure, the Synod of the Reformed Church

adopted the state's proposal for the nationalization of schools on 14 June 1948, two days after the Parliament already proclaimed state ownership over church schools.³¹

The nationalization of the schools was an important step toward the birth of the so-called Agreement between the Communist State and the Reformed Church, signed on the 7th of October 1948. On the surface, the Agreement advocated the idea of "free church in a free state" and promised to end the state's involvement into church issues. In reality, it led to the gradual eradication of church autonomy and the church's total financial dependency to the state. The Agreement regulated that state subsidies would decrease by 25% every five years. The cut was explained by saying the church would become more and more self-sustaining, but it was apparent that the state expected the church to be dissolved within the next twenty years.

However, it was officially signed by Bishop Imre Révész, President of the Synod and Convent until his forced resignation in 1949. Bereczky was the Agreement's main ideologist and promoter; he summed up its relevance and necessity as following:

By Christian realism, we had to take into consideration the place and time where and when we live. The past is irreversibly over and the church's task in the present is to build, help, serve by its own tools there and then where it has its possibility and opportunity to do it. The vision of the serving church originated from this comprehension. /.../ The state agreement with the Reformed Church – and later with all the Hungarian Christian churches – was the result of this theological understanding.³²

Though Bereczky declared in his inaugural speech that he would decentralize the church hierarchy,³³ under his government the church went through an unprecedented process of centralization. The traditional Reformed congregational autonomy was weakened. The church government got involved into the free elections of pastors in many cases to support their own loyal candidates. Meanwhile, the deans' and especially the bishops' power over their pastors became legally reinforced. According to the 1951 amendment of the church's bylaws, any pastor could be relocated from his congregation by the church government– an "administrative tool" which became very useful to discipline defiant pastors and establish a system of fear and mistrust. The most

famous victim of these “administrative tools” was Bereczky’s former friend, Imre Szabó, Dean of the Budapest Church County. After Szabó acted as Bereczky’s opposition in the Synod, he was relocated to a remote insignificant village in Eastern-Hungary.

As part of the centralization process, the majority of missionary societies were dissolved until the end of 1950, while the rest of them were placed under the firm control of the church authorities in 1952. This stifling process ended the longstanding tradition of voluntary lay service of the Reformed Church.³⁴ The church press had a similar fate. Many church newspapers ceased to exist, the rest was thoroughly censored by the church authorities. The adjustments of the Church Counties’ borders in 1952 also served for the purpose of centralization and personal purges. For example, the dissolution of one of the four traditional Church Districts, the Tibiscan Church District, also resulted in the deposition of its bishop, Andor Enyedy, a representative of the old era.³⁵

The most criticized point of Bereczky’s activity was that he sometimes adjusted his church policies to the state’s demands, not out of necessity but out of compliance. For example, when he approved the absorption of the Sárospatak and Pápa Theological Seminaries by the ones in Budapest and Debrecen in 1951 or when he offered to the state three secondary schools which still stayed in church ownership according to the 1948 Agreement. Giving up these schools left only the Debrecen Secondary School in the hands of the Reformed Church.³⁶ The abolition of the two historic Seminaries, both founded in the Reformation Era, made Karl Barth aware of the harmful tendencies within the Reformed Church in Hungary and motivated him to raise his voice. In a letter dated 16 September 1951,³⁷ which had been published in the West despite his intention, Barth drew parallels between the Nazi Germany’s Deutsche Christen movement and Bereczky’s church leadership: “Must Reformed Hungary always be 100 percent in agreement with whatever regime happens to be in power?”³⁸ The letter caused great panic at the Bishop’s office and its response was written and published by the supervision and approval of Mátyás Rákosi, who desperately wanted to keep the appearance in the West that religious freedom was protected in communist Hungary.

Interestingly, another area where the communist interest tried to use the church for its purpose was the ecumenical movement. The State Office for Church Affairs and even Mátyás Rákosi himself paid close attention to the participation

of the Hungarian Reformed delegates in various ecumenical organizations such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) or the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches. The Communists sought to co-opt these organizations as a tool for their political propaganda.³⁹ The freshly founded WCC could not shut out the heated political climate of the Cold War and sometimes became the theater of clashes between Eastern and Western political ideologies. Next to those who wanted to preserve the neutrality of the organization, there were always some delegates, both from the West and the East, who attempted to use the WCC's publicity as the channel of their political message.

As early as 1946, Bereczky, being involved in various forms of foreign affairs that time especially as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, attended two preparatory conferences of the WCC in Switzerland. Consequently, he was also present at the initial WCC General Assembly in Amsterdam during the late-summer of 1948. On 8 July 1949, Bereczky became the President of the Ecumenical Commission of Hungary. When in July 1950 the Toronto meeting of the WCC Central Committee condemned North Korea's "war aggression", Bereczky criticized their statement by an open letter sent to the WCC General Secretary. Bereczky's criticism focused on the credibility and objectivity of the UNCOK (United Nations Commission on Korea) report about the Korean War, on which the Toronto statement relied. Bereczky also pointed out the contradiction of the statement which supported "police action" against North Korea, while expected a peaceful solution the same time.⁴⁰ Since the Toronto statement also condemned China's support for North Korea in April 1951, Chinese Protestant Bishop Tzu-Chen Chao, one of the six presidents of the WCC, resigned from his position as an act of protestation.⁴¹ In order to express his solidarity, Bereczky also resigned from his membership in the International Affairs Committee at the next meeting of the Central Committee in August 1951 in Rolle, Switzerland.⁴² Though he accredited great importance to his resignation, it did not bring him the accolades he expected. In spite of his aspirations, Josef Hromádka, Czech Protestant theologian, became the generally recognized leader of the Eastern churches within the WCC instead of Bereczky. It was only a cold comfort that in 1952 the Comenius Faculty of the Charles University of Prague granted honorary doctorate to Bereczky acknowledging his ecumenical service.⁴³ Bereczky also attended the 1954 WCC General Assembly in Evanston, USA, where he delivered the Hungarian Reformed Church's invitation to hold the next WCC Central

Committee meeting in Galyatető, Hungary, during the summer of 1956. In spite of his attempts, by that time, Bereczky's impact on ecumenical matters was gradually overshadowed by the diplomatic talent of his Hungarian rival, János Péter, new Bishop of the Transibiscan Church District.

The examples mentioned above show us the Bereczky leadership became the simple executor of the Communist State's will and interests, mediated by the State Office for Church Affairs founded in 1951. This communist intention and method was later aptly described by the resigned Bishop Ravasz as "weakening the church by the church." The Communist State was wise enough not to choose the way of direct confrontation with the Reformed Church, like it did in the case of the Catholics, but acted out its anti-church program by the help of inside collaborators.

One of the key questions about the assessment of Bereczky's activity and personality are his true motivations during this process. His official statements, articles and sermons testify that he was deeply convinced by the righteousness of his church policies serving state purposes. However, Bereczky failed to develop a coherent theological system, his attitude toward the Communist State was reinforced by a theological justification, his so-called "theology of the narrow road."⁴⁴ This theology finds its origins in Bereczky's personal experiences during the last phase of the Second World War. He considered the horrors of the war and the total defeat of the inter-war Hungary as the result of God's judgement. Bereczky's life was in permanent danger because of his relationship with the resistance movement; and he experienced the Russian occupation as personal deliverance and the manifestation of God's grace. This intense personal experience brought him to that assumption that both judgment and grace manifest themselves in the historical and social context of this world. In his words: "His judgment made the old Hungary to collapse, and His grace gave us a wonderful opportunity to have a new beginning."⁴⁵

In his opinion, God's legitimate judgment was caused by sins committed within the context of human, social relations, like the social injustice of the pre-war or the war itself. On the other hand, he believed the grace of God also reveals itself there, where there is a promise and intention to solve these social problems by the implementation of a peaceful and just society. According to him, the Marxism represented by the Soviet Union had this promise and intention to a peaceful and just society by which it becomes the tool of God's grace.

Consequently, the church must also promote this new social transformation; with Bereczky's words: "In this new situation, the church must recognize its radically new assignments and earnestly embrace the service waiting for her: this was and this remains the narrow road of the church."⁴⁶ Thus, in his public statements he never questioned the righteousness of his policies what he declared to be God's will. Moreover, in the mid-1950s Bereczky in his speeches, articles and even in his sermons embraced more and more the style and terminology of the communist politicians, frequently using their usual phrases or favorite expressions.⁴⁷

However, for a more comprehensive assessment of Bereczky's motivations, it is also relevant to see that his close friendships, and in many cases kinships,⁴⁸ with the discredited and convicted members of the Hungarian Brotherhood, the Smallholders Party (and especially with the disgraced Zoltan Tildy) made him vulnerable to blackmail after the communist takeover. Eventually, Rákosi's "Salami Tactics" reached Bereczky's political supporter, Tildy, on 30 July 1948, when Tildy was forced to resign from Presidency of the Republic after his son-in-law had been arrested for corruption and infidelity. Thereafter Tildy was kept under house arrest from the end of August 1948 until May 1, 1956. Tildy's downfall resulted in the end of Bereczky's secular political aspirations, too. According to the contemporary opinion of László Pap, Dean of Budapest Seminary:

I knew what Bereczky, as Smallholders Party member, thought of the Communists, and I had no doubt that what I knew, the Communists knew it too. / ... / I was afraid that because of this political burden Bereczky will have to make concessions in church matters.⁴⁹

Considering Bereczky's delicate political situation caused by his Smallholders past and particularly Zoltán Tildy's downfall, if he wanted to secure his position he had to prove his loyalty to the Communist Regime constantly.

Interestingly, many of his closest colleagues and even friends wrote reports about him to the State Security Services, which were always suspicious and distrustful toward Bereczky. In these reports, he is characterized as somebody who publicly advocates state politics, but secretly hinders and sabotages them.⁵⁰ The State used him, but never trusted him. It was also true, that on several occasions Bereczky used his remaining political connections to intervene for deported or imprisoned pastors, church members or their relatives.⁵¹ The State's

mistrust was also strengthened by the biased reports of those young careerist church-officials who tried to blacken the “old fool” – as they called Bereczky – in order to assist János Péter, Bishop of the Transtibiscan Church District and Bereczky’s rival for the supremacy over the Reformed Church.⁵²

Inside the church the growing discontent against Bereczky’s church policies led to the formation of the Reformed Renewal Movement, which harshly opposed Bereczky’s servile attitude towards the Communist State even before the 1956 Revolution.⁵³ During the 1956 Revolution, the members of the Reformed Renewal Movement could step forward and reinstall László Ravasz as old-new Bishop. The 63 years-old Bereczky lived through the events of the 1956 revolution in a hospital. Earlier that year he had a stroke on his return from a conference in Germany; under the pressure of the new circumstances he had to announce his resignation by phone from the hospital bed.⁵⁴

After the Soviet suppression of the 1956 Revolution, Bereczky’s leadership was restored with the help of the regenerating Communist State, led by János Kádár. However, Bereczky still suffered from the consequences of his stroke and could not completely fulfill his responsibilities. He was reinstated as Bishop by the State Office for Church Affairs in order to symbolize the continuity of the new Communist Regime of János Kádár with the pre-revolution order.⁵⁵

In his 1957 episcopal report, Bereczky admitted some of the mistakes of his pre-revolution leadership. According to him the harshness of his church policies, especially the so called “administrative tools” – such as the relocation, suspension and forced retirement of pastors, or the abolition of missionary organizations – can be viewed as the “temptations of love,” meaning that their intention was to save as many pastors and church-people as possible from waking the attention of the Communist State and thus suffering harsher retribution.⁵⁶ After the consolidation of the Kádár-regime, Bereczky’s service was not needed anymore and the State Office for Church Affairs approved his retirement in 1958.⁵⁷ He died in the age of 73 in 1966.⁵⁸

When the criticisms of the Bereczky-era resurfaced after the political changes of 1989, Endre Nagy, Bereczky’s son-in-law and former synodal co-worker, replied with the argument that Bereczky’s primary motive was the preservation of the Reformed Church and its members even if this meant to suffer some losses and damages on several fields, like in education, culture and inner-mission. Nagy refreshes Bereczky’s apology from 1957, when he states that his father-in-law’s

tough church policies were needed in order to protect the anti-communist church-persons from the possible harsher retribution of the state.⁵⁹ In his opinion, the church and its leadership was on a forced course. If Bereczky had resigned, he would have given way to more willing collaborators, like János Péter and his circle of young arrogant careerists.⁶⁰ If he had resisted, he would have become a martyr like the Catholic Cardinal László Mindszenty or the Lutheran Bishop Lajos Ordass, but even this could not have prevented the State to execute its anti-church policies. In Bereczky's own words: "No one claims that this road was without mistakes, nor that it was easy. But yes, it was the only viable road for the Church here and now: the narrow road of the obedience by faith."⁶¹

On the other side, in the opinion of Gyula Gombos, Bereczky's former parishioner at the Pozsonyi Street and his expatriate critic in the 1960s, it is also necessary to take into consideration what has been saved and what is lost. Although, the church's organization, some of its institutions, most of its pastors, elders and members, so the "outside" of the church has been preserved, on the same time "Hungarian Calvinism" gave up its 400 years old formative role in Hungarian culture and education and, above all, it degraded the preaching of the Gospel to be the channel of government propaganda. With Gombos's own words: "the church government sacrificed the essential for the nonessential, the inner assignment for the outer appearance, the wine for the wineskins, the heritage for one bowl of lentils."⁶²

Bereczky's final evaluation is still debated. There are still some who emphasize his sanity, by which he preserved the church from a possible eradication. It is expressed that nobody could give a different path to the church among the given circumstances. There are also many, who still harshly criticizes his conformism to the Communist State, especially how he sometimes went beyond the "extra mile" and sought to satisfy every demands of the State, for which he is accused of opportunism and unprincipled careerism. There are also many who wonder how someone who was a devoted revivalist, church planter, and rescuer of Jews could so easily be mistaken and become the tool of a totalitarian dictatorship? Or is it even possible that this background was the very reason for what he became? Was he the victim, or the perpetrator; or maybe both? The debate is still going on as well as the research of his life, therefore it is also possible that new evidence will shed some more light on his motivations.

At the beginning of his bishopric service Bereczky declared:

“The road of the Church leads between two temptations: the first temptation is to ignore the signs of the times and protect something what has been already condemned by God’s judgment; the other temptation is to adapt ourselves to the changes of time, while sacrificing those values, which were entrusted to us by God.⁶³

We might say that in his struggle to avoid the first, Bereczky might have exposed himself too much to the latter. In order to not protect something which he considered be condemned by God, he might have sacrificed too many values which were entrusted to the church and to him as its responsible leader.

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Interchangeable kingdoms of God(s)?

A Critical Theological Reflection
on Conversions or Journeys
from Christianity to Communism

Introduction

It was a peculiar phenomenon during Communism that several well-known persons participating in the revivalist movement of the Hungarian Reformed Church not only sympathised with socialist ideas but also showed a further 'development'. They converted from Christianity to Marxism. One may say that they exhibited an 'advancement' in their knowledge as Marxist ideologues and via their collaboration with the atheist state which was communist.¹

This paper seeks to investigate how it was possible that Christians, especially several leading revivalists of the Hungarian Awakenings movement, collaborated with the communist state. The membership of this movement included the names of many future bishops, particularly Albert Bereczky, János Péter, Tibor Bartha. It also included other notable personalities such as Sándor Fekete, István Finta, Benő Békefi and Imre Kádár. The actions of these members provide much food for thought. Let me draw attention to a perplexing, if not bewildering particular example of the Rt. Rev. János Péter. How it was possible for Péter, a Christian Bishop close to revivalist circles to join the communists? Furthermore, why did he present himself as a „believer” of that ideology to such a degree that he was entrusted to as a trusted advisor and eventually the foreign minister of Communist-controlled Hungary (13 September 1961 – 14 December, 1973)? It is also an intriguing question whether he „converted” to Communism. If so, when, how and why did he make an unusual 'leap of faith'? These and other

issues also lead to larger questions regarding how those with Christian identities at this time reconciled their faith with communist belief. In Péter's case, was he an opportunist, a careerist or a devout member of the Party? Did he truly believe that he served the church and the state equally and fairly? Additionally, from a theological perspective, could one serve „two Lords” at the same time? Finally, the further bewildering question arises: is the belief in Marxism, especially in its extreme form, compatible with Evangelical Reformed Christianity? Rt. Rev. János Péter's life and work is just one example of the many revivalists and other Christians who decided to collaborate with the communist state. Though almost 30 years have passed since the collapse of Communism, the beliefs of these collaborators have escaped scholarly attention. In sum, the core question of this paper is how Christians related to Marxism (Communism) during the 40 years of oppression that began shortly after the end of World War II. In sum the main research question of this reflection is how and why he and other revivalists of the Reformed church made a shift of allegiance? In other words, why those people 'converted' from proclaiming Kingdom of God to propagating the 'earthly paradise' of Communism. Before attempting to sketch out a framework of reference by which categories may be stated to offer an interpretation, it is vital to address the core question from various aspects and make some observations.

What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens?

It is helpful here to raise the famous question of Tertullian: What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens? Before we are quick to judge that this is perhaps to radical question that would imply a response that could only be reductionist in its possible response, I need to make several qualifications. First, I have already alluded to the fact that history has shown us that extremism in any form is dangerous and that it takes on an evil form capable of destroying human dignity and the lives of millions of people. Communism, as an extreme form of leftist ideas, is not immune to this charge. Second, we must remember that a responsible Christian, regardless of his or her political orientation to the direction of leftist or right-wing ideas, is obliged to avoid political extremism. Third, I entertain the thought that Christianity is a theist religion that cannot be married with an atheist worldview such as Marxism in that form that had appeared in Central Europe. One might

agree with the fact that it is possible to learn from some of the critical analysis of Marx. But to embrace Marxism as an ideology in its entirety, or to serve and approve its Leninist or Stalinist versions as Hungarian former revivalist did, is such a self-deception and lack of sense of reality and proper gospel, if I may be allowed to say so, that is really puzzling and disturbing.

Here I deem it crucial to distinguish between Socialism and Communism. Both drew ideas from various leftist thinkers. But Communism, which I perceive as the applied form of Marxist ideology, particularly in Hungary, was an extreme form of the Left. Like Nazism, Communism was an ideology that produced many evil deeds in Central Europe. Indeed, when Hungary was first occupied by the Nazi Germany in March 1944, it was called properly as occupation. Yet when the other extremist power, the Soviet Army, came to Hungary, the Communist leaders hailed it as a liberation. This conscious propaganda of the servile Hungarian Marxists resulted in a schizophrenic and regrettable reality for decades in Hungary. Its isolated people were taught that the Soviets were liberators and that the German Nazis were evil. But of course, evil has no colour, race or specific form of embodiment. Extreme leftist ideologies such as Marxism (Communism as it is referred popularly) or right-wing extremists like National Socialists (Nazism as it is popularly referred to) produce equally immoral and evil systems that must be, and should have been, rejected by any Christian leader who took the Gospel seriously. However, it is a grim reality that the majority of Christians in Hungary, like those in Germany failed to speak out against extremism, albeit of a leftist orientation. Only a very small minority stood up against the enormous pressure of prevailing ideology during the course of the national history of the aforementioned nations.

Worldviews, either from left or right, may enrich our Christian theological understanding of the world. Nevertheless, the bewildering phenomenon that some of the most fervent Christians, the revivalists, were the most faithful collaborators of building an openly atheist society in the name of Communism is really a peculiar phenomenon that invites researchers for investigation of primary historical sources. The issue also calls for a serious theological reflection. The more specific intention of this lecture is to sketch out some of the major lines of investigation which could be followed when a proper in-depth research will be carried out. It also seeks to establish the categories, to identify factors/elements and highlight impacts that may have contributed to the shift of a worldview (from a

theist to an atheist) or, in other cases, where two views remained side by side, albeit in a perplexing formation just like people who inhabit strange or unusual marriages. In some cases, erstwhile revivalists did not really give up their piety, or their reckoned, self-justified Christian life. They simply made special concessions or accepted the 'faith' of Marxism. Surely such cases were realities during the time of the totalitarian communist regime. But, in this syncretism, yet another question arises with even more pressure and imperative: (how) could a Christian be a theist and atheist at the same time? Is it possible to be a Marxist communist and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Had it been not a self-deception? For some the biblical argument is that one cannot serve two Lords at the same time as mentioned above. This perception of faith produced martyrs in the history of Christian church. Others argue that a person's life journey is really complex and a picture is never black and white but it has many colours, even each colour has shades. Therefore, this fact calls for careful investigation and analysis and one must avoid making quick judgements. Needless to say, it is possible to find biblical justification for this latter stance too. Nonetheless, the main concern of this paper is to raise the issue a phenomenon called 'conversion', that I believe with careful analysis, is possible to comprehend. Therefore, the core research question, which reappears again and again in different forms shedding lights on different aspect, is how come that many revivalist leaders did not realise or were blind to the very fact that had been openly propagated by the Hungarian Communist namely their aim was to abolish religion. In other words: their final dream of victory was to eliminate Christianity that was the major religion in Hungary. For Hungarian theologians like me the question is rooted in a historical, existential and very vividly remembered experience that has still a sad and lasting imprint on the life of the Reformed Church of Hungary.

The Difficulty and Challenge of Doing a Research Regarding a Sensitive Issue

Let me make some remarks. Apart from some theological reflections on the theology produced during the communist era often but not exclusively developed by former revivalist leaders as future to be collaborator of the totalitarian regime, there is very little historical research done on the recent history of our church.

This curious development might be explained along the following lines. First, some contend that it is too close in terms of time to do any objective research. Second, some of the collaborators are still alive, or has been alive for a long time after the collapse of Communism in 1989. Furthermore, their sons and daughters are very much part of the 'renewed' structure of the Reformed Church of Hungary that also impedes proper and open discussion. Third, people were indoctrinated to be indifferent to issues that are not immediately important to their lives and well-being. The new church members are not interested in issues of the past as they did not attend the church at that time either due to their age or were part of the silent masses. Rather the newcomers, seek jobs and career opportunities in the church structures that is over financed for national reasons by the current government. This observation has another side. There are members of the congregation, the former church goers, who dared to attend the church during Communism. They were extremely small in number at that time and even today they constitute a small minority of the current local church membership. Despite of the reasons listed above one must appreciate the little we have at hand produced by theological or historical research. István Bogárdi Szabó's book is a very fine study on the servile theology of the HRC that coined a term "theology of service" to seek the favour of Marxist Communist leaders by distorting the gospel.² Upon this work drew the dissertations of Szilveszter Füsti-Molnár,³ who develops some aspect further and László Gonda's fine work throws light on the missiological consequences of such behaviour.⁴ Recently other like Gabriella Rácsok, Ábrahám Kovács and other wrote articles on the nature of theology and historical events of the Communist period.⁵ As for creating databases Tibor Filep⁶ books contain excellent sources for research. It is also welcome that in Budapest Réka Kiss⁷ and Gábor Lányi⁸ as well as other began to fill the lacuna left open by historians for decades that should have been done at least 20 years ago. All in all, if one looks at the meagre sources of theological and historical research done about the relationship between church and state during Communism with a view to the Legacy of Reformed Church of Hungary the state of research is in a lamentable state for producing so little. However, let us be thankful to the little we have and urge new people to do more research and start discussion about this modern "donatist", ecclesiological issue that might be condensed to the paraphrased Tertullian question: what does a theist, especially a revivalist has to do with an atheist ideology?⁹

Before doing any case studies on the theology, work and life of persons such as Bereczky, Bartha and alike, it is vital to identify the core lines of analysis. As a theologian and historian, I believe it is possible to bring the two disciplines into a fruitful dialogue to wright out a line of analysis. My intention is to create a viable framework of intelligent interpretation that may disclose the complexity of the pending and puzzling question. A more specific research question is: what does the Red Star has to do with Jesus Christ's cross? In order to 'decipher' the phenomenon why 'conversion', change of faith, or shift of allegiances happened as well as collaborations were made, it is of utmost importance to delineate the lines of investigations. Therefore, I seek to sketch out a preliminary framework of reference that may be refined during future research.¹⁰

Creating an Interpretative Framework and the Explanatory Tools for the 'Conversion' Phenomenon

To explain the phenomena that a significant number of *evangelical, pious Christians* became so susceptible to Marxism which was clearly anti-religious, vehemently against Christianity, one needs to set out some lines of investigations. This phenomenon I call a transition from Christianity to Marxism or label as 'conversion', used in a broad sense. I would like to establish three categories that I consider inner (related to modes of thinking of given worldviews, that is their philosophy and theology, the way they articulate their 'dearly held' beliefs), outer (circumstantial, social sensitivity and political views etc.) and the psychological-biographical one. To find possible answers to the why some Christians fully or partially 'converted' to Marxism, that is were willing to collaborate with the very enemy of the church, perhaps it is helpful to state the question differently: What created the „ideological bridge” that one perception of the world led so *smoothly* to the other one. To put it differently: what are the common denominators that both worldview commonly share. If those could be identified, it might be possible to assert and state various results of observations arriving from intellectual reflection as well as deriving from research data.

Inner Categories (modes of thinking, dimensions of religion)

Let me start with the 'inner' categories. Yet, each category may be divided into further subcategories. It is vital to scrutinize the nature of Christian faith and the belief in Communism from a science of religion perspectives that is very much aware of the underlying religious nature of the two inimical worldviews, their philosophical premises, the worldviews expressed in their respective doctrines and the embodied structures (liturgies/ceremonies or the organised forms e.g. 'ecclesiology) of both worldviews out of which one is called a proper religion (Christianity) and the other is a quasi-religion (Marxism with its applied form Communism).

First, I shall argue that both worldviews are deeply religious and even the 'atheist' Marxism could be perceived as a religion. To prove my point I shall use the theoretical tool offered by two famous scholars Paul Tillich and John E. Smith.¹¹ Secondly, when the philosophical-religious (theological) premises of each competing worldviews are examined, it could be discerned that both emphasise a foregone 'truth' before indenting to prove it. Third, their core doctrines seen from a science of religion perspective (eschatology, ecclesiology, soteriology to use terms borrowed from Christian theology) show striking resemblances that, I believe, enable people examined in future case studies, to unconsciously embrace the 'foreign' ideology from their own faith. This realisation might be one of the several factors that created the 'ideological bridge' to ease the decision to accept, collaborate with a similar but not essentially the same ideology/worldview. Fourth, there is a vast literature on the religious nature of Communism when the tomb of Lenin or Ho Shi Minh attracts pilgrims to the 'saint' similar to that of medieval or even contemporary saint of the Catholic church. Not only on conceptual level but also on its physical embodiments, the phenomenon of humans creating religion(s) in the Feuerbachian or Barthian sense may be discerned.¹² Of course, here one may list many other features of religious practices such as worship, devotion, gatherings and alike that are in nature very similar to one another when Communism and Christianity with its cultural form, Christendom is compared.

Outer categories (historical, political and social elements)

The other outer factors are circumstantial, that is the historical, political, and social contexts may make a vital and lasting impact on both levels, individual and communal. Even the latter may be unpeeled as an onion that one's own family, larger church context and national circumstance may be studied in relation to each of the other layers plus to the individual life. These mutually interactive relations, realms or spheres may produce one's own life story in its entirety. In this regard it is really revealing to see how Gábor Lányi's slowly and steadfastly attempts to uncover the social and political aspects of Bereczky's life that may have a bearing, in fact, I would also intuitively say, a vital imprint on the theology and actions of this former revivalist.

Psychological-Biographical Category

Finally, there are overarching lines/structures and modes of being underlying any persons' life story when he or she is subject to any case study, that is the psychological make up of a person. What makes this perspective even more difficult to grasp and analysis, if there are written sources remaining at all, that a person's personality, and psychological make-up may also evolve during his or her life time.¹³ Therefore to grasp the essence(s) of how one's spirituality/theology/ even changing worldview is formed by his psychological determinative factor inherited from parents seems to be an impossible task to identify. Yet, if certain characteristics may be established such as vanity, desire of power, desperate search for glory, having sense of being elected/chosen or other features such as a coercion to prove something due to childhood experiences as it is in the case of Bereczky, as Lányi points it out, the very complex phenomenon of 'conversion' from one perception of the world to the other may be explicable and might provide comprehensible possible explanations for one's action.

After outlining the inner, outer and an psychological-biological categories, that creates an overarching bridge even between the categories flowing into both directions, I intend to begin to tackle one of the first crucial issues, that is a claim: communism may be perceived as a religion like Christianity, or its Reformed realisation, and if so, I believe that Marxism and Christian theology

is comparable to a certain degree. In consequence, bridges may be discovered which enabled the 'conversion' of revivalist to Marxist ideology.

Some Inner Categories Unfolded

A Philosophical and Phenomenological Approach. The Possibility of Building Bridges

From a religious studies perspective, the vital issue at stake for scholars of science of religion is what constitutes religion. Let us first examine the theory of John. E. Smith about quasi-religions may provide useful ground for comparison.¹⁴ Then, we try to see whether Ninian Smart's model of seven dimensions of religion is applicable to both worldviews dealing with the first, I shall offer a definition of religion in order to articulate what constitutes a quasi-religion, then we move on to identifying one of the dimensions of proper religion in Christianity and Marxism.¹⁵ I assert that a philosophical and phenomenological approach to understanding religion provides a basis when a definition of religion is reached for comparison. John E. Smith wrote that religion is "*an expression of human response to the sacred, transcendent or whatever reality regarded as ultimate and worthy of an unconditional devotion*".¹⁶ Smith also stated proper religion is "*an enduring facet of experience that concerns what is believed to be the reality on which human life and destiny ultimately depend*".¹⁷ What did he do in fact? He rephrased what theology addresses as God question and brought it into the discussion. Smith endeavoured to create a definition where he introduced skilfully the notion of transcendent through the notion of the sacred, a truly religious, theist concept. Here the Transcendent of a philosophical phenomenology could be equated by the God concept of Christian theology. But by changing the naming of the subject matter, he was able to prove his point.

It is well known that Christian theology perceives God as an infinite, transcendent being, and carefully developed a highly complex system of speaking about God. It is also true that Marxism as an ideology did not have a God. It was openly atheistic. Therefore, it looks like that the two are not comparable at all. One is a religion, a proper religion the other is an ideology, or a quasi-religion as Smith calls it that is a crucial difference for many at first sight. Before jumping

into hasty conclusion of agreeing with this assertion, it is indispensable to see the innate nature and structures of a worldview, be it a religion, or an ideology. I believe that there is far more in Smith's definition of religion what comes to the fore at first sight. Paying close attention to the way Smith articulated his concept, one realizes the significance of the second part of the definition which states that *reality regarded as Ultimate is often perceived worthy of an unconditional devotion by the adherent of a religion/religious tradition*. And we may add: this is also true for any ideology, or worldview. This second clause provides the ground for comparison since this is inherent in the 'philosophical/theological' structure of both Christianity and communism. It is still worth unveiling the concept further. Let me make some other useful remarks and make some statements.

I seek to offer a definition of quasi-religion that dismisses 'religious language', leaves the theological notion of God, or philosophical concept of Transcendent behind in order to decipher one of the tool through which it might be plain and intelligible why some evangelical Christians moved so easily from a devoted from of Christianity to Communism. Following Paul Tillich's conceptualisation, it is asserted that quasi-religion is a state of being seized by an Ultimate Concern, a deeply held belief which relegates all other concerns of life to subsidiary status and at the same time it encloses the only answer to the true meaning of a real life.¹⁸ Consequently that such concern must be observed with utmost gravity, and exhibits an all surpassing willingness to sacrifice any secondary concerns, which is in conflict with the Ultimate Concern. The embodiment of this philosophical-theological notion appear in evangelical songs like "all to Jesus I surrender", or Communist songs when an adherent of religion is submitting his will to the 'Cause', that of the party with capital C.¹⁹

If religion proper and quasi-religion are understood as proposed above by Smith, then one is able to demonstrate that there is no essential difference in this regard, from an 'objective'/outer science of religion perspective between conceptualisation of certain key concerns of Christian religion and communism. Since there is a great resemblance between how (not what) they articulate the Ultimate Concern, and the core of their innate 'philosophical concept' about life and society, and the solutions they offer, their answers may also be compared. This leads me to state that both communism and Christianity exhibit what could be termed as 'religious nature of a given worldview, or philosophy of life' regardless how the adherent, the insider perceives and labels his or her view about life.

Seven Dimensions of Religion. Comparability, the Issue of the Possibility of an Unconscious Bridge building

Having established what religion is, that has built a bridge for comparison between Christianity and Marxism, it is worth digging into deeper level that examines what constitutes a religion both in theory and practice. To realise how other kind of inner categories may click very well in world inhabited by special outlook on the world by each 'religion' Christianity and Marxism, I call as an aide the theory of Ninian Smart.²⁰ He enlists seven dimensions of a religion, which I believe are easily applicable to Christianity too.²¹ These are the followings. First, *Ritual entails* Forms and orders of ceremonies (private and/or public). These are often regarded as revealed. Second dimension is named as *narrative and mythic*. *This meant* stories (often regarded as revealed) that work on several levels. Sometimes narratives fit together into a fairly complete and systematic interpretation of the universe and humans placed in it. The third aspect is coined as *experiential and emotional feature of religion*. *Here are the words, that provided common ground such as* dread, guilt, awe, mystery, devotion, liberation, ecstasy, inner peace, bliss are crucial. The fourth dimension is constituted of *social and institutional aspects*. *It means that a* belief system is shared and attitudes practiced by a group. Often rules for identifying community membership and participation (public). Fifth dimension contains the *ethical and legal features*. *These are* rules about human behaviour (often regarded as revealed from supernatural realm). Sixth dimension is *doctrinal and philosophical*: systematic formulation of religious teachings in an intellectually coherent form. Finally the seventh dimension is labelled as *material*. *This is one of the forms of embodiments*. *It refers to* ordinary objects or places that symbolize or manifest the sacred or supernatural. As mentioned above, any of these categories are capable to building the 'ideological bridge' between Christianity and Marxism without the person really noticing it. Nonetheless, I do not intend to deal with all of these here. Out of these dimensions Smith and Tillich dealt with the philosophical, I may add the philosophical phenomenological aspect. Now, I single out one striking feature of each worldview, Christianity and Marxism that is almost a backbone of their respective teaching, eschatological soteriology. I try to spell out the features and characteristics of this special doctrine.

Exclusivism as one of the dimensions: A common ground for creating an ideological bridge

First of all, let me state that exclusivism is a common trait of both 'religion. Each has an exceptionally strong tendency for perceiving itself the only and just form of solution for the problem they variously state in regard to the state and life of humankind. This tendency had deadly and sad consequences within each respective tradition. Various other interpretations of Marxist ideology were severely persecuted by the party in the same fashion as Christians did it through centuries if they were found to be different from the official and orthodox doctrine.²² This propensity towards exclusivist radicalism is a typical trait of Judeo-Christian worldview which also gave religious tint to Marxism. Scholars often argue that Marx could not deny his Jewish background, the very world that shaped his mental map. Both Christianity and communism as an applied form of Marxism, laid an extreme importance on the correct understanding of its core doctrine, which in turn had affected all other dimensions of their worldview. On the one hand this is also an aspect why the two are excluding one another for the adherent, the insider of those 'religions' can only belong to one of the worldviews. On the other hand, from the outsider's perspective of scholar of science of religion the nature of this concern, the fiercely held exclusivist 'love' for one's own view, is strikingly similar. Besides the strong belief in the Ultimate Reality (whatever is meant by that) there is also a feature that both commonly share. They are missionary worldviews.

Missionary Feature as a Common Point: Being Convinced and Sent to Convert

The missiological aspect of making the world a better place is a key concept in each worldview, Marxism and Christianity. Therefore, we have another aspect that explains why a „theoretical bridge” could have easily construed in 'converts mind' when a staunch evangelical person met with Marxism. It is also deeply imbued by a form of eschatology. Here we confine ourselves to the most essential teachings of both 'religions', which were valued highly as treasure by its ardent followers. Let me make some observations. First, the truth discovered about the

Ultimate Concern as the only Reality made a profound impact on its believers who felt constrained to share the 'good news' by all means, regardless whether the people wished to hear it or not.²³ Second, sharing the same linear concept of human history an eschatological flavour was lent to their discovery of truth. In consequence the 'message' of the discovered truth had to be proclaimed to all the people. It was an innate coercion that the followers felt in their heart to do so. In both 'missionary traditions', it was assumed that people must hear what they discovered as a treasured, dear truth since they 'lived in darkness'.

Then comes the question: how did this missionary fervour manifest itself in both traditions, do they speak about the same issue? Here the often illusive term of Christian theology, the multi-layered 'Kingdom of God' language comes afore that brought Christian faith often into trouble. It has been claimed that not only the 'God'/main Cause concept of each worldview shows a totalitarian characteristics such as totality of a religion (Christianity) or an ideology (Marxism) but also both claim the entire life of the devotee. These 'religions' demand a full, an entirely focused devotion. At the same they both believe to work for the betterment (regardless how and whatever is understood by them) of people and society. In other words, we save you even if you wish it or not. In this regard communism and Christendom, that is the contextualised and cultural embodiment of Christian faith, shows striking resemblances. Each has a vision of paradise like final, ideal state of society. Although, it must be underlined that they employ different languages for instance: Kingdom of God, or classless society. Studying their texts it is possible to assume that the eschatological nature of their vision is comparable. Finally, it is shocking to see the radicalism of the most committed members who were willing to surround everything to achieve and accomplish the reckoned aim/target of equal, idealised society prompted by the Ultimate Reality.

I singled out some features from the inner categories, also used one aspect of Smart's dimensions (the sixth, the doctrinal one) to underline the possible points of contacts that may provide an ideological bridge that made the impossible possible, that Jerusalem may have a lot to do with Athens, depending on the perspective how the life and work such person like János Péter is explained and interpreted. If we add certain outer categories to these doctrinal elements like the radical social teachings of Jesus, they may also be compared to the radical reforms of Marxism. In so doing another bridge is discernible that enable revivalist

to connect to Marxist ideas. Initially they, as devout Christians, had a healthy social sensitivity to care for the masses, the people, the ordinary. They often exhibited a far better social care than those fellow Christians who were often on the scale of political right. However, it is crucial to avoid oversimplification that many right wing, patriotic revivalist were also really social sensitive too. What I am claiming here is that in certain cases people with leanings towards leftist political agendas may or might have found elements to grasp upon, to hold on and subconsciously reacted to a sympathetic leftist ideology. They may have done so without noticing that, when the extreme form of Marxism was being put into practice in the 1940s, communist party members were a danger for Christian faith rather than a common friend.

Kingdom of Theist and Atheist 'Gods': Attempts Recover the Paradise Lost?

Following the line of argumentation of Paul Tillich and John E. Smith, if we compare both religious entities, that is Christianity and communism) and perceive them as comparable worldviews, we may be able to analyse conceptualisations such as how the ideal society is envisioned in both „models”. The both use a „religious concept and paint a picture of an ideal society, that is the “Kingdom of God” of language for Christians and the final stage of history, the communism paradise of the Marxist. Both worldviews really hoped and worked for the final victory of the God/god/ Ultimate Concern. All was surrendered so as to achieve the high end. Once this observation accepted the remaining intriguing question is how did selected persons in a future case study (such bishops János Péter, Albert Bereczky and alike understood the term „Kingdom of God”, and how that concept related to a similar view of Hungarian communist. This could be a really interesting line of investigation as an inner category. To this connects one religious feature of both worldview that is their deeply eschatological nature.

Before making some other observations about eschatology, I need to draw attention to the psychological make-up of persons who are susceptible to such views. It would be revealing to study what kind of psychological characters are drawn into this form of religiosity, spirituality where this feature so prevailing and dominant. It is enough here to stay also the interrelatedness of the inner

categories to the psychological-biographical categories and acknowledge the interwoven aspect of these categories.

Eschatological Feature of both Respective Religion: Another Commonly Shared Ground

It is also argued that eschatology is one of the most essential aspects of the doctrinal dimension not only of a religion proper, Christianity but that of a quasi-religion, Marxism and its inculturated form, communism. My intention is to shed light on how remarkably similar characteristics exist between an atheist ideology, dialectical materialism of communism and theist religion, Christianity. I believe this is one of the inner categories/elements that formed a „theoretical bridge“ for individuals to shift so easily from a theist worldview to an atheist ideology. For Christians the Kingdom of God with its strong eschatological flavour has always been a challenge. Calvinist Puritans produced an Oliver Cromwell who sought to establish in a sense the Kingdom of God on earth, a desire that Jesus warned us not to do so. However, this resulted in a good endeavour that paved the way from a tyrannical feudal system to a democratic governance of state. Even the name of the state, ‘Godly commonwealth’ bears testimony to this dream. To some degree the Anabaptist movement of Thomas Münzer may be also regarded as an endeavour to form God’s kingdom on earth. Of course, human beings are always willing to ‘help’ God to establish such kingdom. It is certain human beings’ vanity. Especially of those who feel themselves ‘called or chosen’. Finally, to cite a third example, the American puritans put it into practice what Cromwell desired. A new democratic state was formed but sadly it is often forgotten fact that it was accomplished at the expenses of indigenous North American native. There has been an Indian holocaust too.²⁴ Eschatological kingdoms hastened by human beings always come at a great costs of other peoples’ live that is, often silenced as a topic. Making these remarks one may ask the question: is it possible to believe that the Kingdom of God could be realised, materialised on earth, in our very context, country England, Germany, New England (The Americas), or Hungary perhaps Korea? Furthermore, a question raises itself before us: how it is best to understand the Kingdom of God as a place, or communist paradise? Can someone find a good balance to believe strongly in the possibility of a paradise

like human state that we partially did achieve with modern democracy and yet be aware of the fact that it cannot be fully accomplished in its ideal form in this world.

Cromwell's, Münzer's, or Bereczky's inappropriate understandings of the gospel missed the dynamics and tension embedded in Jesus' prophetic, wise and smart language. They all lacked to make a sharp distinction between the desired aim and the extent of the possibility to realise that. For some minds throughout history, especially for those individuals (being felt sent/called by God, destined to be a leaders) it caused a problem to realise the double layer of understanding of 'already here' and 'not yet realised' dialectical aspect of the Kingdom of God language.²⁵ These two trends, the thoughts of already here and not yet realised, has to be held *harmoniously together* in a dialectical fruitful tension. If it is done so, then it is adequately dealt with. Otherwise this may prove to be a test of failure for those leaders who did not grasp the inner meaning of this religious-philosophical deep truth.

The Temptation of Recovering the Paradise Lost

Once the point I have been explicating is grasp, it is easy to see the similarity of the mistakes committed by Christians and Marxists. The borders of an earthly kingdom (state, country) and the envisioned, desired „Kingdom of God”, or name it as classless society, that is, the „paradise” are *entirely overlapping*, indeed they are identical *for the Communist and some misled Christians who were willing to collaborate with the Marxist, atheist state*. This gross error led to various forms of totalitarianism in various periods of Christendom and during Marxist communism. Both claimed to work for of absolute goodness for the people, and on behalf of people, and did attempt to justify their means of achieving their dreams and visions. This falsely held belief may have been one of the ideological bridges which enabled the shift for individuals to smoothly change the tracks at the „reckoned points of meetings/ where crossroads meet”. *In such manner conversion may have taken place from Christianity to communism*. Perhaps this also accounts partially for the shift, transition from Evangelical Reformed Christianity to a secularist, Marxist ideology. Research may prove this theoretical assumption. Finally when comparing the two 'religions', it is vital to underline that in both cases state and religion overlapped.

Another Common Feature of Envisioned Eschatological „Kingdom“. The State and Church Will be One

Some questions may be posed for further research in this regard: What does a Christian mean by Kingdom of God, especially when it is applied to the „tangible“ form of its realisation in society? How Marxism speaks about the paradise-like state of human society? What are the key words they keep reciting? These are: equality (rights, goods etc.), all needs will be satisfied. Each worldview promised a kind of happiness that reigns forever and alike. While it is possible to discern some similarities, it is vital to underline that there are, of course, crucial distinctions between Marxist and Christian faith. First of all, Marxism is atheist whereas Christianity is theist. Secondly, Marxism endeavoured to eliminate all other worldviews, whereas biblical Christian faith did allow for other views regardless what it thought about them. Christianity always had a room for other views.²⁶ Third, Marxism is not interested in a human being, however, Christian faith really cares for not only for the material well-being of a person (see Jesus' social teaching in the Sermon on the Mount) but also attempts to understand human soul, suffering, sin and offer a salvation the in its core entirely differs from the salvific intention of Marxism. It is imperative for evangelical and biblical Reformed faith to acknowledge that while Marxist (Communist) may believe not only in the possibility of being able to realise the „kingdom of god“ (Marxist ideology) but also hold that it they can make it happen on earth in history. Christians should be aware of the danger and avoid the false belief that they (human element is valued so high) are able to achieve the fullness of Kingdom of God (personal or societal level) in this world (earth, history, their own country, context).

Let me make some observations about the nature both worldviews. Albeit, one system of belief allows for the possibility of „material“ realisation of earthly paradise in the literal sense. But neither (Communism truly and falsely understood Christianity too) takes it into account *the nature of human sin, and the corruptibility of human nature*. A Crucial difference flows from this. While a Christian can be accountable for holding a wrong view, i.e. belief in the goodness/ability of human beings (individual) to make a paradise like state, „a reality on earth“, communist cannot since they do believe in the goodness of human beings. In sum, although their eschatology may show striking similarities for a religious studies scholars

doing a comparative historical phenomenology but it is clear for theologians who may employ comparative religion/theology and other scholars of various fields that their anthropologies are very different!

Outer categories history, social and political contexts

So far the lecture threw light on how many features of inner categories may provide 'ideological bridges' for Christians to connect to Marxism. These enabled the Reformed revivalist to step into a strange ideological marriage. It has been pointed out but not proved that the psychological-biographical category may deliver some revealing result after an in-depth investigation. Now it is time to turn attention to some outer categories that may also offer some points of connection and explain the reason why some top evangelical Reformed Christian leaders gladly and easily received and even welcome communism in Hungary. It is important to contend that home mission societies such as Bible and Tract societies, YMCA, Sunday School movements, orphanages, revivalist societies like Bethany C.E., medical and diaconal societies or Soli Deo Gloria, the student movement as well as national organisations for ministers and elders did provide a para organisation structures for individuals who did not find a place in traditional ecclesiastical hierarchy but felt called to do something great for the church. Of course, this is not the only and by far not the main reason why many talented persons joined such movements but it is a fact that these parallel structures did offer a ground to be known nationally and be recognised as a respectable leader of a religious community. Secondly, voluntarism was a typical trait of these organisations where the most devout and committed members joined hand in hand not only for saving the lost, the sinful people spiritually in the name of Christ, but also exhibited a strong social sensitivity to the poor, the needy and the marginalised. This feature Christian faith brought them into the same camp with atheist, socialist or communist. Therefore, there was a bridge, a common point for those Christians who finally later left biblical Christian faith. Yes, I dare to claim that some of the top leaders not only distorted but falsified the gospel with the 'theology of service'.²⁷ They did cross the Rubicon to a degree that their theology cannot be called Christian from a faith point of view. The social drive of evangelicals and socialist prompted them to work for an eschatological end,

that is, a classless society/Kingdom of God, where people are equal. Although it needs to be emphasised that they do differ on what theoretical (ethical, spiritual, philosophical) basis they envision upon which to build their vision/dream.

Concluding thoughts

Taking all into consideration, the inner, the psychological-biographical categories as well as the outer social categories did provide enough room for non-vigilant Christians to be attracted too close to a form of Marxism that was in fact seeking to eliminate Christian faith. As to the fact why revivalist Christian leaders like Bereczky, Péter, Bartha or Fekete collaborated with the atheist state a researcher needs to ask various questions mentioned in this lecture, and use archival resources, oral history analyse them. At the same time they need to, theorise, theologize and dare to make conclusions even if those may be painful. The crucial question, that keeps coming back, is whether it is possible to hold them Christian faith and Marxism together or such Christians, who experienced another conversion, should have left either Christian faith or Marxism. To understand their motivations, intentions and urge for leadership a researcher need to make the following steps.

Personal stories need to be examined how their life stories evolved in Hungarian Reformed Christianity. He or she needs to be aware of the fact that socialism should not be confused with Marxism and its extreme applied forms of Communism. It is vital to identify areas where Christian Socialism rhymes with the biblical teaching of Jesus. However, differences must be pointed out too. The researcher needs to analyse the reasons for the failure of the *established church* to reach out to the masses. Therefore, an in-depth research needs to be carried out how pseudo-feudal-capitalism system between the two world wars prompted parachurch organisations to care for the needy. In other words, what evangelical-pietist managed to do in this regard and how they succeeded in their missions, and at the same time what is the reason why the official church failed. A scholar also needs to study the relation of Home Missionary organisations and spiritual revival and its activist aspect. Finally, the researcher must try to grasp, delineate the individual character of persons from a psychological point of view even if it is difficult. However, if archival materials are available (letters, diaries, notes

etc.) it might be attempted. To these relate further sub-questions: what kind of personalities of people were attracted to leadership, why they felt the need to persuade other to their deeply held belief, and what was the drive that made them willing to do activism. With these reflections I had hoped to sketch out the lines of investigations and attempted to create a theoretical framework that may offer interpretative tools for understanding one of the most painful and complex time of Christian church where unprecedented 'conversions' happened among top Reformed Hungarian revivalist.

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A far too eloquent silence

Karl Barth's inexplicable
reluctance to address or
comment the bloody
avengement of the Hungarian
Freedom Fight in 1956

The present paper touches upon Reinhold Niebuhr's open letter addressed to Karl Barth following the putting down of the Hungarian freedom fight against the Communist regime. Niebuhr's letter entitled 'Why is Barth silent on Hungary?' was published on 23 January 1957 in *The Christian Century*. I intend to pursue an analysis of Barth's inexplicable silence over the issue, including his outspokenness during the Second World War as well as the similarly striking attitude of his disciple Josef Lukl Hromádka. The attitude of these theologians can indeed be contrasted by the shocking abnegation of two declared, yet deeply indignant Communists: Jean-Paul Sartre and Peter Fryer. It appears that Barth's image as a systematic theologian – and especially as a Christian ethicist – may have to be partially re-evaluated by and for contemporary theologians.

The Hungarian uprising against Communism and the US reaction in 1956

Having been 'sold out' again by the world's superpowers to the Soviet Empire at the end of the Second World War, ordinary Hungarians began their move towards freedom by a peaceful march of protest on 23 October 1956. By 'selling

out' I mean for example the shameful backdoor deals cut between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin during their consultations on 4–11 February 1945 in Yalta, Crimea.

One of the firm demands of the 1956 Hungarian Freedom Fight was the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. Stalin's statue was indeed demolished by the demonstrators, but it is important to mention that mostly tin heads were rolling at the time in Budapest and in the country. A new government was set up, and for a few days it seemed that the country may return to some form of democracy, or at least to take the first steps towards it. The initially hesitant Soviet leadership, however, being reassured by the USA that no intervention of 'the free world' was to be expected, ordered a full scale Russian military attack upon Hungary on 4 November, which ended the freedom fight in a massive bloodbath in a few days. Retaliations of an almost unprecedented cruelty were soon to follow. The US betrayed Hungary yet again. In order to substantiate the extent of this betrayal, we need to quote the address of Hon. Michael A. Feighan, US Representative of the 20th Ohio District, uttered on 31 August 1960 in the House of Representatives under the title *The Captive Nations – Key to Peace*:

Khrushchev proclaims that the Monroe Doctrine no longer exists because the new Russian ruling class refuses to recognize its claims. By this he means that the entire world is his bowl of cherries and he will pick the cherry he feels is ripe regardless of in whose orchard it grows. What a contrast this is to the action taken by our State Department 'Soviet Experts' at the time of the Hungarian Freedom Revolution. You will recall the revolution broke out on October 23, 1956, and that by October 28, the Hungarian patriots had rid their country of the Russian oppressors. A revolutionary regime took over and there was a political hiatus for 5 days. Then the State Department, allegedly concerned about the delicate feelings of the Communist dictator Tito, sent him the following cabled assurance of our national intentions in the late afternoon of Friday, November 2, 1956: 'The Government of the United States does not look with favor upon governments unfriendly to the Soviet Union on the borders of the Soviet Union.'

It was no accident or misjudgment of consequences which led the imperial Russian Army to reinvade Hungary at 4 a.m. on the morning of November 4, 1956. The cabled message to Tito was the go ahead

signal to the Russians, because any American schoolboy knows that Tito is Moscow's Trojan horse. It took less than 48 hours for him to relay this message of treason to his superiors in the Kremlin. All the world knows the terrible consequences of that go ahead signal. This act of infamy was buried in the noise of the 1956 presidential campaign and the moral revulsion which followed in the wake of our failure to respond to freedoms call in captive Hungary. As we approach the promised new era in the conduct of our international affairs, I suggest the time is opportune for a full scale, bipartisan congressional investigation of this infamy. This would provide an appropriate answer to Khrushchev's rejection of the Monroe Doctrine.¹

To keep the record straight, the telegraphic message was transmitted by none else than John Foster Dulles, the then US Secretary of State and brother of Allen Welsh Dulles, the then head of the Central Intelligence Agency. One does not need any conspiracy theories upon facing blatant facts, and although this is not the main theme of our paper, the utter importance and disastrous consequences of this message cannot be overstated.² The mere silence of the US State Department would have been better for Hungary than the above quoted dispatch to Tito, which was considered a 'go ahead signal' and 'infamy' even by US political representatives. The message was also labelled as being 'cruel' by Frank A. Sedita, mayor of Buffalo, who also called for a bipartisan congressional investigation of the entire event in order to 'clear away the dark clouds of doubt which hang heavy over our national honor'.³

The sheer brutality of the Soviet military aggression dismissed any remnants of Eastern or Western illusions concerning the alleged 'humanoid' face of Communism – well, at least in the hearts and minds of decent thinkers. As Reinhold Niebuhr, a minister, theologian and philosopher who himself had been deeply involved in promoting Christian 'leftist' ideas concerning the assurance of social justice for working classes in Detroit, aptly put it:

Their [i.e. Hungarians'] revolution was suppressed in a bloodbath which has destroyed permanently whatever prestige still adhered to the Communist ideology in Eastern Europe and among the intellectuals and neutralist theologians of the Continent.⁴

Surprising 'defections' from the international Communist camp

We mentioned 'decent thinkers', and this circle does not exclude people with leftist or even Communist attitudes. Perhaps one of the most famous western defectors from the Communist camp was Jean-Paul Sartre, who on 9 November 1956 declared:

What the Hungarian people teach us with their blood is the complete bankruptcy of socialism as a commodity imported from U.S.S.R. [...] I condemn the Soviet invasion wholeheartedly and without any reservation. Without putting any responsibility onto the Russian people, I nevertheless insist that its current government has committed a crime. [...] I entirely regret my relations with my friends, the Soviet writers, who do not denounce (or cannot denounce) the massacre in Hungary. One can no longer be a friend of the ruling faction of the Soviet bureaucracy: it is horror that dominates.⁵

The other western Communist author, Peter Fryer, correspondent of the *London Daily Worker*, having realised that the reports he had sent from Budapest were entirely distorted and published as such by his own newspaper, indignantly left the *London Daily Worker*, and presented the reasons for his decision in two other publications, i.e. *Daily Express* and *Manchester Guardian* respectively:

For almost nine years I was proud to work for the *Daily Worker*. But no journalist can continue to work for a newspaper which sends him for a major foreign assignment and refuses to use what he writes. I am therefore compelled to resign from the *Daily Worker* and to seek other means of putting the truth about events in Hungary before British Communists and Socialists. This was my fourth visit to Hungary since 1949. I spent over a fortnight there, and I am convinced that Soviet intervention was both criminal and unnecessary. [...] I will fight inside the Party for a return to socialist principles, for political honesty, and for real international solidarity. [...] Only in this way can we hope to cleanse from the British Communist Party the stain of having defended in Eastern Europe oppression no less brutal than, say, British rule in Kenya: and of defending Soviet aggression in Hungary while deploring British aggression in Egypt.⁶

Fryer's previous boss launched a ferocious counterattack. Nonetheless, having been an eyewitness of what Soviet retaliation means, Fryer could not abstain from unmasking the policy of systematic misinformation carried out by the *London Daily Worker* and replied on a much wider scale in the *New Statesman*:

From start to finish the *Daily Worker* – or rather the Stalinists who control it – has lied, lied, lied about Hungary. It printed a gruesome photograph of a lynched man under the headline: *The White Terror in Hungary*, implying that he was an ordinary Communist Party member, whereas there was in the office another photograph of the same corpse, taken from a different angle, which showed that he was wearing ÁVO [Communist Secret Police] uniform. The *Daily Worker* cynically declares that for the Soviet Union to have 'refused' to intervene would have been 'inhuman' and that by denying this I am 'quite obvious to reality'. After what I saw of the bravery, the sufferings and the sacrifices of the heroic people in the face, of terrible odds, this insult to their gallantry and to their 20,000 dead sickens me. Shame on a newspaper which can spit on a nation's anguish and grief. Shame on Party leaders who can justify with smooth clichés and lies the massacre and martyrdom of a proud and indomitable people. These leaders are wholly discredited; they have abandoned socialist principles; they are destroying the Communist Party as a political force. They must be removed quickly, if the Communist Party is to hold its head up once more before the British people.⁷

As one may observe from the above, falsehood is not the exclusive privilege of Eastern Communists. Alas, nor is the application of double standards. No decent person could remain silent upon witnessing the Hungarian uprising and its aftermath. Even British Communists came to condemn the mercilessness of Soviet retribution. It is therefore a rather difficult task for any Hungarian, especially for members of the Hungarian Reformed Church in the Carpathian Basin to digest the reaction of two prominent contemporary theologians, namely that of Karl Barth and Josef Lukl Hromádka.

Barth's reaction: silence, double standards and/or neutrality?

Apart from his *Church Dogmatics*, the fame of Karl Barth was established by his staunch resistance to and relentless assaults upon Hitler's Nazi regime and ideology. Without trying to diminish his efforts to bring one of the greatest perils against humankind to an end, it is perhaps time to review some of the key moments of this resistance, to put all details into perspective. After having contributed to a great extent towards the formulation of the *Barmen Theological Declaration* in 1934, Barth loses his professorship in Köln in 1935 – evidently as a retaliation from the Nazi regime. On 8 July 1935, however, Barth immediately accepts the special invitation to become a professor in Basel and leaves Germany for good. This choice is understandable, himself being a Swiss, yet from that moment onwards he could criticise any regime – Nazi or Communist – from a truly safe haven. So in that respect his 'resistance' could and should not be likened whatsoever to that of other theologians, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), who chose to stay on and resist Hitler from within the Third Reich.

The move to Basel put Barth in a peculiarly privileged position. He was given a practically unique and equidistant perspective from a neutral Switzerland to assess the rising and destructive force of both Fascist and Communist systems. Our main question at this point is: Was his assessment of the two regimes also balanced and equally critical? Could he make the best of this point of observation? Well, on the one hand, on 19 September 1938, Barth addressed his faithful Czech disciple, Josef Lukl Hromádka in a widely publicised letter in the following manner:

Every Czech soldier who fights [against Nazi Germany] and suffers will be doing so for us too, and – I say this without reservation – he will also be doing it *for the Church of Jesus*, which in the atmosphere of Hitler and Mussolini must become the victim of either ridicule or extermination.⁸

Needless to say, had Barth written these famous lines from within Germany, he would not have lived to see the end of the Second World War. Probably not even its beginning in earnest. On the other hand, however, Barth did not write anything about the Hungarian freedom fight in 1956, although he was in Switzerland like

in 1938 and had absolutely no reason to worry about any threat upon his life and safety. That is why he was critiqued by Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Christian Century* on 23 January 1957.⁹ Barth's rather solemn and theologically quite audacious declaration, namely that every Czech soldier resisting Hitler in 1938 would be fighting 'for the Church of Jesus' stays in sharp contrast with his silence eighteen years later, when another military giant, the Soviet Union, mounted a ferocious attack upon a similarly small country (i.e. Hungary). Without trying to be pathetic, this silence in itself begs the question: The young students, workers, peasants, intellectuals and teenagers of Hungary butchered by the Soviet tanks had not been fighting at all 'for the Church of Jesus'? Is this some theological amnesia or inconsistency on Barth's part or is this double standard a key element of his system of ethical and political thought? To put it in simplest terms: was the godless, anti-religious and anti-Christian international Communism as bad as Fascism in Barth's eyes or not?¹⁰ Sadly, his own words provide us with the answer:

Russia and America are both in different ways children of Europe. [...] They have both suddenly grown into giants, who each in his own way would like to be patron, benefactor and protector of Europe. Both are afraid of encirclement by the other. [...] One must concede that the anxiety of the Eastern giant is better founded than that of the Western giant, when one considers the total ring of Western bastions. [...] The church must concern itself with political systems, not in terms of principles but as seen in the light of the Word of God. It must reject every effort to systematize political history and must look at every event afresh.¹¹

It is amply clear that for Barth the atheistic and inhuman nature of totalitarian Communism and Fascism cannot be rendered as being equally dangerous, which is par excellence an arbitrary as well as untenable ethical position, if not a very slippery slope in itself.¹² One has to be utterly ignorant of the reality of the Gulags and of everyday life in the Eastern Block behind the iron curtain to formulate such preposterous statements. Moreover, Barth's theological argument may seem indeed appealing in the sense that the church 'must look at every event afresh' in the light of the Word of God. Let us do exactly that by asking the question: how should one proceed based on this advice? To begin with, any honest reader of the Word of God may find it difficult to appraise how e.g. the

aggression of Hitler's war machine against other countries during the war and the USSR's bloody retaliation against Hungary in November 1956 respectively could be assessed as being fundamentally different on an ethical level on the basis of the commandment concerning the love of one's neighbour. To quote a practical example: how is it possible to reach different conclusions concerning the above events based on a concrete admonition from the Word of God? The message seems to be clear enough:

Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.¹³

Having been brought up in Communist Romania led by a fierce dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, I am more than aware how the constant application of double standards can become a principle of governance over the country and over the controlled minds of its citizens – exactly by looking at every event afresh. As grandmothers in Hungary and Transylvania used to say: 'the first invaders of our homeland, who raped us, were the ugly Nazi Fascists. The second invaders, who raped us again, however, were the Soviet heroes, our glorious liberators'. The most ridiculous or rather tragicomic aspect of the story: this was the official assessment of the events of the Second World War by the governing Communist parties both in Hungary and Romania (and in every other country which had been sold to the USSR in Yalta). Pensions to WW2 veterans in Romania were given only to those who fought on the Soviet side; the soldiers, who had been enrolled in the armies of the losing side and came home with serious wounds and/or disabilities were ignored or labelled as traitors.

These Communist leaders looked at every event afresh – indeed, not in the light of the Word of God – and reached as well as publicised opposing judgments concerning the brutality of Nazi and Soviet military forces respectively. How can, then, a theologian, well versed in the Bible, look at every event afresh – this time in the light of the Word of God – and not reach an equally condemning position concerning both types of oppression, as a matter of unavoidable consequence, but rather apply the same double standards as both Fascist and Communist leaders have done instead? This is the insoluble dilemma concerning Barth's

rather problematic ethical stance, and in spite of repeated attempts to absolve him, the best one can bring forward is a few attenuating circumstances like his efforts to assist Christian ministers who emigrated from or rather fled Eastern European countries. The basic error, however, persists in his wilful choice to ignore the seriousness of left-wing extremism in comparison to the horrors of right-wing terror. That is why Reinhold Niebuhr's words still hit home:

Without the guidance of principles and looking at every event afresh in the light of the Word of God, Barth comes to the capricious conclusion that Communism is not as bad as Nazism because it is not anti-Semitic. [...] A little concern for 'principles' would have instructed Barth that some of the barbarism of Nazism was derived from the same monopoly of irresponsible power from which the barbarism of Communism is derived. Looking at every event afresh means that one is ignorant about the instructive, though inexact, analogies of history which the 'godless' scientists point out for our benefit.¹⁴

If one takes a glance back to Barth's attitude towards resistance and fleeing one's homeland upon encountering the Nazi terror, another interesting aspect arises. In 1938, Barth replied angrily to Hungarian theologian Béla Vassady, who had asked his advice concerning what true German Christians should do in the event of being called to arms. Should they desert their country? According to Barth's reply,

Neither the acceptance of divinely appointed government, nor the correctly interpreted love of the Fatherland can force any German person to participate in a war initiated and enforced by Hitler. Whoever intends to take part in it, will do it for other reasons.¹⁵

Albeit 'desertion' was Barth's very first choice upon facing the first hindrance – not yet of his life, but only of his career! – by the Nazi regime in 1935, he still felt justified in imagining even a mass exodus of a whole German nation from their homeland in order to avoid being enrolled in 1938, i.e. three years later, under a much more strengthened and authoritarian regime. Due to lack of space we cannot provide a full analysis of this rather interesting exchange. Vassady's

courteous reply, however, proved to be spot on not only at the time, but in much later periods as well:

My dear Colleague, please consider these questions as asked by a friend, who understands your political theology entirely, but at the same time considers that the concrete question at hand is far more complicated to the extent that the arguments of your simplified political theology are incapable to calm the nationally and racially involved people.¹⁶

It is perhaps superfluous to say that Barth never forgave Vassady for his justified critique, and did not reply directly to any of his letters in the following decades until his death, instructing only his secretary, Charlotte von Kirschbaum, to give occasional and courteous answers, but firmly reject any initiative concerning any personal meeting or collaboration coming from the part of his Hungarian colleague. Barth preferred to appear as peace-loving, yet his vanity and conceit often took the best of him.¹⁷

Discussing the disgusting: Hromádka's attitude towards the Hungarian uprising

Whilst Barth remained silent about Hungary despite the justified critiques he had received from Niebuhr and others, his faithful disciple and addressee of his famous letter in 1938, the Czech theologian Josef Lukl Hromádka was not content to stay quiet. On the contrary: on 8 December 1956, in a revoltingly false declaration, Hromádka labelled the Hungarian freedom fighters as voicing 'Fascist slogans', 'committing thousands of crimes', carrying out 'anti-Jewish pogroms' and fluttering 'the banners of social and political nationalism'. He even criticised the World Council of Churches for its sympathy towards Hungary.¹⁸ Although not one of his calumnies were ever supported by any evidence, Hromádka was allowed to stay on as a member of the WCC's Executive Committee, which constitutes at least a complicity in his moral crime by the leadership of WCC at the time. Moreover, in 1958, Hromádka, who had equally praised the brutality of Soviet intervention in both cases of Hungary and Korea,¹⁹ was awarded the infamous Lenin Peace Prize²⁰ by the very Nikita Khrushchev, who could obtain this most precious Soviet trophy only a year after the Czech theologian, in 1959.

One wonders how on earth could anybody attempt to describe Hromádka later as a theologian who attempted to resist Communist oppression. As my grandfather used to say, 'only the mediocre apprentice does not surpass his/her own master'. In this case, Hromádka truly surpassed his adulated master, Barth, who remained silent concerning the events in Hungary, and also about his lapdog's loud and ill-mannered barking up the wrong tree. Barth never attempted to distance himself from his pupil's disgusting opportunism by which Hromádka sought to besmirch the memory of freedom fighters, and ultimately obtained the highest possible honours of a truly evil regime. The silence of important and usually vociferous figures can indeed be most eloquent.

A sad lesson: 'sacred cows' come in pairs

As a weird irony of fate, in 1948 – during the first General Assembly of the forming World Council of Churches, and twelve years before the Hungarian Freedom Fight – John Foster Dulles and Josef Lukl Hromádka represented the two sides of the Iron Curtain in Amsterdam. Dulles could speak on behalf of Western Capitalism, whilst Hromádka was given one of his numerous opportunities to eulogise the wonders of Christian existence in Communist countries. Twelve years later, in 1956 these two men became instrumental in causing and justifying Hungary's brutal destruction by the Soviets respectively – without ever being challenged concerning their statements and motivations.²¹

It also needs to be stressed, that Barth had relied almost exclusively upon Hromádka concerning every Central-European political and historical development, even after 1956. He kept silent not only about the Hungarian Revolution, but also concerning Hromádka's blatant lies about it. We have yet to see any evidence of Barth reprimanding his Czech disciple for this repugnant betrayal. Great men make great mistakes. Nonetheless, they should know better, since 'they will receive the greater condemnation' (cf. Mk 12:40).

I do not know how reliable Hromádka could be concerning the Korean crisis in the 1950s. What was proven, however, beyond any reasonable doubt is that he could not be trusted at all concerning Eastern Europe. The defence of his moral integrity is perhaps a job for those, who have lost some of their common sense concerning basic principles of Christian ethics – perhaps because of having

been influenced by some perplexing, yet largely useless exercises in theological, political and moral sophistry. Nonetheless, this common sense of basic Christian ethics should have been restored in all the witnesses of the bloodbath in Hungary in 1956, as a practical instruction offered by the Soviet regime for the European West, which had already begun to relapse into its preferred state of indifference. This, rather easily understandable and basic ethical stance was reformulated in a sad memento by none else than Albert Camus:

I am not one of those who wish to see the people of Hungary take up arms again in a rising certain to be crushed, under the eyes of the nations of the world, who would spare them neither applause nor pious tears, but who would go back at once to their slippers by the fireside like a football crowd on a Sunday evening after a cup final. There are already too many dead on the field and we cannot be generous with any but our own blood. The blood of Hungary has re-emerged too precious to Europe and to freedom for us not to be jealous of it to the last drop. But I am not one of those who think that there can be a compromise, even one made with resignation, even provisional, with a regime of terror which has as much right to call itself Socialist as the executioners of the Inquisition had to call themselves Christians. [...] Hungary conquered and in chains has done more for freedom and justice than any people in the last twenty years. But for this lesson to get through and convince those in the West who shut their eyes and ears, it was necessary, and it can be no comfort to us, for the people of Hungary to shed so much blood which is already drying in our memories. In Europe's isolation today, we have only one way of being true to Hungary, and that is *never to betray*, among ourselves and everywhere, *what the Hungarian heroes died for*, *never to condone*, among ourselves and everywhere, *even indirectly, those who killed them*.²²

Based on the above, the moral classification of Hromádka-types becomes a far easier task. Thanks be to the Lord, such attempts, however late, begin to surface also in the western world. To quote an example of such formulation imbued with customary academic politeness:

Hromádka was never a simple collaborator. But he misjudged the workings of communist power and became one of the 'useful idiots' whose good intentions Lenin had urged his henchmen to exploit.²³

As it became evident during the aftermath of the Hungarian Freedom Fight, the Soviet regime did not have any reasons to complain about Hromádka's 'good intentions'. Unfortunately, neither did Barth, who could have chosen to rely on the words of credible eyewitnesses like Peter Fryer, or such eloquent writers like Albert Camus, but most emphatically did not. It is also true that Camus was never awarded the Lenin Peace Prize...

A small memento

One small, much less known memento than that of Albert Camus, deserves to be quoted here. This is a passage in a letter addressed to Karl Barth dated 24 May 1966 by Prof. András Nagy, a Transylvanian Hungarian theology professor of Kolozsvár, Romania. The political reality in the country – one year after the rise to power of Communist dictator Ceausescu, whose totalitarian regime lasted until the end of 1989 – was quite similar to that of Hungary, including the suppression of free speech and movement. A lot of Hungarian Reformed ministers, theology professors and students were captured, imprisoned and even murdered in Transylvania as well, as part of the retributions in the aftermath of the events in 1956. Amidst these circumstances, Prof. Nagy wrote the following lines to Barth:

In our time, just as Calvin in his own time, as a one-book man – that is, the man of a single theme, that of the very question of mankind – you have written a lot, and did not only voice your opinion in certain matters of life, but being constrained by the Word of our God and Lord, moved by the Holy Spirit, assuming your own responsibility and risking even your life, you took a stand and caused millions to take a stand, inter alia, when you uttered: 'résistez! résistez!' (1938). *Amidst later events, we also would have loved to hear from you a similar 'résistez!' pronounced for the benefit of the suffering people.*²⁴

We ought to add that Prof. András Nagy held Bible sessions in his own home, where theology students were also praying for the victims of the 1956 uprising in Hungary. Many participants at these praying events were later condemned to long years in Romanian Communist prisons. Given the fact that every piece of correspondence could be expected to be censored by the Romanian State Police, the very wording of the above letter represents an uncommon courage on Nagy's part in 1966 – a certainly much bigger courage than that of Barth in 1935, who had left Germany at the first threat upon his career! – in his attempt to remind the universally praised Swiss teacher of his ethical duty as an influential Christian theologian. Sadly, to no real avail...

Estne repetitio mater studiorum? As it appears, the only real lesson of history is that we never learn anything from it, so repeating it over and over again remains our only option. Nonetheless, if we may still conclude that certain attitudes and standpoints need revision even at the cost of occasionally 'demythologising' some of the most famous figures of our recent past – then this is a lesson worth taking. Oddly enough, we need to follow Barth's advice of looking at all events in the light of the Word of God – yet this time with full honesty, not fearing where this light may lead us, and not closing our eyes when the very same Word points us towards revising some of our own, however aged misconceptions.

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- 2 See also TOULOUSE, M. G.: The Development of a Cold Warrior: John Foster Dulles and the Soviet Union, 1945–1952, in: *American Presbyterians*, vol. 63, No. 3 (1985), 309–322.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 187.
- 4 NIEBUHR, R.: Why is Barth silent on Hungary?, in: *The Christian Century*, 23., (1957 January), 108–110, 108.
- 5 ‘Ce que le peuple hongrois nous apprend avec son sang, c’est la faillite complète du socialisme en tant que marchandise importée d’U.R.S.S. [...] Je condamne entièrement et sans aucune réserve l’agression soviétique. Sans en faire porter la responsabilité au peuple russe, je répète que son gouvernement actuel a commis un crime. [...] Je brise à regret, mais entièrement, mes rapports avec mes amis les écrivains soviétiques, qui ne dénoncent pas (ou ne peuvent dénoncer) le massacre en Hongrie. On ne peut plus avoir d’amitié pour la fraction dirigeante de la bureaucratie soviétique: c’est l’horreur qui domine. See *L’Express*, 9 Nov. 1956, also https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/apres-budapest-sartre-parle-article-du-9-novembre-1956_460810.html.
- 6 FRYER, P.: Letter of Resignation, in : *Manchester Guardian*, (16. Nov. 1956) See also FRYER, P.: *Hungarian Tragedy and Other Writings on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, London, Index Books, 1997, 1.
- 7 FRYER, P.: The Hungarian Revolution, in: *New Statesman and Nation*, LII/1341, (24 Nov. 1956)
- 8 Barth’s Letter to Hromádka on 19 September 1938 (my emphases, PKI). BARTH, K.: *Offene Briefe 1935–1942 GA 5*, Zürich, TVZ, 2001, 107. See also METAXAS, E.: *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2010, 312.
- 9 NIEBUHR, R.: Why is Barth silent on Hungary?, in: *The Christian Century*, (23. Jan. 1957), 108–110. Barth’s students wrote an open letter to Niebuhr, defending the Swiss theologian, to which Niebuhr also replied. See ‘Barth on Hungary: An Exchange’, *The Christian Century*, (10 April 1957), 453–455.
- 10 KOVÁCS, Á.: *Interchangeable kingdoms of God(s)? A Critical Theological Reflection on Conversions or Journeys from Christianity to Communism*. See the chapter 9 in this volume.
- 11 BARTH, K.: *Against the Stream: Shorter Post-War Writings, 1946–52*, New York, Philosophical Library, 1954, 129. NIEBUHR, R.: Why is Barth silent on Hungary?, in: *The Christian Century*, (23. Jan. 1957), 109–110.
- 12 KOVÁCS, Á.: A Remedy of the World: An Eschatological Dimension of a quasi-religion, Communism and its application in Central Europe, *Korean Journal of Religious Studies*, 74:(3) pp. 121-148. (2014). Here Kovács points out in an illuminating manner the religious nature of communism referring to the Hungarian context.
- 13 Jeremiah 22:3.
- 14 NIEBUHR, R.: Why is Barth silent on Hungary?, in: *The Christian Century*, (23. Jan. 1957), 109.

- 15 See in FERENCZ, Á. (ed.): *Világok vándorai. Úti beszámoló Karl Barth 1936-os és 1948-as magyarországi látogatásáról. Karl Barth és Vassady Béla levelezése (Wanderers of Worlds. Trip Reports about Barth's Visits to Hungary in 1936 and 1948. Correspondence Between Karl Barth and Béla Vassady)*, Debreceni Református Hittudományi Egyetem, Debrecen, DRHE, 2007, 137. See also BARTH, K.: *Offene Briefe 1935–1942 GA 5*, Zürich, TVZ, 2001.
- 16 Letter of Béla Vassady to Barth in 1938, in: FERENCZ, Á.: *Világok vándorai*, 134.
- 17 See George S. Hendry's assessment in his book review of the following volume: *Karl Barth, His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts By Eberhard Busch*, trans. by John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), in *Theology Today*, July 1977: 'The years in Basel were the period of his crowning theological achievement – and of his decline. For Barth, they were happy years (despite four house moves), but they were not peaceful. His compatriots, who desired nothing so much as not to annoy Hitler, were upset by his continued outspokenness and took measures to restrain him. And after the war was over, they were even more upset by his unoutspokenness about the threat of communism and its lurid demonstration at the time of the Hungarian uprising. Barth was excoriated by many, including Reinhold Niebuhr, for his strange 'silence about Hungary,' and Barth's attempts to defend his attitude were widely regarded as exercises in sophistry, if not something more serious – his telephone was tapped, and he caught the attention of the C.I.A. It seems clear that, despite his claim to an irenic disposition, Barth enjoyed controversy and thrived on it.' <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/004057367703400210> (accessed: 20 June 2019).
- 18 The text of Hromádka's calumniating declaration can be found in STÖHR, M. (ed.): *Der Geschichte ins Gesicht sehen*, München, Kaiser, 1977, 250ff.
- 19 See e.g. the somewhat partial, but serviceable article by Doris LeRoy, Worker for peace from behind the Iron Curtain, <https://labourhistorymelbourne.org/worker-for-peace-from-behind-the-iron-curtain/> (accessed: 20 June 2019).
- 20 See BENEDETTO, R. - MCKIM, D. K. (eds.): *Historical Dictionary of the Reformed Churches*, second edition, Plymouth, The Scarecrow Press, 2010, 216–217.
- 21 See also BOCK, P.: The Dulles-Hromadka encounter revisited: two churchmen anticipated some current world changes, in: *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*, vol. 11, issue 3, art. 3 (1991): <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1600&context=ree> (accessed: 20 June 2019).
- 22 Camus, A.: *The Blood of the Hungarians, 23. October 1957 (my emphases, PKI)*. <http://www.magtudin.org/Albert%20Camus%20Eng.htm> (accessed: 20 June 2019).
- 23 LUXMOORE J. - BABIUCH, J.: *Vatican and the Reg Flag: The Struggle for the Soul of Eastern Europe*, Continuum, 2000, 84.
- 24 I am indebted to my former professor, Dr. Tamás Juhász in Kolozsvár for bringing this letter to my attention. He had published two letters of Prof. Nagy to Barth in the periodical of the theology students in Kolozsvár (*Quo Vadis*) in a Hungarian translation. According to his account, both letters of Prof. Nagy are kept in original in the *Karl-Barth-Archiv* in Basel. The above quoted text contains my emphases (PKI).

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