

TEACHING THEOLOGY

Papers of a Working Conference

Theological University Kampen
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TEACHING THEOLOGY - INTRODUCTION

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In October 2001, the theological universities of Debrecen and Kampen held their first joint working conference. The theme, ‘ministeriality and professionalism’ focused on central questions concerning the identity, position, and role of the minister in relation to the congregation and society. Descriptive understanding, theological interpretation, and the development of models for renewal supported the discussion of adequate vision and strategy. As the papers of this conference ¹ demonstrate, changes in church and ministry necessarily involve debate about the aims of theological education. Because the system of higher education is being restructured these years, this debate is all the more timely.

The second conference (Kampen, September 2003), of which the papers are published in this volume, focused on teaching theology. How much theology is needed for adequate functioning as a minister (or religious educator or spiritual counselor)? Which type of theology is needed in terms of content and/or method? Which teaching methods are most appropriate? How can theological education integrate academic theological reasoning, professional skills, and personal and spiritual development?

Certainly, theology and the church have a history in which they have been confronted with various contextual demands in the Netherlands as well as in Hungary. This notion is a self-evident and necessary part of the contributions in this volume. This context-oriented theological enterprise is carried by the conviction that theological education should facilitate the praxis of church and society to responsible self-criticism. Regarding the task of theological training, we can not renounce the claim that theology remains free, free enough to confront the church and public life critically in search of constant renewal, and to account for its accomplishments in the context of the academy. At the same time theology can be understood as church theology, ecclesial enough to testify to the relevance of God’s revelation in the contemporary world.

The relation between these dimensions is not an isolated question. According to David Tracy ², theology always functions in particular discourses that pose specific questions and demands and involves specific criteria. There is no such thing as absolute theology, detached from the world around. Theology is always context-related, and we better be aware of the type of context we are relating to. Obviously, as we experienced in our previous meeting, the contexts of Hungary and The Netherlands are quite different, not only in terms of the political and social situation, but also in terms of the relation to the churches we belong to. Dutch churches are different from Hungarian churches, and therefore Dutch theology for the churches will not be identical with Hungarian theology for the churches. To add to that, in the variety of churches – even within the confines of the Uniting Protestant Church of The Netherlands – we will find a variety of theological contributions.

So, if we want to discuss how we can teach theology, we have to discuss what kind of theology we are teaching and which discourses we have in mind. In which contexts do we anticipate our students to function? Here in Kampen we are in the middle of a discussion how to structure the professional training for ministry and we are confronted with a multitude of vision for ministry. Some think of ministry as a classical spiritual function within the church, others dream of ministers running a private spiritual business free from the church. The confrontation with these visions brings about a challenging question concerning our own position in theology, our own attitude towards church, society, and academe.

David Tracy, whom we have mentioned earlier, writes: ‘The more general question “What is theology?” first demands (...) a response to a prior question: What is the self-understanding of the theologian? To ask that question as a personal and in that sense an irrevocably existential one is entirely appropriate.’ (end of

¹ Ganzevoort, R.R. & Fazakas, S. (eds.) *Amt und Professionalität. Ministeriality and Professionality. Papers of a Working Conference*, Debrecen/Kampen, in press.

² Tracy, D, *The Analogical Imagination*, New York 1981.

quote) As we work in what is called ‘simplex ordo’ institutes, we don’t make an artificial difference between so called neutral academic courses on the one hand and confessional ones on the other. We take as our starting point the conviction that in the whole of theology academic attitudes are to be combined with professional training and personal spirituality. However, it seems to me that the whole concept of simplex ordo is misused if this is seen as a matter of personal faith only or if theology becomes restricted through the framework of a confession. Simplex ordo theological teaching is not the same as church theology. In fact, as Tracy continues his earlier quote: ‘... one risks ignoring the actual complexity of different selves related to the distinct plausibility structures present in each theologian. Behind the pluralism of theological conclusions lies a pluralism of public roles and publics as reference groups for theological discourse.’ In each of us, there is this pluralism. And in our two universities, we make every effort to meet the standards of these three discourses. We cannot afford to be isolated in only one discourse, because that would mean immediately to become irrelevant.

Each of these publics is heterogeneous. The academic public, to start with, will function differently in a seminary as compared to a department of religious studies in a secular university. When it comes to our own situations, and this is but one example, in Kampen the department of practical theology includes social scientists, which brings about intensive cooperation and discussion about the integration of theology and social sciences. In Utrecht on the other hand, social sciences are not part of the church-related department of practical theology, which brings about sharper distinctions between the two. In fact, Kampen practical theologians often feel responsible to put society on the agenda of the university, whereas the colleagues in Utrecht feel responsible to keep the church on the agenda, society being accounted for by social scientists. This is not just the case for practical theologians. Church history can be studied in clear theological terms, but it can also stress the discourse of general history. The nature of our theological work thus is heavily determined by the structures we work in.

The academic public also determines the criteria to judge our work. More and more the academic life is under surveillance of peer reviews, formal visitations, and politics. What we do should be relevant for society, contributing to the development of a ‘knowledge based economy’, and so on. And as far as content en method are concerned, since Thomas Kuhn we are aware that science is governed by paradigms, ways of working and thinking that are institutionalized in accepted journals, experts, etcetera. Each paradigm is beyond discussion as long as it stands, but it is not absolute.

And then academe is only of the publics we have to deal with. Theology always finds a natural audience in the community of faith, but there is also communication with the wider society. The societal public consists at least of the technoeconomic realm, the realm of polity, and the realm of culture. Before these two audiences, theologians will need to develop both explicit or Christian and implicit or secular language (Cf Bailey 1997). The interaction between these two languages may become one of the most intriguing tasks of theology in the years to come.

But it is not simply a matter of different discourses about something – in these discourses theology itself takes on different meanings. The locus of conversation defines in part the shape and tasks of the discipline. In each locus of conversation, correspondence to and difference from the other party define the identity of theology. In relation to the church, theology may stress its academic nature in its efforts to serve the community of faith. In relation to the academic realm it may focus on scientific procedures, communicating with other sciences on the one hand and other theological disciplines on the other. Obviously then, each theologian will develop his or her own definition and his or her own approach to teaching within the specific configuration of relations of the person.

It seems helpful to distinguish between two orders of theological discourse. Academic discourse belongs to the second order. Discourse of religious or non-religious individuals and communities in church and society belongs to the first (Ganzevoort 2001). George A. Lindbeck (1984, 69) works with the same distinction. Speaking of theological propositions in a cultural-linguistic approach, he states: ‘Technical theology and official doctrine [...] are second-order discourse about the first-intentional uses of religious language. Here, in contrast to the common supposition, one rarely if ever succeeds in making affirmations with ontological import, but rather engages in explaining, defending, analyzing, and regulating the liturgical, kerygmatic, and ethical modes of speech and action within which such affirmations from time to time occur. Just as grammar by itself affirms nothing either true or false regarding the world in which language is used, but only about language, so theology and doctrine, to the extent that they are second-order activities, assert nothing either true or false about God and his relation to creatures, but only speak

about such assertions. These assertions, in turn, cannot be made except when speaking religiously, i.e., when seeking to align oneself and others performatively with what one takes to be most important in the universe by worshipping, promising, obeying, exhorting, preaching.’ (end of quote)

We can follow Lindbeck in this basic distinction, but two points merit more discussion. First, the difference between the orders may not be the presence or absence of truth claims but the different criteria for truth claims and the different lines of reasoning governing the discourses. As academic theologians we are interested in truth questions, but we answer them differently than we do as believers. Second, official doctrine probably should not be regarded as second-order discourse. The criteria for truth claims and the lines of reasoning seem to be more akin to first-order discourses of religion. There are in both first and second order discourse varying degrees of reflection as well as more individual or more collective utterances that are more or less validated. Official church doctrines are more reflected, collective, and validated, but they still abide with the rules of first order discourse.

This difference between first and second order discourses may help us in clarifying the many questions we have in theology and in relating theology to the three publics of the academic world, society, and the church. Much confusion, it seems, arises from the fact that language is used that does not fit the discourse at hand. An important aspect of teaching theology therefore is teaching theological competency in plural, helping students to become affluent speakers of more than one language.

With this background, the questions we started with become all the more intriguing: How much theology is needed for adequate functioning as a minister (or religious educator or spiritual counselor)? Which type of theology is needed in terms of content and/or method? Which teaching methods are most appropriate? How can theological education integrate academic theological reasoning, professional skills, and personal and spiritual development?

This volume of papers deals with these questions. The three audiences of society, academy, and church are discussed in their implications for teaching theology. Besides academic debates, one can find here presentations of ‘best practices’: approaches to theological education that are deemed to be successful or innovative. Each paper focuses on one or more of the audiences involved and – obviously – does this from the point of view of a particular discipline. What brings them together is the fundamental discussion how theological education can be developed. These proceedings thus are like a tissue of many colors, woven together. We have all theological disciplines, three publics, two levels of theory and practice, and two institutes with their own national and traditional background. In short, the reader is at the brink of an exciting exchange of opinions, visions, and experiences.

Dependent on history, tradition, and context, the aims of theological education are explored. Every presentation or ‘best practices’-case study displays a specific understanding of the task of theology. We have deliberately refrained from harmonizing the concepts or perspectives and we do not claim general endorsement. We are aware of the provisional nature of our human exertions, including our theology. We merely hope that the communicative presentation of this volume offers a small contribution to the improvement of theological education.

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DIE ‘ÖFFENTLICHKEIT’ UND IHRE BEDEUTUNG FÜR DIE SYSTEMATISCHE THEOLOGIE

Sándor Fazakas

Öffentlichkeit ist die ‚verbindliche Horizont‘¹ christlicher und kirchlicher Existenz. Sendung und Ausbreitung christlichen Glaubens, Verkündigung und Lehre der Kirche, Gottesdienst und soziales Handeln, Relevanz und Funktion christlicher Theologie ist unvorstellbar ohne tiefe Verankerung in die Öffentlichkeit – die das ganze Leben und Geschichtlichkeit menschlicher Existenz umfasst. Selbst die Kirche Jesu Christi ist eine öffentliche Größe – meint Wolfgang Huber in seiner Buch ‚Kirche in der Zeitenwende‘² -, die in der Öffentlichkeit wirkt und für die Öffentlichkeit eine besondere Auftrag hat. Diese Öffentlichkeitsauftrag ist in der biblischen Tradition fest verankert - denke man an das öffentliche Wirken der Propheten Israels oder an den im Neuen Testament formulierten Auftrag der Kirche, etwa im Missionsbefehl Jesu Christ im Mt 28, 18-20 oder Versöhnungsauftrag der Christen nach 2. Kor 5,19 ff. Aber die öffentliche Dimension christlicher-kirchlicher Existenz war von Anfang an ambivalent: die abweisende Haltung gegenüber allerlei politischer Religion oder totalitärer Macht (nicht nur im römischen Reich sondern auch später) und die vorbehaltlose oder politisch motivierte Hinwendung zur Öffentlichkeit seit der konstantinischen Wende lässt sich durch ein kirchengeschichtliches Repetitorium bestätigen.

Es wäre aber verfehlt diesen Gang der Kirche durch die Geschichte im einzelnen zu analysieren – eines lässt sich aber feststellen: Das Verhältnis der christlichen Kirche zur Öffentlichkeit ist bis heute unerledigte Thema der neuzeitlichen protestantischen Theologie. Die dadurch erweckte Unsicherheit wurde im Mittel-Osteuropa noch gesteigert durch die geschichtliche Erfahrung vor und nach den politischen Wende um 1989/1990. Die vorher aus der Öffentlichkeit zurückgedrängte, den Staat als übermächtig-bedrohende Größe erfahrene Kirche erfuhr kurzfristig eine Begeisterung seitens der Politik und der Gesellschaft den Kirchen gegenüber – doch diese Hochschätzung geriet langsam in Zwielflicht angesichts der ohnmächtigen Haltung den neueren Herausforderungen gegenüber oder durch die unerledigte Verhältnis zur Vergangenheit kirchlicher Mitarbeiter und Würdenträger. Auch wenn einige der wiederholt wechselnden Regierungen die Kirchen als Partner betrachten wollten beim Aufbau einer neuen politischen, rechtlichen und sozialen Ordnung des Staates, so zeigt die Bevölkerung selbst nun weniger Interesse gegenüber den christlichen Kirchen als unmittelbar nach der Wende.

Aber – wie lässt sich ‚Öffentlichkeit‘ definieren? Was beinhaltet der Begriff, der das Wirklichkeitsverständnis und Orientierung der Kirchen so unausweichlich bestimmt? Was ist die Bedeutung der Öffentlichkeit für die Systematischen-Theologie – ich präzisiere, für die Theologie überhaupt? Um diese Problematik näher zu erläutern muss man die Fragestellung aus zwei Perspektiven und auf zwei Ebenen betrachten: (1) Erstens aus einer Außenperspektive, d.h. auf dem Ebene der Wahrnehmung und Deutung der Wirklichkeit seitens der Theologie und Kirche. Hier wird die Öffentlichkeit als Wahrnehmungs-, Orientierungs- und Handlungsraum gedeutet, die nach Aufgabe und Identität der Kirche in der Welt fragt. (2) Zweitens ist auf die Binnenperspektive nicht zu verzichten, dass heißt die Frage nach Zweck und Aufgabe der Theologie in der Gesellschaft, in der Kirche und im Verhältnis zu anderen Wissenschaften ist nicht zu vermeiden.

¹Huber, W., *Kirche in der Zeitenwende. Gesellschaftlicher Wandel und Erneuerung der Kirche*, Gütersloh 1998, 103.

² Ebd. 102.

ÖFFENTLICHKEIT ALS VERKÜNDIGUNGS- UND HANDLUNGSRAUM DER KIRCHE

Das Verständnis der Öffentlichkeitsauftrag oder Öffentlichkeitsanspruch der Kirche in Ungarn ist bis heute stark bestimmt durch den historischen Erfahrungen vor und nach der politischen Wende 1989/1990. Es wurde nur in Gegenüber zum Staat und Politik erörtert, führte aber offenkundig zu eine gewisse (gewollte oder ungewollte) ‚Partnerschaft‘ und nicht zu einer kritischen Distanz. Eine selbstbewusste und eigenständige Rolle der Kirche im Verhältnis zur Gesellschaft und Staat konnte jedenfalls nicht ausgearbeitet werden. Trotz dieser Engführung gewann die Systematische Theologie in Ungarn gerade in dieser Hinsicht durch den Theologen Ervin Vályi-Nagy und István Török eine solche Potenzial und Autonomie theologischen Denkens, die für die Neuorientierung unter den veränderten Rahmen und gesellschaftlicher bzw. kirchlicher Umbruchsituation unentbehrlich sind.

Ervin Vályi Nagy war derjenige, der Barths ‚Nein!‘ in der theologischen Geschichtsdeutung (als eine Variante natürlicher Theologie) am konsequentesten weitergedacht und weiterentwickelt hat, mit der Feststellung, dass das Thema der Geschichte zu den unerledigten Grundproblemen der neuzeitlichen Theologie gehört.³ Im Besinnung auf Barths Kampfschrift ‚Theologische Existenz heute‘(1933) und auf dem ‚Barmer Theologischer Erklärung‘(1934) übernimmt er den mutigen Schritt, die Unhaltbarkeit der geschichtstheologischen Prämissen der ungarischen Kirchleitung zu beweisen – und zwar im Jahr 1955, in einer Zeit, in der die kommunistische Regime den Kirchen auf Kooperation gezwungen hat. Er schreibt: ‚...die Sendung der Kirche besteht nicht darin, sogenannte historische Notwendigkeiten anzuerkennen und mit «geschichtlichen Kräften» zu kooperieren‘ und nicht darin diese Notwendigkeiten mit christlichen Ideen und Moral zu beeinflussen. Die Sendung der Kirche bezieht sich auf «das Eine, was not ist»,... die Verkündigung von Gottes ewiger und gnädiger Entscheidung.⁴ Also, nicht die Ordnung des Staates, des Volkes oder der Gesellschaft als Offenbarungsquelle gilt, sondern allein Gottes Wort. Gotteserkenntnis kommt nicht aus einer kirchenpolitischen Option für eine bestimmte politische Macht und die theoretische und praktische, innere und äußere Grund der Kirche, der Theologie oder christlichen Lebens besteht nicht in einer Geschichtsphilosophie, sonder in der Botschaft vom Gekreuzigten und Auferstandenen.

Von diesem Hintergrund her beobachtet er nicht weniger skeptisch die historischen Ereignisse um die politische Wende 1989/1990 in Ungarn und Mittel-Osteuropa, mit der Befürchtung, dass die geschichtstheologischen Deutungen mit anderen Vorzeichen wieder in die Mode kommen. István Török rückt die Frage nach Jesus Christus als dem ‚einem Wort Gottes‘ und damit als dem alleinigen Haupt der Kirche in Zentrum der Verkündigung der Kirche, wenn er nach der Wende(1989/1990) nach theologischen Kriterien der Erneuerung sucht. In einem grundlegenden Vortrag stellt er fest: ‚Das Charakteristische an der Irrlehre ist, dass sie zu Christus als Zentrum ein anderes Nebenzentrum stellt. Dann fängt dieses Nebenzentrum an zu wachsen und stellt das Hauptzentrum in seinen Dienst. Solche Nebenaspekte können... der auf rassistischen Grundlage aufgebaute Nationalismus oder der diktatorischer Sozialismus sein.⁵

Heute gilt es die Warnung, nach wie vor: mit dem gesellschaftlichen, politischen und wirtschaftlichen Wandel ist also nicht die Heilszeit oder die messianische Zeitalter eingetreten, als zuvor. Vor dem Gedanken ‚panta rei‘ darf man nicht in Ekstase fallen. Die Ereignisse der Weltpolitik und der Weltwirtschaft sind also nicht Stätte der Offenbarung Gottes, sonder bloß Orte und Räume der Bewährung des Glaubens. Im Grunde geht es heute (so in Ungarn wie in ganzen Europa) um die nicht ganz überflüssige Frage, ob der Öffentlichkeitsbezug der Theologie und des christlichen Glaubens in einer vorbehaltlosen Bestätigung der Ereignisse der Weltpolitik und der Weltwirtschaft oder in der Gestaltung der Wirklichkeit besteht. ‚Konfirmation‘ oder ‚Transformation‘⁶ der Wirklichkeit sollte es Zweck und Aufgabe der Theologie und Kirche heißen? Eine bewusste oder unbewusste ‚theologia gloriae‘ ist

³ Vályi Nagy, E., ‚Wahrheit und Geschichte.‘ In: Vályi-Nagy, Á. (Hg), *Geschichtserfahrung und die Suche nach Gott*. Kohlhammer. Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln 2000, 97.

⁴ Vályi Nagy, E., ‚Gott oder Geschichte?‘ Über die Prämissen der heutigen reformierten Kirchenführung in Ungarn‘ In: *Siehe Anm 3* (1955), 32.

⁵ Török, I., ‚A megújulás teológiai feltétele‘ (Die theologische Voraussetzungen der Erneuerung). *Confessio 1*/(1990), 122-124.

⁶ Lochman, J.M., ‚Ökumenische Theologie der Revolution.‘ *Evangelische Theologie 27*/12. (1967), 644. – Vgl.: Vályi Nagy, E., ‚Theologie als Bestätigung und als Öffnung. Wirkliche Wandlung oder Variation des Gleichen?‘ In: *Siehe Anm 3*, 66.

verbreitet seit der sechzig Jahre, einerseits auf dem Einfluss europäischer ökumenischer Theologie der jüngsten Vergangenheit, die andererseits im ungarischen Kontext durch dem Experiment ‚Kirche im Sozialismus‘ noch vertieft und im allgemeinen kirchlichen wie gesellschaftlichen Bewusstsein verankert ist. Nach dieser triumphalen Sehweise wird alles, die in den sozialen, kulturellen und politischen Ereignissen geschieht, als Spuren des außerhalb der Kirche wirkende Christus interpretiert. Diese ‚latente Justinianismus‘⁷ oder - anders ausgedrückt – ‚Neurose der Säkularisierung‘ sieht wohl, dass die Welt ist der Kirche fremd geworden, aber versucht in diesem Fremden das spezifisch Christliche, in den universalistischen Grundzüge der Welt die Bestätigung der Herrschaft Christi, in den allgemeinen Bewusstsein und moralischen Verhalten der Menschen latente Inhalte christlicher Glaube und Ethos zu entdecken. Dieser Logik nach wird die Schrumpfung der Kirche als Ausbreitung des Christentums gefeiert, wo nicht die Welt der Kirche nachfolgen soll, sondern umgekehrt, die Kirche soll bereit werden sich dem Maßstab modernistischen Lebens- und Wirklichkeitsdeutungen anzupassen, das Evangelium konkurrenzfähig zu machen. Die Folge dieses Verfahrens ist entweder eine Art Verunsicherung oder – als Gegenreaktion - eine totale Selbstabschließung der Angelegenheiten der Gesellschaft, der Kultur und der Politik gegenüber und eine radikale Infragestellung der Werte und Institutionen der Gesellschaft. Diesem ambivalenten Verfahren entsprechend ist seitens der Öffentlichkeit auch eine doppelte Strategie zu beobachten: entweder wird die vorbehaltlose Bejahung und Bestätigung der Theologie und Kirche in Sachen der Sinn- und Wertvermittlung der Bürgerlichen Gesellschaft erwartet (z.Bp. in sozialetischen Fragen), oder umgekehrt, wenn die vermeintliche oder veröffentlichte Meinung der Kirchen nicht mit der Interesse der Öffentlichkeit konvergiert, wird die Forderung laut, die Kirche soll sich von gesellschaftlichen und politischen Fragen zurückhalten.

Zwischen Utopie und Negation, Bejahung und Infragestellung drängt sich die Frage auf: soll die Theologie die neuzeitliche Vernunft und modernistischen Lebenseinstellungen verherrlichen und den Adaptationsprozeß mit christlichen Vorzeichen mitmachen – oder soll sie auf die Seite des kritischen Denkens stellen und zur Umkehr rufen? Ich plädiere für den Zweiten – ohne dabei für eine totale Infragestellung und radikaler Negation zu werben. Aber die ‚Metanoia des Glaubens‘⁸ enthält den Keim einer wirklichen Transformation, einer Umwandlung der Vorhandenen. Warum? Weil durch den Glauben erweckten Hoffnung rechnet mit dem ‚etwas anderes‘, mit dem Gegenwart Gottes in dieser Welt, der sich nicht in die Struktur der Welt einmauern lässt, sondern durch die Verkündigung und Handel der Kirche öffentlich bezeugt wird.

Vom diesem Hintergrund her hat die Theologie daran zu erinnern, dass im Rahmenbedingungen der weltlichen Öffentlichkeit – sei es im Politischen oder Ökonomischen, im Kulturellen oder im Kirchlichen – mit Gottes Gegenwart zu rechnen ist. Das klingt vielleicht befremdlich oder bedenklich. Vertrauter ist dagegen die Wendung, dass Gottes Vergegenwärtigung in Jesus Christus durch Wort und Sakrament vermittelt geschieht. Nicht die Welt oder die Geschichte, weder die Natur noch ein geopolitisches oder wirtschaftliches Geschehen (z.B. Globalisierung oder EU-Integration) Mittel der Vergegenwärtigung Gottes sind. Jedoch: gebunden an Jesus Christus sind Wort und Sakrament Erschließungsereignisse oder Offenbarungsmedien, die Gottes Gegenwart und seine heilsame Nähe eröffnen – und das geschieht nicht heimlich, nicht für eine exklusiver Kreis religiöser Menschen, sonder für die Welt. Ganz genau, die Erkennbarkeit der Kirche in dieser Welt ist an der Öffentlichkeit ihrer Verkündigung und ihrer Lehre gebunden: erkennbar ist die Kirche als die ‚Versammlung aller Gläubigen, bei denen das Evangelium rein gepredigt und die heiligen Sakramente laut dem Evangelium gereicht werden‘ (CA 7).⁹ Diese Definition fragt natürlich nach der konkreten Gestalt der Kirche in der Öffentlichkeit – die hier nicht weiter verfolgt werden kann. Eines aber lässt sich feststellen: die geschichtliche-gesellschaftliche Gegebenheiten der Welt bilden nicht nur den Dasaeraum der Kirche, sonder zugleich Echo- und Resonanzraum für die christliche Verkündigung.

Karl Barth war derjenige, der zum ersten mal über diesem Echoraum sprach. In einem Vortrag aus dem Jahre 1946¹⁰ spricht er davon, dass das Abendland als Orientierungs- und Handlungsrahmen endgültig

⁷ Vályi Nagy. E., ‚Theologie als Bestätigung...‘ In: *Siehe Ann 6*, 66.

⁸ Ebd. 76.

⁹ ‚Augsburgisches Bekenntnis. Art 7.‘ In: *Unser Glaube. Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*. Gütersloh (1991), 64.

¹⁰ Barth, K., ‚Die christliche Verkündigung im heutigen Europa.‘ In: *Theologische Existenz heute 3*/(1946), Zürich.

zerbrochen ist, die evangelische Rede vom Kommen Gottes kann sich nicht mehr auf die Tradition des Abendlandes beziehen, kann sich nicht länger auf Rechtsordnungen oder Religionsbedürfnisse des Abendlandes berufen. Stattdessen kann diese öffentliche Gottesrede den befreienden Heilsgeschehen Gottes für den Menschen bezeugen. Eberhard Jüngel greift diesen Faden auf,¹¹ wenn er nach dem Fall der Mauer in Europa eine Analogie zwischen europäischen Freiheitsgeschichte und der befreienden Gegenwart des Reich Gottes sieht, ohne dabei mit dieser Analogie abfinden zu können. Er formuliert die Aufgabe folgender Weise: 'Um die geschichtlichen Erfahrungen begrenzter Freiheit deuten zu können, wird es notwendig sein, sie in biblisch-reformatorische Freiheitsgeschichte einzulesen'.¹² Befreiende Rede entsteht, wo Erfahrungen evangeliumsgemäß durchbuchstabiert werden, wo der Text der Welt durch den Text der Heiligen Schrift in seinen Differenzen lesbar gemacht wird.

Diese öffentliche Rede von Gott ist keine ererbte Selbstverständlichkeit, sondern gewagte Rede in einer Welt, wo geistliche-kulturelle und historische Werte und das Recht auf eigene Identität einfach nivelliert oder marginalisiert werden. Diese öffentliche Rede ist zugleich notwendig in der heutigen Welt, gerade wo politischen-wirtschaftliche Zusammenhänge transzendiert oder ideologisiert werden – weil diese Rede von Gottes Gegenwart kann die Heilshoffnungen oder Untergangsvisionen relativieren. Wieder mit Karl Barth gesagt, Gott ist Gott und die Welt ist Welt – wo Gottes Gegenwart bezeugt wird, werden keine Götter oder Götze angebetet, werden keine Ideologien gepflegt, da muß der Mensch sich selbst nüchtern sehen und verstehen: mit seiner Chancen und Grenzen, in seiner Endlichkeit, in seiner Schranken aber auch in seiner Verantwortung. Die Welt war der Kirche nie dankbar und wird wiederum nicht dankbar, wenn die Kirche oder Theologie die Götter der Welt einfach ignoriert – aber die Geheimnis der Welt ist doch die Nichtexistenz ihrer Götter.¹³ Die Kirche weiß um dieses Geheimnis der Welt – und in der Bezeugung dieses Geheimnisses zeigt ihre Treue der Welt gegenüber.

Natürlich wird diese öffentliche Rede irrelevant, wenn die Kirche ohne bewusste Wahrnehmung der Grundprobleme menschlichen Lebens an den Menschen vorbeigeht. Unsere Gesellschaft ist nicht nur durch eine kulturell-religiöse Pluralität gekennzeichnet, sondern auch dadurch, dass sehr viele Menschen in ihr sozial isoliert, überfordert, behindert und als Einzelne oder als Gruppe marginalisiert sind. Neben oft bedrängenden sozialen Notlagen (und diese werden nach dem EU-Beitritt Ungarns am 1. Mai 2004 nicht einfach verschwinden; vielleicht ist vorerst das Gegenteil der Fall!) gibt es in der heutigen ungarischen Gesellschaft ebenso einen wirklich beeindruckenden Hilfe- und Beratungsbedarf! Es scheint, dass die Verkündigung und die persönliche Zuwendung der Seelsorge, bzw. die professionelle und ehrenamtliche Diakonie aufeinander zugehen müssen. Ich meine zu beobachten und bin zuversichtlich, dass im europäischen Raum die Überzeugung wächst: diakonisches Engagement gehört zum Kernbereich kirchlicher Arbeit. Dabei werden die Kirchen nicht allen Erwartungen, die aus verschiedensten Richtungen im Sinne einer Dienstleistung an sie gerichtet werden, entsprechen müssen oder auch nur können. Doch die Widersprüche und Krisen der modernen Gesellschaft eröffnen ihr gleichsam eine Chance zu beweisen: 'Kirche für andere' ist eine, ist vielleicht die Lebensweise, die Zukunft hat und Zukunft erschließt. Auf dem Weg dahin muss Kirche für diesen je 'Andern' und diese je 'Andere' erreichbar und glaubwürdig erlebbar werden!

FUNKTION DER KIRCHE UND BILDUNGSAUFGABE DER THEOLOGIE

Der Ansatz der reformatorischen Theologie – wie oben auch geschildert – verknüpft die Öffentlichkeitscharakter der Kirche mit ihrem Verkündigungsauftrag. Knapper und umfassender könnte man diesen Tatbestand nicht beschreiben, als mit der 6. These der 'Barmer Theologischen Erklärung': indem die Kirche mit ihrem Wort in der Öffentlichkeit auftritt, ihrer eigentlichen Aufgabe gerecht wird, nämlich 'die Botschaft von der freien Gnade Gottes' ausrichtet 'an alles Volk'.¹⁴ Dieser Verpflichtung, die

¹¹ Brenner, B. & Jüngel, E. (Hrsgs.), *Europa und der Protestantismus. Ein Arbeitsheft mit Dokumenten und Beiträgen*, Göttingen 1993, 35-58.

¹² 'Die christliche Zeugnis von der Freiheit: Beratungsergebnis der Südeuropagruppe' In: Hüffmeier, W. & Müller, Ch. R. (Hrsgs.), *Wachsende Gemeinschaft in Zeugnis und Dienst: Reformatorische Kirchen in Europa; Texte der 4. Vollversammlung der Leuenberger Kirchengemeinschaft in Wien, 3-10. Mai 1994*. Frankfurt a. M. 1995, 141.

¹³ Barth, K., 'Offenbarung, Kirche, Theologie. Drei Vorträge, gehalten vom 10-12. April in Paris.' In: Ders: *Theologische Fragen und Antworten*. Zollikon, Evangelischer Verlag AG 1957, 169-171.

¹⁴ Burgsmüller, A. & Weth, R. (Hrsgs.), *Barmer Theologische Erklärung. Einführung und Dokumentation*. Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag 1984. These 6, 39.

freie Gnade Gottes zu bezeugen, wird die Kirche in ihrer Verkündigung und Lehre, in ihrem Gottesdienst und ihr soziales Handeln gerecht. Aus dieser Binnenperspektive wird klar, dass der Horizont der Öffentlichkeit nicht allein auf das politischen-gesellschaftlichen und ökonomischen Umfeld begrenzt werden kann – sie umfasst das Leben und Wirklichkeit der Kirche, so wie die Welt der Wissenschaften. Nicht vom Ungefähr differenziert David Tracy zwischen drei Felder der Öffentlichkeit, wie ‘society, academy and church’, wenn er den gesellschaftlichen ‘Portrait’ der Theologie zu schildern versucht.¹⁵ Geht man aber von der Bestimmung der theologischen Wissenschaft im Leben der Kirche und in ihrer sozialen Kontext, so wie von der Zuordnung einzelnen theologischen Disziplinen in der Gesamtgefüge der Theologie aus, wird die Reduktion der Öffentlichkeit auf politischen-sozialen Umfeld unhaltbar.

Spätestens an dieser Stelle, wo es um die Öffentlichkeitsrelevanz theologischer Arbeit und kirchlicher Verkündigung geht, muss man für eine Definition der Theologie entscheiden, die der weiteren Gedankenführung zugrunde liegt. Ich entscheide für eine funktional-kerygmatische Bestimmung der Theologie, nachdem Theologie als kritische Funktion der Kirche und als wissenschaftliche Selbstbestimmung des christlichen Glaubens auf sein eigenes Wesen (Althaus, Herms) zu betrachten ist, die zur ‘zustimmende Leitung der christlichen Kirche’ (Schleiermacher) und zur Lösung praktischer Lebensfragen im Lichte christlichen Wirklichkeitsverständnisses erforderlich ist.¹⁶ Dieser Bestimmung entspricht die Frage nach der (1) Ziel der Theologie mit Blick auf die Systematische Theologie innerhalb des theologischen Fächerkanons und nach dem (2) Bildungsaufgabe theologischer Unterricht.

(1) Ziel systematisch-theologischer Arbeit ist die Rechenschaft des christlichen Glaubens vor der Gegenwart – ‘seid allezeit bereit zur Verantwortung vor jedermann, der von euch Rechenschaft fordert über die Hoffnung, die in euch ist’ (1 Petr 3,15). Diese Arbeit geschieht in der Kommunikations- und Verantwortungsgemeinschaft der Kirche – meint Joachim Zehner in seiner Arbeitsbuch für Systematischer Theologie -,¹⁷ und hilft dazu, den auf die Offenbarung Gottes beruhenden Glauben in der Gemeinschaft der Kirche, in der Gesellschaft und in dem akademischen Bereich der Wissenschaften – also auf dem Forum der Öffentlichkeit - zu artikulieren und zu erklären. Dies geschieht in wissenschaftlicher Weise, wenn in ‘sorgfältigen, transparenten und rechenschaftsfähigen Schritten’¹⁸ der Inhalt des Glaubens vor dem Erkenntnisstand anderer Wissenschaften verantwortet und bewährt wird. Die weitere Aufgabe dieser systematischer Theologie, in einer bestimmter Problemsituation Einzelaspekte des christlichen Glaubens zu klären, neu zu verantworten und in angemessener Form zum Ausdruck bringen. Beispiel dafür kann die Frage der Kindertaufe oder die politische Versöhnungsidee erwähnt werden. Bei dem ersten geht es um die Infragestellung kirchlicher Praxis auf Grund neuzeitlicher Philosophie über die Autonomie des menschlichen Individuums und Entwicklungs- und Sozialpsychologischen Erkenntnisse, nach dem unmündige Kindertaufe dem Recht des Kindes auf freie Entfaltung der Persönlichkeit entgegensteht.¹⁹ Die Idee der ‘Versöhnung’ gilt in heutiger Alltagssprache nicht mehr als Zentralbegriff paulinischer Theologie, sondern als Schlüsselbegriff politisch-ethischen Selbstverständigung²⁰ der Gesellschaften in Mittel-Osteuropa nach dem Zusammenbruch kommunistischer Diktaturen. In beiden Fällen gilt es: aus der Öffentlichkeit aufgeworfene Fragen und Problemstellungen kritisch zu untersuchen, Begriffe zu definieren, die Aspekte der Probleme aus der Perspektive theologischer und nicht-theologischer Wissenschaften zu analysieren und zentrale Inhalte des Glaubens vor der Öffentlichkeit der Kirche und Gesellschaft zu klären.

In diesem Vorgang muss die theologischer Arbeit ihrem Gegenstand und ihrer Sache treu bleiben. Die Ansatz der Theologie Barths und der Wort Gottes Theologie ist in diesem Zusammenhang erwähnenswert. Barth gibt der Theologie die Aufgabe, darum zu ringen, dass die Offenbarung gehört, korrekt verkündigt und hingenommen wird. Theologie ist also keine Religionswissenschaft, weil ihre Gegenstand nicht die Erfahrung oder die Bewusstsein des religiösen Menschen ist, sondern Gottes

¹⁵ Tracy, D., *The analogical imagination. Christian theology and the culture of pluralism*, New York, Crossroad. 2000, 3-46.

¹⁶ Stock, K., Art. Theologie III. In: *TRE Bd 33*, 324.

¹⁷ Vgl: Zehner, J., *Arbeitsbuch Systematischer Theologie. Eine Methodenhilfe für Studium und Praxis*. Gütersloh, Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1998, 13.

¹⁸ Ebd. 13.

¹⁹ Ebd. 42.

²⁰ Reuter, H-R. (Hg.), *Politik der Versöhnung*. Stuttgart, Kohlhammer 2002.

Selbstoffenbarung in seinem Wort. Gegenstand der Theologie: ist Gottes Wort. Oder nach seiner ausführlichen Definition aus 1929, Theologie ist die der Kirche zugeordnete Wissenschaft von Gott, als “dem Gegenstand der Verkündigung dieser Kirche.”²¹ Hier wird es deutlich: Theologie ist eine Funktion der Kirche. Ganz genau, “in der Theologie versucht die Kirche, sich immer wieder kritisch darüber Rechenschaft zu geben, was das heißt und heißen muss, vor Gott und vor dem Menschen: Kirche zu sein.”²² Theologie existiert nicht in einem beliebigen Raum, sondern in dem Raum zwischen Taufe und Abendmahl, zwischen Heiliger Schrift und ihrer Auslegung und Verkündigung. Theologie ist nur im kirchlichen Raum denkbar, als die notwendige, wissenschaftliche und kritische Selbstprüfung der Kirche – immer vor Angesicht Gottes und am Maßstab des Wortes Gottes gemessen.²³

Aus dieser Perspektive gibt es keine Alternative für eine funktional verstandene und auf Gottes Wort angewiesene ‚kirchliche Theologie‘. Weder die plausible Vermittlung zwischen Kultur, Zeitgeist und Schrift, noch eine als ‚gelebte Religion‘ bezeichneter christlicher Glaube kann den oben definierten Ziel gerecht werden. Die erste Lösung, die ‚Vermittlung‘ wäre mit einer Selbstbeschreibung beschäftigt, um sich den anderen Wissenschaften, Kultur und Religionen als ‚salonfähig‘ zu verkaufen. In diesem Fall wäre die Suche nach Entsprechungsinstanzen von innen auf dem Plan, statt sich auf das durch Zeugnis und Bekenntnis offenbarte Wort Gottes, als den Grund der Theologie zu besinnen. Der zweite Weg würde zu einer Fremdbestimmung der Theologie von Außen führen, weil einer Religion, die sich als ‚strittig-gelebte Erfahrung‘ oder als ‚christlich-normative Lebensführung‘ darstellt, seitens der anderen Wissenschaften der wissenschaftliche Rang abgesprochen wird.²⁴ Die ambivalente Beurteilung des Faches Theologie in der Uni- und Hochschulpolitik und die ständige Debatte um die Öffentliche Rolle der Theologie und Kirche in der Gesellschaft, lassen diese Tendenzen erkennen – ebenso in Ungarn, wie (nach meiner Beobachtung) in Deutschland oder in der Schweiz.

Der funktionalen Bestimmung der Theologie entsprechend umfasst die Bezeichnung ‘Systematische Theologie’ den Zusammenhang verschiedener theologischer Arbeitsgebiete. Sie schließt ein:

- den exegetischen Kompetenz, der die Aussageintention der biblischen Texte in ihrer primärer Kommunikations- und Interpretationssituation;
- den dogmatischen Kompetenz, der die Evangeliums- und Bekenntnisgemäßheit der gegenwärtiger Lehre überprüft;
- den historischen Kompetenz, die Fähigkeit die den geschichtlichen Gegenwart der Kirche in dem Erinnerung und Vergegenwärtigung der Entwicklung des Christentums betrachtet;
- den ethischen Kompetenz, der die Orientierung für das Handeln und die Theorie der Sittlichkeit im Horizont der Gegenwart zum Gegenstand hat;
- den praktischen Kompetenz, der die exegetischen-systematische und historischen Kompetenzen integrierend ihre Aufgabe in der Kommunikation des christlichen Wirklichkeitsverständnis in der heutigen Lebenswelt sieht;²⁵

In diesem Gesamtbild kommt der Systematischen Theologie die Rolle eines Rahmenkonzeptes zu, das nicht nur die Vereinigung differenzierter theologischer Wissens als Aufgabe hat, sondern viel mehr nach dem funktionalen Einheit der Theologie ruft. ‘Eine solche Systematik ist die Funktion aller Funktionen der Theologie.’²⁶ Nach dem bis in die Neuzeit bestehenden Einheitlichkeit des Faches Theologie institutionell und methodisch ausdifferenziert hat, ist es Zeit den inneren Zusammenhang der vierfachen Disziplinen wieder anzuerkennen und aufzuzeigen – gerade im Horizont kirchlicher und gesellschaftlicher Öffentlichkeit, dem Sache und Gegenstand der Theologie entsprechend.

(2) Für eine funktional-kerygmatisch verstandene Bestimmung der Theologie entspricht das Bildungsziel einer ‘theologischen Habitus’ (als habitus intellectus practicus). Und das ist die Frage unserer Konferenz: Was für eine Theologie zu verantworten ist und wie sieht sich unsere theologische Ausbildung

²¹ Barth, K., ‘Schicksal und Idee in der Theologie.’ In: *Zwischen den Zeiten* 1929, 310.

²² Ebd, 177.

²³ Barth, K., *S. Ann* 13, 177 – Vgl.: KD I/1. 1-2.

²⁴ Siehe dazu die Aufsätzenreihe unter dem Titel ‘Was ist gute Theologie?’ In: *Zeitzeichen* 7-9/2002. von U. Körtner, W. Gräßl und G. Pfeiderer.

²⁵ Vgl.: Stock, K., Art. ‘Theologie III’ In: *S. Ann* 16, 328-340.

²⁶ Sauter, G., ‘Art. Dogmatik I.’ In: *TRE Bd* 9, 55.

aus? Im Blick auf die heutigen kirchlichen, gesellschaftlichen und akademischen Öffentlichkeit ist dieses Bildungsziel folgendes sein: in allen Bereichen der Öffentlichkeit die Erbauung der christlicher Gemeinde und die Förderung ihrer Dialog-, Handlungs- und Verantwortungsfähigkeit in der umgebenden Welt zu dienen.

Damit möchte ich zum Schluss an meiner Vortrag vor zwei Jahren in Berekfürdő anknüpfen,²⁷ als wir uns mit dem Thema Professionalität und Amtlichkeit beschäftigt haben. Im Blick auf die Diskrepanz zwischen den theologischen Anspruch und empirischen Wirklichkeit des Pfarramts habe ich den Versuch gemacht, Indizien für einen 'theologischen Kompetenz' zu finden, gerade unter den drängenden Fragen: Wie viel Theologie braucht der/die Pfarrer/In im kirchlichen und gesellschaftlichen Alltag und welche Art von Theologie ist erforderlich?

Wenn Theologie heute als Funktion der Kirche und Dienst am Wort gesehen wird, kann nicht die Frage nach Differenzierung und Zuordnung einzelnen theologischen Disziplinen, oder nach dem Ringen um einen wissenschaftlichen Rang der Theologie von höchster Bedeutung sein. Viel wichtiger und dringlicher scheint mir die Klärung und inhaltlichen Bestimmung einer 'theologischen Kompetenz' der Pfarrerinnen und Pfarrer, der Kirchenleitung, der Theologen und Nicht-Theologen (zugleich). Wird theologische Kompetenz als Inbegriff der Fähigkeiten verstanden, die für die professionelle Verwaltung und Führung der 'Institution Kirche' erforderlich sind, ergibt sich die Antwort auf die Frage 'was für eine und wie viel Theologie braucht ein Pfarrer?' nicht nur vom jeweiligen Amtsverständnis und Selbstbild der Pfarrer her. Welchen Wert haben dann außerkirchliche und innerkirchliche Erwartungen? Welchen Stellenwert hat dann der Ruf nach Realitätsanpassung? Der Kern einer Theologischen Kompetenz sollte in einer anderen Richtung gesucht werden: z.B. in dem hermeneutischen Zirkel zwischen Schrift, Verkündigung und heutiger Welt- und Lebenserfahrung. Aus dieser Perspektive wäre deutlich, was theologische Grundkompetenz des Pfarrers oder der Theologen bedeuten würde: eine persönlich reflektierte Lebensführung, die Fähigkeit zur Versachlichung von Glaubensfragen, und die Fähigkeit, die Autonomie und Verantwortung der Gemeindeglieder in Fragen des Glaubens und eigenständigen Urteilsbildung zu stärken.²⁸ Selbst Barth hat ließ auch keinen Zweifel daran, dass die Gemeindeglieder oder die ganze Gemeinde die Funktion der Theologie erfüllen sollte – dass Nicht-Theologen und Nicht-Pfarrer – nach unserem Verständnis die dreifache Öffentlichkeit - mitverantwortlich sein sollten dafür, dass 'die Theologie ihrer Professoren und Pfarrer keine schlechte, sonder eine gute sei.'²⁹

²⁷ Fazakas, S., 'Pfarrexistenz heute. Die Rolle des Pfarrers/PfarrerIn in der ungarischen Kirche und Gesellschaft.' In: Ganzevoort, R.R. & Fazakas, S. (Eds.), *Ministeriality and Professionality. Papers of a Working Conference*. Debrecen, 2003, 27.

²⁸ Vgl.: Körtner, U.H.J., *Die Gemeinschaft des Heiligen Geistes. Zur Lehre vom Heiligen Geist und der Kirche*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999, 100.

²⁹ Barth, K., 'Offenbarung...' In: *S. Ann 13*, 184.

TOWARD AN INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGY: PARADIGM SHIFTS IN MISSIOLOGY, ECUMENICS AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION¹

Volker Küster

The three disciplines missiology, ecumenics and comparative religion (when taught at a theological faculty) are the sources of what we have started calling intercultural theology. Missiology is nowadays dealing to a large extent with the ways Christianity is taking form in different cultures. Mission is always also culture contact. If ecumenics does not limit itself to the Protestant-Catholic relationship but turns to the pluralism of confessions, denominations and groups, the cultural dimension will come to the fore as well. Under the premise that religion is a cultural system,² all three subdivisions of the pluri-discipline missiology, ecumenics and comparative religion³ are then equally concerned with questions of culture contact, which can be qualified more closely as first contact, conflict and exchange⁴. Culture and religion are related dialectically to one another and penetrate each other. Cultures are man-made complex weaves of meaning and symbol systems, always already open to transcendence. Religions are cultural expressions of an experience of resonance.⁵ “Intercultural theology” is therefore an adequate umbrella term for interconfessional, intercultural and interreligious issues.⁶

THE SITUATION OF THE PLURI-DISCIPLINE MISSIOLOGY, ECUMENICS AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION AT THE PROTESTANT FACULTIES

The general trend to favor religious studies over against theology strengthens the position of comparative religion. Where the theological frame is preserved, there is a tendency to find a new name for missiology and ecumenics in reaction to the paradigm shifts that these disciplines are undergoing.

In Germany the chairs for missiology are in combination with ecumenics and/or comparative religion. While missiology is frequently declared superfluous, ecumenics is nearly absorbed by dogmatics. As a consequence comparative religion becomes the lead discipline.

In the Netherlands most of the chairs for mission and ecumenics will not be reopened. Only at the IIMO in Utrecht and the Theological University Kampen (Thuk) will some kind of follow-up with different labels remain. Comparative religion or history of religions is in the Netherlands a discipline of its own right.

With about ten chairs, Germany still claims the most. Besides the two remaining in the Netherlands, the numbers in Great Britain and the Nordic countries Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland vary between one and two chairs.

¹ Presented on different occasions and in varying forms at the Universities of Birmingham, Aarhus, Utrecht, a gathering of EATWOT with theological partners in Chateau du Bossey / Switzerland and the joint assembly of the boards of DOAM/SOAM in Rheinwil/Switzerland. Earlier versions are published in: *Interkulturelle Hermeneutik und lectura popular. Neuere Konzepte in Theorie und Praxis* (Beiheft zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 72), Frankfurt a.M. 2002, 219-227; *Voices from the Third World* 25 (2002) 112-119 and *Theology and the Religions. A Dialogue*, ed. by Viggo Mortensen, Grand Rapids 2003, 171-184.

² Cf. Geertz, Clifford, ‘Religion as a Cultural System.’ In: id., *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*, New York 1973, 87-125.

³ Cf. Küster, Volker, ‘Religionsgeschichte, Missionswissenschaft, Ökumenik. Thesen zu einer bedrohten Pluridisziplin.’ In: *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt* 97, 7/1997, 342-343.

⁴ Cf. Bitterli, Urs, *Alte Welt – neue Welt. Formen des europäisch-überseeischen Kulturkontaktes vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Munich 1992.

⁵ Cf. Theißen, Gerd, *On Having a Critical Faith*, London 1979.

⁶ Cf. Küster, Volker, ‘Interkulturelle Theologie.’ In: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*⁴, vol. 4, 197-199.

In the US missiology is established as a practical discipline at the seminaries, while the large schools such as Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Union or Chicago have chairs for ecumenics and world Christianity. They also hired a number of Third World Theologians such as C.S. Song (Berkeley), Kosuke Koyama (Union), Lamin Sanneh (Yale), Chung Hyun-Kyung (Union), Kwok Pui-lan (Cambridge) or Thomas Thangaraj (Candler). Eastern Europe and the Third World are about the only places where new chairs are opened.

THE EMERGENCE OF AN INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGY

In the wake of secular emancipation movements in the Third World in the period of decolonisation and the building of a new world order after World War II, the then-called younger churches cut the umbilical cord between them and the former mission churches and contextual theologies developed. The Western mission project and theology of mission underwent a crisis and tried to cope theologically with the new situation. In the 1970s a demographic shift of Christianity from the North to the South, especially Latin America and Africa, became evident. With the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the implosion of the communist block this epoch came to an end. Theology has just begun to reflect on the new developments which became known as globalization.

From the late 1960s early 1970s onward, contextual theologies emerged all over the Third World. As early as 1976 contextual theologians from Africa, Asia, Latin America and their diasporas in the West organized themselves in Dar es Salam as Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT).⁷ Their debates about commonalities, differences and cross-fertilization are a success story of an intercultural discourse. The representatives of the two great schools of contextual theology, liberation theology and inculturation and dialogue theology learned from each other and broadened their perception of their particular contexts.

Latin American liberation theologians have been accused for not taking into consideration folk Catholicism as well as the cultural-religious traditions of the indigenous peoples and the African minorities. During the 1980s they changed their attitude considerably. While Latin America was regarded as the most Westernised part of the Third World, liberation theologies in Africa and Asia were more aware of cultural-religious issues from the beginning due to their contexts. African theologians challenged South African black theology for its preoccupation with the race issue. Inculturation and dialogue theologians from Africa and Asia on the other hand were criticized for lacking awareness of socioeconomic and political factors. It was the Asian theologian Aloysius Pieris who pleaded for a merging of the two schools within EATWOT. In the 1990s some sprouting Asian liberation theologies such as Dalit theology in India and Burakumin theology in Japan criticized the traditional dialogue theologies for not paying due attention to the social implications in the cultural-religious systems of their respective contexts. Further, ecology and gender issues became new items on the theological agenda.

With her plea for an „irruption within the irruption“ Ghanaian theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye signalled the coming of age of Third World women’s theology.⁸ The women within EATWOT gave Third World Theology a fresh impulse. They are in a way the second generation. While some of them are still in their fifties the grand old men are slowly disappearing. It has to remain at present an open question how contextual theology in the Third World will continue. But the reconstitution of human dignity before God and men contrary to the facts of individual life situations and the right of cultural difference are irrefutable contributions by contextual theologies.⁹

The ecclesiological and theological awakening in the Third World is paralleled by a crisis in mission and mission theology in the West. As a matter of fact many of the chairs for missiology and ecumenics were instituted to observe these developments in the former mission countries. The term “intercultural theology” which indicates a growing awareness of Christian pluralism, is closely connected to the names of Hans Jochen Margull, Richard Friedly and Walter Hollenweger, the founding editors of the *Studies into the Intercultural History of Christianity*. Margull and Friedli reacted immediately to the new developments

⁷ Cf. Küster, Volker, ‘Aufbruch der Dritten Welt. Der Weg der Ökumenischen Vereinigung von Dritte-Welt-Theologen [EATWOT].’ In: *Verkündigung und Forschung* 37, 1992, 45-67.

⁸ Cf. Strahm, Doris, *Vom Rand in die Mitte. Christologie aus der Sicht von Frauen in Asien, Afrika und Lateinamerika*, Luzern 1997.

⁹ Cf., Küster, Volker, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ. Intercultural Christology*, London 2001.

in churches and theologies of the Third World in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were also pioneers in the debate about interreligious dialogue.¹⁰ Hollenweger has written a three-volume intercultural theology which is an enormous reservoir of material but still lacks some systematic reflection.¹¹

Here the second generation of postwar missiologists came to the fore. Communication theories, which were applied in mission theology as a helpful tool, were critically reflected from the perspective of the receiver. Hermeneutics were introduced as a means to understand the other. In Germany Theo Sundermeier tried to re-establish missiology as a hermeneutic discipline encountering the „cultural stranger“.¹² Mission is being with the people, living together or convivence as Sundermeier puts it with a term found in Latin America. Convivence constitutes a community of helping as well as learning from each other and feasting together. The feast creates space to meet the other, also the cultural-religious stranger. The tension between convivence and difference is not neglected but accepted in mutual respect.¹³ Another milestone on the theoretical level was Bob Schreiter's analysis of local contextualisation processes with the help of communication theories and semiotics.¹⁴ The Christian tradition as such is for him a series of local theologies. With his concept of a „new Catholicity“ he now opts for a theology that operates between the local and the global.¹⁵

Intercultural theology is a necessary tool to link the divergent contextual theologies and to analyse globalized cultural systems in their interaction with Christianity. Its central features are the change of perspective that is expressed by the recognition of the different identity of the cultural-religious other and the attempt to understand him or her in a way that they can discern themselves in my perception. Intercultural theology is creating new space for theological thinking in an age of pluralism.¹⁶

The discourse among contextual theologians in EATWOT as well as the Western discourse on contextual theologies in the pluri-discipline missiology, ecumenics and comparative religion were focussing on three themes: liberation, inculturation and dialogue.¹⁷ Both discourses led to the conclusion that there is a necessity for an intercultural theology.

Liberation, inculturation, and dialogue were also the recurring themes in the official documents of the Catholic Church after Vatican II on the topics of mission and the relation to other religions such as „Redemptoris Missio“ (1990) and „Dialogue and Proclamation“ (1991). The same is true for the World Council of Churches on the Protestant and Orthodox side with documents like „Guidelines on Dialogue“ (1979) and „Mission and Evangelisation“ (1982).

But the discussion within and between the churches has not been without tension and conflict. There has been a rather critical stance toward liberation and dialogue theologians on the Catholic side, as it is indicated by the cases of Leonardo Boff and Tissa Balasuria. In official Vatican documents inculturation is restricted again to mere accommodation. In the ecumenical movement there was a split between the so called ecumenicals and evangelicals about the question of liberation and interreligious dialogue, which led to the foundation of the evangelical Lausanne movement.¹⁸ Even within this group, however, there is still a certain pluralism regarding the issue of contextualization. Especially evangelicals coming from the Third

¹⁰ Cf. Margull, Hans Jochen, *Zeugnis und Dialog. Ausgewählte Schriften*, Ammersbek bei Hamburg 1992; Friedli, Richard, *Fremdheit als Heimat. Auf der Suche nach einem Kriterium für den Dialog zwischen den Religionen*, Zürich 1974.

¹¹ Cf. Hollenweger, Walter J., *Erfahrungen der Leibhaftigkeit. Interkulturelle Theologie*, München 1979; id., *Umgang mit Mythen. Interkulturelle Theologie II*, München 1982; ders., *Geist und Materie. Interkulturelle Theologie III*, München 1988.

¹² Cf. Sundermeier, Theo, *Konvivenz und Differenz. Studien zu einer verstehenden Missionswissenschaft*, Erlangen 1995; id., *Den Fremden verstehen. Eine praktische Hermeneutik*, Göttingen 1996.

¹³ Cf. Simpfendörfer, Werner, 'Auf der Suche nach einer interkulturellen Theologie. Herausforderungen – Aspekte – Bausteine.' In: *Junge Kirche* 48, 1987, 266-273; id., 'Interkulturelle Theologie. Wie kann man Ende und Anfang verknüpfen?.' In: *Evangelische Kommentare* 6/1989, 37-40. While Sundermeier tries to bear the tension between convivence and difference, Simpfendörfer concentrates himself on the cultural conflicts. Both regard the feast as the exemplary opportunity to experience the cultural stranger. But while Simpfendörfer wants to overcome the strangeness in the feast, Sundermeier wants to give it space.

¹⁴ Cf. Schreiter, Robert J., *Constructing Local Theologies*, New York, Maryknoll 1985.

¹⁵ Cf. Schreiter, Robert J., *The new Catholicity. Theology between the Global and the Local*, New York, Maryknoll 1997.

¹⁶ Postcolonial theory speaks of creating a „third space“. Cf. Bhabha, Homi K., *The Location of Culture*, London / New York 1994.

¹⁷ Cf. Schreiter, The new Catholicity.

¹⁸ Douglas, James Dixon (ed.), *Let the Earth Hear his Voice. International Congress on World Evangelization Lausanne, Switzerland*, Minneapolis 1975.

World feel the need to respond theologically to their contexts of poverty, oppression, and religious pluralism.¹⁹ Evangelicals have always had a missiological interest in the gospel and culture issue.²⁰ There they meet with Catholicism. The performance of the young Korean woman theologian Chung Hyun-Kyung at the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra in 1991 led to a severe conflict with the Orthodox churches on the gospel and culture issue.²¹

„Globalization“ has become the catchword for the recent changes in the world order.²² It is signified by the global extension of neoliberal capitalism after the fall of communism and the compression of the world through communication technologies. This change of contexts could not be without consequences for contextual theologies, as can be clearly shown with regard to our three generative themes:

- Liberation: The political situation in the Third World has changed. In Latin America, e.g., the military dictatorships were replaced by populist regimes and young democracies. In South Korea the lifelong opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung finally became president, and in South Africa Nelson Mandela managed a peaceful change. Reconciliation, reparation and reconstruction are thus the new themes on the theological agenda. But at the same time the gap between rich and poor increase in the global system. And many Third World countries are shaken by cruel ethnic and religious conflicts. The classic themes of liberation theology thus still remain current.
- Inculturation: As far as culture is concerned, globalisation theories speak of glocalisation. The hyperculture of consumerism - some have spoken of a McDonaldisation or Coca-Colonisation of the world - is counteracted by a resurgence of local cultures. But the myth of cultural uniqueness has faded. Cultures are mixed and consist of numerous subcultures. Postcolonial theory speaks in this regard of hybridisation or creolisation.²³
- Dialogue: The theological reflection on interreligious dialogue remains ambivalent. At the same time, we are confronted with ethnicity as well as bloody cultural-religious conflicts driven by an ever growing fundamentalism within the different religions. New, non-patronizing strategies of interreligious solidarity with those who are able to confront the fundamentalists from within their own religious traditions have to be explored.

MISSION AND DIALOGUE: THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN MISSION THEOLOGY

What are the implications of the aforementioned developments for a theology of mission? Does it still make sense to talk about Christian mission at all? The answer to this question is yes, but it is impossible today to talk about mission without referring to dialogue.

Defining the concepts

In Christian terms mission is being with the people, living the faith in an exemplary way (Mt 5), telling the biblical stories and relating them to the particular context and individual life situations, helping the needy by healing und feeding them and inviting everybody to the table of communion. While in Eucharist Christians should share their religion in a ritual manner with everybody who feels invited and wants to participate, baptism is the rite that incorporates the convert into the Christian community. It presupposes

¹⁹ Cf. Samuel, Vinay / Sugden, Chris, *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World. Evangelical Christologies from the contexts of poverty, powerlessness and religious pluralism. The Papers of the First Conference of Evangelical Mission Theologians from the Two Thirds World, Bangkok, Thailand, March 22-25, 1982*, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1984.

²⁰ Cf. The Willowbank Report. Report of a Consultation on Gospel and Culture, held at Willowbank, Somerset Bridge, Bermuda from 6th to 13th January 1978, Lausanne occasional papers 2, Wheaton, IL 1978; Kraft, Charles H., *Christianity and Culture. A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, New York, Maryknoll 1979.

²¹ Cf. Hyun-Kyung, Chung, 'Come Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation.' In: Michael Kinnamon (ed.), *Signs of the Spirit. World Council of Churches Official Report Seventh Assembly, Canberra, Australia, 7-20 February 1991*, 37-47; Ibid., *Reflections of Orthodox participants addressed to the Seventh General Assembly*, 279-82; Basdekis, Athanasios, 'Canberra und die Orthodoxen. Anfragen und Forderungen an den ÖRK im Anschluss an die 7. Vollversammlung.' In: *Ökumenische Rundschau* 40, (1991), 356-74.

²² Cf. Beck, Ulrich, *Was ist Globalisierung?*, Frankfurt a.M. 1997; Waters, Malcolm, *Globalization*, New York 1995.

²³ Cf. Young, Robert J.C., *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London 1995; Hannerz, Ulrich, 'The World in Creolization.' In: *Africa* 57 (1987), 546-559.

knowledge about the Christian religion, commitment of faith, and testimony to the God triune. Baptism should therefore take place only after a period of living together and learning from each other.²⁴

But missionary expansion is a central feature of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism alike. Nevertheless, there is a lack of a kind of comparative missiology. To name just a few points of comparison: All three rely on religious scripts and teaching for their missionary endeavors. Islam shares with Christianity also the social engagement, which was lacking in Buddhism until recently. Each has a rite of conversion: baptism in Christianity, reciting the shahada in Islam and the triple refuge in Buddhism. Primary religions are not missionary. That is true for Judaism as well, despite proselytism, and partly also for Hinduism, which is in fact a mixture of various kinds of religions. New religious movements stemming from Hinduism such as Hare Krishna and Osho (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh) are missionising in the West.

Interreligious dialogue developed out of the necessity to live together in multifaith situations. It has therefore often a concrete occasion and an ethical impetus. In its institutionalized forms it is mainly based on Christian initiative. The so-called dialogue in community or living dialogue of the people who experience the faiths of their neighbors in their daily life, however, has been practiced ever since different religions exist in the same place. But there have also been forms of intellectual refined dialogue between the learned of different religious traditions in antiquity and the Middle Ages. Modern interreligious dialogue which goes beyond mere ethical questions of overcoming poverty, violence etc. can be understood as a common search for truth which is always only discernible in a contextual way. In analogy to this dialogue of minds and the dialogue of life, one could speak of a spiritual dialogue or dialogue of hearts regarding the third form of dialogue between the mystics of different religious traditions.²⁵ Again the initiative is mainly on the Christian side: Christian retreat centers offering Zen meditation or Suffi dance and Christian ashrams in India, are well-known examples. But there are also Zen masters reading Eckhart and Hindu sages, who respect Jesus as one of their kind. Recent discussions about sharing spiritual experiences and the possibility of interreligious prayer also belong to this strand of interreligious dialogue.

Mission and dialogue can both only be successful if the local context and the experiences of the people are taken as a starting point and are continuously referred to in the process.

How to Relate Mission and Dialogue

Basically there are four ways of relating mission and dialogue. The two extreme positions are that dialogue substitutes for mission or that mission instrumentalizes dialogue as a means of converting adherents of other religious communities. While the first stance is advocated by representatives of a pluralist theology of religions, the second is put into practice by evangelical mission circles.

A middle path is taken for instance by the mainline churches in their attempt to keep mission and dialogue apart. The World Council of Churches has separate subunits for mission and evangelization and interreligious dialogue. The Vatican has a separate Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and a Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

Finally there is the possibility of relating mission and dialogue dialectically. As a matter of fact, there can be no real dialogue without witness. Only someone who has a religious conviction and is willing to share it not only by questioning the other but also by allowing himself to be questioned gives due respect to the religious conviction of the other and can be taken seriously. Hans Jochen Margull in speaking of vulnerability (*Verwundbarkeit*) has given this approach a christological foundation.²⁶

²⁴ Child baptism is then a matter from second generation Christians onward. In the first generation it should only take place together with the parents. In some strands of western Christianity however baptism has nowadays become more a family rite rather than a rite of incorporation into the particular church community.

²⁵ Similar ideas were uttered by Dominic Moghal at the Aarhus conference (cf. fn. 1). Cf. also Swidler, Leonard, 'The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue.' In: *Current Dialogue* Nr. 5 (1983), 6-9, 9; Eck, Diana L., 'What do we mean by "Dialogue"?' In: *Current Dialogue* Nr. 11 (1986), 5-15.

²⁶ Cf. Margull, Hans Jochen, 'Verwundbarkeit. Bemerkungen zum Dialog.' In: *Evangelische Theologie* 34 (1974), 410-420 [= id., *Zeugnis und Dialog. Ausgewählte Schriften*, Ammersbeck bei Hamburg 1992, 330-342].

The double commandment of interreligious dialogue is therefore: (1) to try to understand the religious other in a way that the other can recognize himself or herself in my perception; (2) to give witness and to share the best of one's own faith with each other. Interreligious communication and hermeneutics are interwoven. To communicate one has to understand and vice versa. With translation, questioning, and exchange, every interreligious encounter can take on at least three different forms. Translation happens necessarily at the beginning of every dialogue. One tries to understand the thought patterns of the religious other in one's own frame of reference. In the course of the dialogue, however, the partners might reach a point where one can not but question the alien faith system. But it may also come to exchange and mutual enrichment. The interreligious encounter not only challenges but also changes the partners in dialogue.²⁷

Interreligious dialogue is however not a ‚discourse without domination‘. This is probably an ideal that reality cannot meet in any case. Therefore the question of power has to be addressed. In the worst case long-endured suppression by a dominant religious tradition can escalate into interreligious conflicts.

Mission and Dialogue in the Context of Interreligious Conflicts

Not only under communism but also in many Islamic countries as well as in Hindu India, Christian mission is forbidden or at least under severe pressure. There are new persecutions of Christians caused by Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism. But there is also Hindu aggression against Muslims and mosques in India, and Muslim aggression against Buddhist monuments in Afghanistan. At the same time aggressive fundamentalist Christian missions cause religious upheavals in former peaceful multireligious communities. Mission without dialogue is doomed to failure and can cause severe interreligious conflicts. But how to deal with growing religious fundamentalism? Traditional concepts of interreligious dialogue presuppose openness towards the religious other and willingness to communicate. These strategies do not work in a fundamentalist framework. Those who are capable to challenge fundamentalists from within their own religious traditions in a kind of intrareligious dialogue have to be supported in interreligious solidarity. Further strategies of preventing conflict and violence have to be applied to interreligious conflicts.

Mission and Dialogue between Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism

Claims to its uniqueness are inherent to every religion. Exclusivism and inclusivism are the two antagonistic strategies to deal with the religious other. Even the so-called pluralist theology of religion is in the end a sublime form of inclusivism. In its move from Christocentrism to theocentrism and finally to a position beyond theism/non-theism, it constructs a metareligion that no longer takes seriously the identity of the religious other nor its own Christian identity.²⁸

The Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all have strong exclusivist tendencies due to their monotheism. That is also true among themselves. But even in blaming one another for being heretical in central patterns of their particular traditions, they still give evidence to their kinship. Jews regard Christianity as heresy because it venerates Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Muslims honor Jesus as one of the prophets but do not regard him as the Son of God, which is from a Christian point of view heretical. The Trinity is for Islam tritheism and therefore heresy. According to Islam, the Jews have falsified the Torah. Judaism and Christianity on the other hand do not accept Mohammed as a prophet.²⁹

In Judaism and Christianity the biblical teaching about God creating the world and pneumatology make an inclusivist position possible. Christian teaching about the logos spermatikos, that works in other religions dating back to Justin found its modern variant in Karl Rahner's ‚anonymous Christians‘³⁰. For Islam everybody is a born Muslim but does not necessarily follow the right path. The people of the book, Jews

²⁷ Cf. Küster, Volker, ‚Ein Dialog in Bildern. Reformbuddhismus und Christentum im Werk von Hattigamana Uttarananda.‘ In: *Mit dem Fremden Leben*, Teil 2, Becker, Dieter / Feldtkeller, Andreas (eds.) Erlangen 2000, 17-32; id., ‚Dialog VII: Mission und Dialog.‘ In: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Vol. 2, 1999, 821.

²⁸ Cf. among others Samartha, Stanley J., *One Christ – Many Religions. Toward a Revised Christology*, New York, Maryknoll 1991.

²⁹ Cf. Küster, Volker, ‚Verwandtschaft verpflichtet. Erwägungen zum Projekt einer „Abrahamitischen Ökumene.‘ In: *Evangelische Theologie* 62, 2002, 384-399.

³⁰ Cf. Rahner, Karl, ‚Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions.‘ In: *Theological Investigations* 5, New York / London 1966, 115-134.

and Christians, enjoy protection under Islam. In liberal law schools Buddhism and Hinduism are subsumed here. Only primal religions are in any case subject to mission.

The Asiatic religions Hinduism and Buddhism differ considerably from the strong exclusivism of the Abrahamic religions. The most inclusivist religion is probably Hinduism, which has been capable of absorbing all kinds of religions and religious influences. Shankara's Advaita Vedanta is a philosophical reflexion of this phenomenon. The least-exclusivist school of Buddhism is perhaps Mahayana which presupposes that everybody is a potential Buddha but has to awaken to it to let this become factual. But there arise exclusivist tendencies in some strands of these religions nevertheless.

Accepting deliberately that other tribes have other gods, tribal religions are in a way the most pluralist type of religion. At the same time, they are strictly exclusivist to the inside. Every member of the tribe is supposed to share the same religion.

Obviously there is no easy way to overcome this exclusivist-inclusivist dilemma without giving up considerable parts of one's own religious identity. But it might well be an important step to mutual understanding if one recognizes that all religions have claims toward their uniqueness in common. The ethos of respect and mutual recognition that is central in interreligious encounter can then lead to an approach that does not give up the uniqueness of one's tradition but recognizes the right of the other to have a similar conviction.³¹ From a Christian point of view this gives way to a dialogical pluralism that operates in two directions: we reflect internally in a theology of religions over the place of the different religions within the Christian thought system and at the same time develop a theology of dialogue that takes into consideration the positions of the others. Without coming to terms with the existence of other religions in one's own thought system, one will not be able to dialogue. This is probably true for all religious traditions.

As shown by the most controversial issue of Theology of Mission, the three disciplines missiology, ecumenics and comparative religion are undergoing deep changes that are asking for an intercultural approach. Crossing the Rubicon of traditional Western missionary thinking can however not mean neglecting or leaving behind the memories and experiences we have made on the way. To the contrary reflection on the missionary dimension of Christian faith in the encounter with cultures and religions remains an integral part of intercultural theology.

THE FUNCTIONS OF INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGY

Intercultural theology has at least four functions:

- 1) The heuristic function, which can be differentiated into hermeneutics, comparative theology and dialogics:
 - a. Hermeneutics: Intercultural hermeneutics do not look at the stranger to discover similarities first but accept the stranger in his or her difference. The hermeneutic criterion is that the others must be able to recognize themselves in the description of their counterpart.
 - b. Comparative theology: intercultural theology, then also compares and asks for transcultural constants without trying to deny the differences. What do men have in common beyond culture?
 - c. Dialogics: intercultural dialogue is a common search for truth that is only available contextually. At the same time, truth will always be more than the sum of the contextual truths. The rules of dialogue for the interconfessional, intercultural, and interreligious encounters have to be negotiated in the process.
- 2) The anamnestic function: intercultural theology collects and preserves the contextual knowledge.

³¹ Cf. Margull, Hans Jochen, 'Der „Absolutheitsanspruch“ des Christentums im Zeitalter des Dialogs. Einsichten in der Dialog-Erfahrung.' In: *Theologia Practica* 15, 1980, 67-75 [= id., *Zeugnis und Dialog*, 297-308].

- 3) The function of foundational theology: intercultural theology deals with issues like gospel and culture or clarifies categories such as inculturation, syncretism, and fundamentalism. In order to communicate, a terminological and theoretical framework must be developed out of the contextual debates, which must be constantly tested on its transcultural feasibility.
- 4) The ethical function: intercultural theology develops strategies for dealing with globalisation and the new nationalisms and ethnicity as well as the resulting cultural conflicts. Dialogue and conflict are the two interconnected issues for future discussions.

INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGY AS A NEW PARADIGM

Intercultural theology might well be a paradigm shift that has consequences for theology in toto.

The new paradigm intercultural theology is not only formally a new heuristic framework for the whole of theology but also connected to all its branches in a material way. Intercultural exegesis then deals with the cultural-religious contexts of the biblical literature or the history of the effects of these Scriptures in different cultures. Intercultural church history looks at the cultural factors in the mission history of Christianity. Practical theology searches for orientation in the multicultural society. The web of generative themes³² of systematic theology such as Trinity, Christology and ecclesiology etc. has to be reconsidered interculturally. Then one has to ask what new perspectives are opened up through the combination of the generative themes of the text with those of the diverse contexts, for instance, liberation, cultural identity, ecology or gender issues.

Besides interdisciplinarity, intercultural theology necessitates also a pluralism of methods and multimediality. Narrativity and esthetics become equal to the traditional academic theology. Art in all its variations is taken seriously as a theological medium.

But if everything is intercultural theology, nothing is intercultural theology. According to its emergence from the pluri-discipline missiology, ecumenics, and comparative religion, intercultural theology should be established in the field of systematic theology and integrate its source disciplines. At the same time, there will always remain a historical and empirical dimension.

Intercultural theology is a pluralistic concept. Its theological foundation is in the inner pluralism of the Christian faith, as it is expressed in the canon of biblical literature, the doctrine of God triune and the multitude of confessions, denominations and groups. This inner state as an open system makes it possible to link Christianity to the pluralism of late modernity, which then is not considered as a threat but as a chance.

32 Cf. Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York 1970; Küster, Volker, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ*, London 2001, 33-35.

RITUALS AND PUBLIC THEOLOGY – BEST PRACTICES

R.Ruard Ganzevoort

The introduction of the new Bachelor-Master structure in the theological curriculum of our university has had major effects on the process and content of teaching practical theology. More than other disciplines, practical theology was affected by the change *and* was given the opportunity for a significant innovation. This was not just an external impetus. Many discussions in the field result in the desire to make such a change (although of course not all practical theologians would welcome the present developments. In this contribution I will first describe these changes as the background for the course on rituals that will be presented.

The implications of a new curriculum

Two points of departure of the new curriculum are essential for the place practical theology has received. The first is the principle that the various theological disciplines function as equals juxtaposed to one another. This seemingly self-evident point must be evaluated as a significant development. Although there has always been the understanding that theology had a fundamental practical intention, the place of practical theology in the actual curricula has usually been the closing entry. After studying the Bible, the Creeds and confessions, and the history of the church (and perhaps a little bit of other religions), finally the student would receive training in preaching, pastoral care, and religious education. This Schleiermacherian sequence has functioned in our curriculum until recently. In previous curriculum changes the share of practical theology and of the social sciences was increased strongly, but all this was intended to fortify the practical training and preparation for ministry. Practical theology still was primarily practical, and only to a degree theological.

The second point of departure is defined by the international European consensus that bachelor studies are not intended to provide the necessary skills for practice. Instead the bachelor study should be devoted to academic training. If the university study would include preparation for professional work, this should be located in the master's studies.

These two points of departure coincide in the present curriculum. The result is that the professional preparation in the master studies is the joint responsibility of all the theological disciplines. Although practical theology may have a somewhat larger task (given the practical training involved in this study phase and the fact that usually practical theologians are most skilled in providing this training), essentially preparation for ministry is not the sole task of practical theology. On the other hand, in the bachelor phase, practical theology has a net study weight of 15 weeks, equal to other disciplines (beyond this, there are integration courses and languages). These practical theological courses are not burdened with the task of practical training. Instead they are available for academic introduction in practical theology and social sciences.

For the innovation of the discipline this is an important gain. Not only does it create time in the curriculum for academic introduction and discussion, more than that it allows a more pure academic growth because practical training is not intended. One logical result of that is that the topics in the bachelor courses on practical theology are not restricted to the church. The course presented here explicitly includes public rituals en discusses public theology.

As said earlier, not all practical theologians would welcome such a development. They might argue that practical theology finds its identity in a close connection to the praxis of the church and/or to the practice of the minister. Such conceptions of practical theology have their legitimate place. The problem, however, is that these close connections hinder the dialogue with other academic disciplines. The bachelor-master

distinction has helped us to create space for both: more academic in the bachelor's and more practice-focused in the master's.¹

The three bachelor courses on practical theology together offer a strong introduction in the discipline. The first course offers the general introduction and has a thematic focus on rituals. The second course offers an introduction in descriptive approaches to practical theology and a general introduction in the social sciences. Its thematic focus is on family, care, and power. The third course is on normative practical theology and offers an introduction into gender studies in theology. Its thematic focus is on learning. This way the three main areas of the field practical theology is involved in (worship, pastoral care, religious education) are presented to the students, but not in terms of how the minister should function. Instead they are offered as fields where we find phenomena worthy of theological investigation. More important still is the introduction to fundamental approaches in practical theology: description and normativity, and the adjacent disciplines of social sciences, gender studies, and pedagogics.²

A course on rituals

The choice to focus this introductory course on rituals has been rather deliberate. It seems that we live in a time where the classic shapes of religion, exemplified in the Word, have become more or less marginalized.³ For many people today, both inside and outside the churches, religion is not so much defined by words, but by experiences and gestures. Rituals have taken the place of content and convictions. Obviously, we may wonder whether this truly is a new situation. Perhaps theologians and church leaders have stressed the dimension of convictions and content, but for many believers experience, consolation, stories, and rituals have been more central to what religion means to their lives. Now that in our times religion becomes more and more deinstitutionalized, this laical preference comes to the fore and the ecclesial focus on content seems to become obsolete.

For students of practical theology, the challenge is to engage in this changing religious world, a world in which they are usually more at home than their parents, ministers or university teachers. In our usual curricula, we encouraged students to disengage from their first-hand knowledge of the world outside, and taught them theological blinkers, so that they were more or less unworldly when we were through with them. What we try to do now is activate their so far implicit and unarticulated theological pre-understandings and engage in critical conversation with the diverse religious landscape.

The course on rituals (like all the courses in the curriculum) consists of five chapters. Each chapter contains a section on the introduction in the discipline (general introduction, practical theology and ministry, practical theology and the church, practical theology and the individual believers, practical theology as an academic discipline). Furthermore, each section contains a case study of a particular ritual, ranging from a Sunday morning Eucharist to a 'Pink Sunday' worship, affirming gay and lesbian persons in the church, and from a pastoral care ritual to collective rituals following major events and disasters. Traditional and new institutional rituals thus are studied side by side with therapeutic and cultural rituals. The students are challenged to observe, analyze, and evaluate critically these rituals. They may bring their personal preferences and experiences to this evaluation, but only because that raises the question how and why we make certain judgments. What we want to teach in this course is not the proper stance toward certain rituals, but the critical academic attitude to understand and evaluate them. To illustrate this, I will present one of these rituals and discuss some of the theological questions involved. This ritual is treated in the chapter on everyday rituals and public theology.

¹ Of course, those students choosing practical theology as their specialization, their master's study does include further academic work in practical theology.

² In this structure, the third step – strategy – is missing. This is the main accent of the preparation for ministry during the master studies. Combining the two – as most students do – we offer a complete route through the discipline. These three steps (description, normative interpretation, strategy) are not the propriety of practical theology. They also formed the structure of the 2001 conference of DRHE and THUK. See Ganzevoort, R.R. & Fazakas, S. (eds.) *Amt und Professionalität. Ministeriality and Professionality*, Debrecen 2002.

³ Ganzevoort, R.R., 'Rituals and the Decay of the Word.' In: Holtrop, P.N., Lange, F. de, & Roukema R. (eds.) *The passion of protestants*, Kampen 2004, 149-164.

Theology of the rainbow bridge...

The section starts with a brief introduction to identity, rituals, and the virtual world of the internet. The internet world offers new possibilities of interacting with other persons and groups, with new shapes and new limitations. On the Internet, we find many shapes of rituals, like lighting a virtual candle of commemoration. One advantage of the internet is that one can more easily find people in similar circumstances.

Following this introduction, the students are invited to visit www.petloss.com. This site is dedicated to those mourning the death of their pet. On it, we find guidelines for the *Monday Pet Loss Candle Ceremony*: ‘On Monday evenings all across the globe we light candles in memory of our pets. It is a very healing ritual with no adherence to any religion or creed, just a simple lighting of candles to bring us all together.’

While there is an on-line Ceremony in the Chat Room every Monday, the Candle Ceremony does not have to be done on-line. Each of us can light our candles in our own way, and privately, but since we share a common love and since most of us do light them at the same time, we are joined in love and in spirit.’ Ideally, this ceremony is performed at 10 PM GMT.

The website also provides the liturgy for the ceremony in many languages (including Dutch, excluding Hungarian, but new translations are welcome). It reads as follows:

Tonight, Monday, we join hands, hearts and souls across the land as one large extended family to pray for our sick and dying pets and to pay tribute to our furbabies who have gone ahead to Rainbow Bridge. Someday, we will meet them again, with hugs, tears and kisses, as we walk together, in eternity, to our new home.

Until that blessed day, we honor these precious souls and remember them with the warm glow of flickering candles, sending a message of love, light and healing, and the faith to believe in miracles.

PRAYER: God, Creator of all living things, we ask that as we light our candles, the healing warmth of love will flow into the brokenhearted who are tending their ailing pets.

Give to them Your strength and comfort.

We also pray that the soft glow of light will part the clouds of grief and sorrow to surround our furbabies at the Bridge.

May excitement REIGN SUPREME as wagging tails, ecstatic purrs and flapping feathers feel our gentle touch once again.

May they know the gratitude we hold in our hearts for their faithfulness and gift of unconditional love as they are forever remembered.

We are temporarily separated for only a short while.

The silver cord that connects us through time and space can never be broken. AMEN.



CANDLE 1: PERSONAL FURBABY. Anything you wish to say.

I will not look back for there is sorrow.

I will not look for today for there is longing.

I will look forward for there is OUR tomorrow.



CANDLE 2: FURBABIES OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Read the names of those who are ill or have gone on before us as a tribute to them and their loving parents.

As we all meet here, our Bridgekids will be meeting all newcomers, easing their way.



CANDLE 3: FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND PEACE

In honor of all the homeless, forgotten, abandoned, abused animals.

For the nameless furchildren who gave their lives for others, for research and as a result of humankind's inhumanity.

May the Higher Powers that be forgive the cruelty.

We light this candle for them.

As our lights shine brightly through the galaxy, may the angels smile upon us, and know that for a brief moment, we have put aside worldly differences to bond as ONE.

CLOSING:

I have sent you on a journey to a land free from pain, not because I did not love you, but because I loved you too much to force you to stay.

MOMENT OF SILENCE.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they will be comforted."

Love, light and healing to all. Amen.

The candles being lit tonight;

Cast a soft and welcome flame.

And draw our loved ones to the light,

As we call to them by name.

Imagine spirits taking flight,

For a moment our souls entwine.

Say not Good Night, but in some

Brighter Time

Bid them all-

Good Morning.

When students have read this ceremony, they are asked to reflect on it. Usually quite diverse reactions are brought to the discussion, each meriting further practical theological analysis and evaluation.

- First, there is the experience of alienation. This ritual has a common form, but an uncommon content. Many students feel that this is from a completely different way of life. Probing this alienation a bit further, they become aware that their theological evaluations are often determined by the degree of familiarity to the students' own faith and tradition. The important issues arising from this are the relative importance of content versus form, and the impact of personal preferences on our theological investigations.
- Students are also impressed by the love and energy dedicated to the memory of these loved animals. This raises a lot of discussion about the role pets play in people's lives and what can be inferred from that about the level of social coherence in our societies. Is our connection to animals a sign that human interconnections fail to supply what is needed? These discussions prompt further research into societal loneliness and social networks. Psychological and sociological knowledge is brought to that task.
- Some students are irritated by this attention for animals on ethical grounds. They object to the seemingly excessive attention for animals when compared to the attention for millions of humans dying from (for example) AIDS or disasters. Pet love may be a western morbid luxury. In response to this, it is observed that the primary aim of the ceremony is connection and consolation. The suffering people go through is legitimate and cannot be dismissed because others might suffer even more. Through this ceremony, they not only connect (albeit imaginary?) with their lost pet, they also console one another.
- Usually students oppose the dogmatic content of the ceremony. The presuppositions for the ceremony reflect a popular form of a (disputable) eschatology that is extended towards animals. The idea that our pets remember us at heaven's gate and will welcome us after our

death may be comforting, but it is not necessarily true or compatible with Christian expectations. In this respect, the use of Christian language offends some students.

- Finally, some students observe that the ceremony is built on a one-sided image of animals (or pets in particular). It uses specific ‘soft’ language (rainbow, fur) and portrays pets as warm, innocent, tender creatures. There is no room for animals that may be fierce or dangerous. If a dog would have to be put to death because it had killed a child, this animal would not fit in the categories of the ceremony. In theological terms, the animal world depicted in the ceremony is one in which evil does not exist. It is paradise. The evil that is addressed in the ceremony is human evil. This portrayal should be evaluated as a simplification and as an escape from reality.

Public Theology

This task is an exercise in public theology. What we try to teach students is that their theological expertise is useful in analyzing public phenomena. Usually we use our theological knowledge only or primarily for understanding phenomena in the church and for acting in church ministry. That is a classic and legitimate use of theology for the audience of the church.

Sometimes a second step is set, in which theology is used to make the Christian self-understanding a more visible and viable function in society.⁴ In this approach, theology is primarily content, and more specifically Christian content. It is a form of theology that has an open eye for the needs of this world. At its worst, this type of theology seeks to demonstrate the superior value of the Christian worldview for this debate. Examples of this are found in the way the Vatican addresses fundamental questions of sexuality and HIV/AIDS and gender issues. At its best, this type of public theology is willing to engage in the troublesome issues of public debate. It wants to show how Christian visions can be useful in societal questions. Wonderful examples of this type of theology have been found in anti-Apartheid theology in South-Africa.

The ideal of public theology governing this course is, however still one step further. I see public theology as the challenge to share our methodical expertise and our knowledge of spirituality, meaning, transcendence, etcetera with the world we live in. Though based on a clear Christian background and identity, this public theology needs not be explicitly Christian in all its statements. Instead, it is brought to the task of hermeneutical analysis of public phenomena such as popular culture⁵ or individual biographies of traumatized men.⁶ Theologians working on public theology of this kind bring their methodical expertise to the understanding of the world we live in.

⁴ See Forrester, D.B., *Truthful Action. Explorations in Practical Theology*, Edinburgh, T&T Clark 2000.

⁵ Gräb, W., *Sinn fürs Unendliche, Religion in der Mediengesellschaft*, Gütersloh, Kaiser 2002.

Gräb, Graham, E., *Representations of the post/human. Monsters, aliens and others in popular culture*, Manchester, Manchester University Press. 2002.
Sinnmaschine, Herrmann, J., *Kino.Sinndeutung und Religion in Populären Film*, Gütersloh, Kaiser 2002.

⁶ Ganzevoort, R.R., *Reconstructies. Praktisch-theologisch onderzoek naar de verhalen van mannen over seksueel misbruik en geloof*, [Reconstructions. Practical Theological Inquiry into the Stories of Men about Sexual Abuse and Faith]. Kampen, Kok 2001.

THEOLOGY AND THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN THE WIND OF CHANGE¹ - BEST PRACTICES

Norbert Fehér

The sub-title of my lecture is Hungarian Reformed Church in the wind of change. I choose this title, because in Hungary if someone talks about Church and politics or theology and politics, we feel and know that after the forty years of communism we have to find new ways which enable us to relate ourselves to political life. We need them because the old methods can not be maintained in the new situation for moral reasons. I think that one lecture is not enough for us to analyze the problem of change in its depth, but I will point out the main issues and illustrate them with examples taken from our life.

During communism (1949-1989) the aim of the state power was to atrophy churches as much as it was possible. They viewed the historical Churches (Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran, Jewish community) through the glasses of Marxism. They thought that the Church was a backward institution full of silly superstitions, and it meant only a drag on social development. Besides the ideological reasons, the Church was regarded as offensive for the state from many other aspects. On the one hand, Church was the agent of old scale of values, which communism wanted to destroy. As pioneers we sang the lyrics in the French march – the Marseilles – “To abolish the past totally.” On the other hand, the Church was one of the strongest community creator power. Strong communities have always been the enemies of dictatorship. There was an institution put in charge of the systematic destruction of the Church, it was called Állam Egyházügyi Hivatal (ÁEH) State Institution for Church Affairs. Many pastors cooperated with this Institution. Servile theologians according to State Institution for Church Affairs worked out the Theology of Ministry. They ordered not only serving the contemporary state but also diacony as the main task of the Church, and in this way closed the Church between the walls of temples. Within this they pointed out the treatment of elders and disabled people. They chose these two groups because they knew that through them the Church would be able to influence society. As opposed to this, through the adults and youths much bigger influence could be exercised. For this reason state suppressed Church schools.

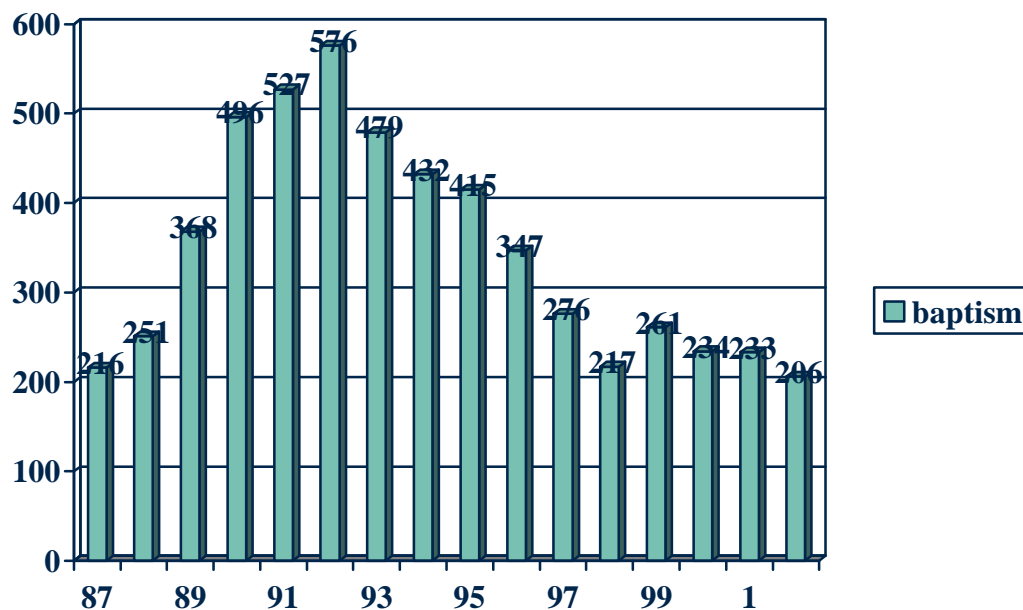
The democratic changes of the year 1989 caused happiness and joy, we could hardly believe it. But beside the joy there were also many tasks to deal with. We had to analyze the past 40 years with all of its corruption, and to fulfill the new challenges.

Church attendance was not an accepted activity during the time of communism. Namely, if someone was the member of a congregation, it was harder for him to get along in civil life. In this way, during the forty years a new generation grew up, which did not have direct relationship and direct experience with the Church. But after the political changes, the suppressed desires for spiritual and religious life arose to the surface and a spiritual vacuum evolved. Beside this spiritual vacuum there was a fear in many people. This fear was strongly generated by the media. They frightened the people by saying that the nationalist era existing before World War II would return. At that time – before the war – churches had stronger position within society. So after the change many people showed up in churches, because they wanted to accommodate to the new times.

People were longing for the Church. They were looking for something that – they thought – can be found only in the church. This was not only an emotional and spiritual search without any result. We can trace this movement in the statistical data as well. For example, in the Debrecen Reformed Great Church the number of baptisms annually was 200-250 before the political changes. As opposed to this in 1989 it

¹ This lecture is based on the discussions with Rev. Zsigmond Vad pastor of Debrecen Reformed Great Church, my boss, and on the annual reports (2001. and 2002.) of Rev. István Derencsényi dean of Debrecen diocese

radically increased, and by 1992 reached its peak which was 570. Then it began to decrease slowly. From 1997 the number of baptisms is around 200 and 250 again.



Political parties wanted to utilize this boom. Both sides of the political life emphasized that they help churches. But it came to light that – as Ervin Vályi Nagy wrote –: „The time of classical legitimating role of religion is up. The differentiated, pluralistic modern society in fact does not need it (...) They do not derive the really working social ideas, values and goals from Christian religion, but they state the religious origin subsequently, although in reality they are not religious values.”² The result of the expropriating attempt of the political parties can be seen in the political sympathy of our church members. Because our church is colorful from the aspect of party preference.

The enthusiasm accompanying the changes died down. And it shows that we could not handle the crowd that came into our temples, because even our identity was not clear yet.

In the following, by using the historiographical principle of *ad fontes*, I would like to examine the actual social and political problems in the mirror of the principles of reformed fathers. I would like to go back to the spiritual source of our Protestant tradition, and view our life through them. For our reformed identity can not be stable without these principles, and can not be lived without them. The problems do not characterize the post-communist Hungary any more, but the capitalist Hungary.

Sola Scriptura- In political life our society is usually called the society of information. This is an appropriate name, because the mass media overwhelm us with ambiguous and self-contradictory information. Possessing information and the means to spread it provide a status of power. In Hungary –and I think in the other parts of Europe too- there is a political war for the possession of the media. In the world of mass-communication and commercials it is difficult to be the agent of *Sola Scriptura*. It is not easy to tell the people that the Scripture should be the standard of our life, faith, and acts. This challenge does not offer any cheap popularity.

Sola Scriptura, this is a very actual challenge for Mission for our churches in the contemporary society, because the terminology of the Bible are totally unknown for the people of the 21st century. From the aspect of common life in society we try to discover the good news for ourselves and for those who do not have a religious background. Let me tell you a personal experience. I led a Bible study for our youngest youth group and I used the word adultery a few times. In Hungarian there are two words for adultery: házasságtörés, which is commonly used, and parázñaság, which is used by the Bible. I used the word

² Vályi Nagy, Ervin, *Minden idők peremén*, Bp. 1993. 216. p.

parázñaság. By the end of the conversation it came to light that the children (14 year-olds) did not understand the word adultery at all. This phenomenon is a problem not only in a youth group, but in the other layers of the secularized society as well.

It is not easy to use the Scripture as an authoritative text, in front of our contemporaries, because both the times of Enlightenment and after it the atheistic ideology of communism tried to discredit it. But the Scripture survived the hard times. And we can see a great thing, namely that church revivals are always based on the Bible, which finds ways through authentic Bible based sermons applied to contemporary life.

Sola Gratia- Our world is very complicated. Globalization, individualization, democracy, concentration of power, financial labyrinths, individual ambitions etc. So complicated. We have to preach the good news of grace in this world. In the eager capitalism, when millioners appear and at the same time many people become homeless we try to emphasize the grace and mercy of God. We should support every political will, which wants to direct the borderless market-economy towards social market-economy, in which the social net is as close-meshed that nobody can fall through it. Because of this ideological background the prestige of those congregations, which have deaconal institutions and projects increased in the eyes of the local people and societies.

The Church as a social worker would have been the aim of the spiritual revival of the early nineties. In the Debrecen Reformed Great Church there is a Home dealing with children who are cumulatively disabled. This home – the Immanuel Home - was founded right in the time of the spiritual vacuum. Someone found the pastor of our church Rev. Zsigmond Vad, and asked him what the church did for the disabled children. The answer was: nothing. Nevertheless, the scandalous nature of this nothing was the first step in the way of the Immanuel Home's life, which has been prospering and growing continuously since that time.

Our congregation has a homeless ministry project too. This project also wants to draw attention to a social problem – while at the same time bringing higher reputation for the Great Church in the city. And an other – may be the greatest – effect was that this ministry moved many church members from their inactive state.

THE GRACE OF GOD HAS TO SHINE THROUGH OUR CHURCHES.

Soli Deo Gloria. It is not easy to represent and to vindicate this idea in the self-adoring world. In this confession we can find recognition and acknowledgement the sovereignty of God and also the borders of humanity. When a reformed church member says that the glory is only of God, he or she defends us from putting created things on the same level with God. This confession defends us from being the victims of useless substitute-activities. This prevents us from throwing out the sanctuary from our lives while we create the cult of ourselves, like in the form of almighty politics, the disco world, the craziness of sports, the sanctuary of banks and so on.

After the acknowledgement and the confession of God's absolute sovereignty we have to represent it in the society. Nowadays, when among the many –isms (like pluralism, socialism, conservatism, liberalism) democratism was given a high value, and when democracy is an unquestionable magic word, we have to see clearly that the word of the people is not always the word of God. Righteousness does not gain its validity from the majority of votes.

In this way the Reformed Church permanently has to use the practice of prophetic critique on the contemporary power and government. The Reformed Church does not comit herself to political parties, but she is the humble servant of the Lord of Lords.

According to the prophetic task, the Church has to be open to the world. She is not a ghetto, she mustn't separate herself from the life of society and politics. Church has social responsibility. And responsibility can not be practiced outside of politics, on an intellectual unpractical level, however it may not be practiced on the level of party politics.

Let me quote Ervin Vályi Nagy again in this matter: "We don't want, and as well we must not keep in step with politics neither like an amuck-runner, nor like a rebellious forerunner. We must fulfil our Christian mission, to contract an 'untrustable', non-absolute, temporary alliance with a movement and next time

with another. We are free, and we want to keep the space free by the coming of God's Kingdom. (...) In this we have concrete responsibility."³

The Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church prohibited for the pastors to take part in party politics, and if a pastor becomes a member of any political parties he or she must suspend the pastoral status. This issue must have been regulated by canon law because unfortunately a few reformed pastors took part in politics forgotten that the prophetic activity and professional politics are two totally different realms. The prophetic rank stands in the hierarchy of God's Kingdom, but politician has to obey the law of the party and its interests.

In Hungary the main political parties are separated by sharp ideological and philosophical borders:

- Alliance of Young Democrats- Christian democrats, conservative
- Alliance of Free Democrats- liberal
- Hungarian Democratic Forum- Christian democrats, conservative
- Hungarian Socialist Party- liberal social democrats, successor of the one and only party of communism the Hungarian Socialist Worker Party
- Independent Farmer Party- conservative (fallen into parts after the last election)
- Party of Hungarian Justice and Life- radical conservative
- Worker Party- communists

They were in power in the following order:

1990-1994 The Hungarian Democratic Forum in coalition with the Independent Farmer Party and the Party of Christian Democrats

1994-1998 The Hungarian Socialist Party in coalition with the Alliance of Free Democrats

1998-2002 The Alliance of Young Democrats in coalition with the Independent Farmer Party and the Hungarian Democratic Forum

2002-? The Hungarian Socialist Party in coalition with the Alliance of Free Democrats

From May 2002 the Socialists and the Free Democrats govern. Formerly the Young Democrats and their coalition were in power. The ideological differences of the parties can be felt in their opinion about the Church and her role in the society. Hence it is not indifferent for the church that in what political atmosphere she can serve, what difficulties or opportunities she faces with. Theoretically Church does not depend on any kind of government, for her goals and tasks are different, and she fulfils them on another level. For this reason she can practice her ministry in dictatorship and in modern democracy as well. But a totalitarian state or even an atheistic liberal democracy can be a danger for Church's life and ministry.

In practice, separation between Church and state does not mean absolute isolation. For the sake of certain projects we must make a temporary alliance with the political forces. The evidence of this alliance can strongly affect our church life. Let me tell you a few examples.

In the period between 1998 and 2002 conservative government the Orbán-cabinet (Viktor Orbán was the Prime Minister) was in power. As a result of this, the cabinet's loyalty in the church matters many unsolved problems were solved in our Church. This cabinet confessed the separation between Church and State and it did not neglect the cooperation in important matters. The Orbán-cabinet understood that the matter of the secularized church real estates had not been settled by giving back ill-conditioned buildings or by a certain amount of financial compensation. Since secularized buildings and institutions had a strong financial background in the form of operating capital, estate, flat houses or other business. The law of state compensation does not include this financial background. In this way our congregation got back ill-conditioned buildings as a compensation, and we managed to reconstruct them by using the money of the economy-animating Széchenyi project's tender. So the Orbán-cabinet did not over-support churches, but by its all possible opportunities tried to recompense a part of the moral and financial damages that historical churches suffered after the World War II. This is why we can say that since the period of Edict of Tolerance there have not been built as many temples as nowadays. At the end of XVIII. Century the Edict of Tolerance allowed the oppressed protestant churches to built church temples. State began to

³ Ibid 209. p.

support the teaching of religion in elementary and high schools between 1998 and 2002. They stopped the negative public discrimination of religious institutions, namely schools and social institutions.

But let me tell you another fact. I am a youth minister in Debrecen Reformed Great Church from September 2002. Since I started my work I have prepared five tenders. I tried to support youth ministry in this way. Four of the tenders were announced by the Children and Youth Office of the Hungarian Government and one by the National Children and Youth Public Foundation. Only one was successful of the five tenders. It was the one which I sent to the Public Foundation. The others were refused without any explanations. This tendency is rather usual if we look at church tenders called for by the government. The recent government does not support the Church as much as the previous one. On the one hand, this is bad for us, while on the other hand, it is good, because in a low-supported situation like this we can remain independent from the State, but less church projects can be realised.

Of course, as in many areas of life, we cannot generalize the attitude of the government towards Churches. This year a gipsy mission project will be started with the help of the State in Baranya county. The main supporter is the Party of Free Democrats, which is part of the coalition in the present government. This proves that we may not call political forces anticlerical because in certain matters – which are important for them as well – they help churches. State can be an instrument which helps the Church to go along better. But we must not forget while we obey in the sense of Paul (Rom 13, 1-7) that the glory is only of God. *Soli Deo Gloria*. We believe and experience that we can live a valid Christian life only by considering and biblical interpreting of the social and political context. And if we do this seriously, we do not have to fear from changes, and we do not have to be afraid of being bound by a tradition.

GATHERING THE FRAGMENTS. URBAN MISSION AND THEOLOGY IN THE NETHERLANDS

Jannet van der Spek

One and a half week ago, I had to deliver a sermon on the feeding of the four thousand. The story is widely known. I don't need to tell it here. This time we had the version of the gospel of Mark, chapter 8. In this story it has been left an open question what has happened exactly. What kind of miracle has happened? Was it the miracle that Jesus, when he was breaking the bread, in a miraculous and supernatural way was making more bread, or is the miracle this: that when somebody just start to bless what is there and then share it, that further on everybody can find some leftover pieces in his pocket and hand it out in their turn. We can find arguments for both. After all, both Luke and Mark have another story, where Jesus positively refuses to make bread out of stones. Jesus is not a bread-magician, or a bread-king, or at least he doesn't want to act like that. He has come hungry out of the desert, as Noordmans, the Dutch theologian, has written, not as a well-fed benefactor. On the other hand we don't need to deduct too much from the perception that there's a lack of food at a certain place, at a certain moment, what's always the problem when people are starving. Whatever has happened, there it started with the seven loaves of bread of the disciples and it turned out to be plenty enough for everybody.

Working in Urban Mission I have often thought that nearly everything I had with me could be used. It could be a sandwich or a map of Rotterdam that I have in my backpack. It could be the drivers-license of my colleague, or a relation with an official of a housing cooperation or the local council. It could be my lack of knowledge of proper Moroccan cooking or Dutch gardening, so that someone could help me. Yes, even my middleclass youth in a big Christian family or my studies in theology could be useful. It is there and it can connect with the talents or luggage or needs of the local residents and very soon all sorts of things will happen, in all directions. It multiplies. Whispers rise and stories follow. Usually we leave it like that. After all, next day and next street something new will happen. It is just too much.

But now, when doing theological research on urban mission, I try to gather the fragments. Traces of what happened in all those stories what maybe matter for theology. I am gathering the broken pieces, like the disciples after the feeding. The pieces that were left. The pieces that were not directly useful. It has been left an open question where this pieces have come from. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, are they still doing miracles in the so-called terrible neighbourhoods? Or was it already there in the bags and backpacks of the crowd, the local residents, and was it just the problem that nobody takes the trouble to notice? Or is it really true that the poor seven loaves of bread of the disciples were taken in service and were multiplied? The pieces of bread, what do they stand for? In Marcus 8 the disciples have no clue and Jesus becomes angry about that: 'Do you still not perceive or understand?' But as a reader of the story one cannot understand either what they were supposed to understand. Also interesting is the response of the Pharisees: 'We want you to show us a sign, a sign from heaven?'. Also here Jesus reacts rather sulky. This time it seems as if the reader can understand why, but it's always easy not to identify with the Pharisees. For the time being the sign is just this: seven baskets with the left pieces of bread. A reference to the seven deacons and in that way to the whole world, as the tradition says. (Distinct from the twelve baskets with pieces that were left over after the feeding of the first time. That is seen as a reference to Israel) I think my research on a theology of Urban Mission is in this stage. It seems as if the theological harvest is plentiful and has references from en to the whole world, but for the time being there are just pieces, fragments and stories. For the time being we only have only basket.

In the paper that I received about this conference this lecture was mentioned as an invited lecture. Well, I have been invited, but I don't come from outside. I have a job at the THUK. I have no experience at all with the theme of the conference: teaching theology, but I was taught theology. My experience is about the practice of Urban Mission, first as worker in the 'Oudewijkenpastoraat', 'urban ministry in the deprived neighbourhoods', later as minister of a 'buurtkerk'. Literally 'buurtkerk' means 'local church', but what I refer to is a church that is as much committed to the neighbourhood, as to liturgy and so on. I

don't want to consider this work as a theologian in a deprived neighbourhood as a form of public theology as David Tracy has defined, but I think it is rightly a form of theology in the public, as we will see, I hope.

In this lecture I would like to start to describe shortly some relevant developments in the concepts of Urban Mission and to talk about some of its theological motives. Then I want to concentrate on the concept of urban mission in the Netherlands and how it has influenced the practice of the *oudewijkenpastoraat*. Next I want to go into what happens in such a by a certain theology determined practice. Which theological questions arise, which theological concepts need to be reconsidered? In practice such a distinction sounds rather artificial. Urban Mission is an unsettled phenomenon in a rapidly changing urban society all over the world. Its relation to theology happens to work out as what we say in Dutch: What was first, the chicken or the egg? To make it more complicated: Sometimes urban mission is a practice that is started on account of a theology that strongly emphasizes that practice is the first act and theology the second (cf Gutierrez). Sometimes a certain practice has been labelled as urban mission after the event, partly because of the Christian sponsors. That is of course a very good reason, bread is important, as we have found out, but it doesn't promote the clarity. In practice 'the theology before' and the 'theology after', the 'theology as a strategy to sponsors' and 'theology as reflection on faithful acting', are intertwined. We can speak about a process, making circles from practice to theology, and from theology to practice.

URBAN MISSION

Urban Mission is a kind of umbrella concept for a mixed collection of missionary initiatives in the West and in the East, in several places and several times. The concept emerges first in the forties of the last century and came into fashion in the circles around the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, especially when these councils integrate in 1961 in New Delhi. This integration itself was a sign of a new Spirit of the Churches and was supposed to be a sign of new times to come. Churches that don't want to leave the mission to private associations and want to be missionary itself. The concept of urban mission merges together with other new concepts of that time as Mission in six continents and Church for others. All these ideas have to do with the post-colonial spirit, the new self-confidence of the former mission countries and the embarrassment of the former sending countries, as well with the matter of secularization and rapid changes in both. One wanted to leave the concept that mission is something you do safely far away. The idea that you can do mission without being converted yourself. Urban Mission always has to do with local initiatives of local churches. In 1961 Urban Mission still has something to do with a reaction of churches all over the world to worldwide urbanisation, modernisation and industrialisation and their embarrassment with that.

In Western Europe the concept of urban mission emerges among others out of the movement of worker-priests, who settled in the working class neighbourhoods and worked with the local workers in the factories. This was started as an attempt to rechristianize this part of the society. Although little by little the priests left the traditional goals of mission as conversion and the planting of new churches, they stayed in the neighbourhoods and in the factories and they radicalized in their solidarity with the local people. And of course rather soon after this the Roman Catholic Church forbids the priests to work in the factories¹, but that's another story.

Urban Mission emerged in Asia out of the churches that already were used to being a (religious) minority. These communities though were confronted with an overwhelming poverty and rapid changes around them and they were in search of a new identity independent from the west. Also there the concept of urban mission secularized. In the concept of urban mission, mission no longer has to do with the dialogue between religions, in particular not at the level of concepts. It's all about everyday life and what matters there.

Initially in the sixties urban mission was always bracketed together with industrial mission. Both have the connotation of being there where the church has lost its self-evident presence. In the beginning of the seventies, starting at a conference of the Council of Churches in South East Asia, urban mission was

¹ By example in France in 1954

bracketed together with rural mission. You could say: well, then the whole world is included, but it stands for a shift in the focus of urban, rural and industrial mission. The concept has been radicalized further. It no longer has to do with the contrast between rural and urban, or between modern and traditional, or between 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft' and so on. From that moment on the main focus of urban mission is poverty. Poverty in urban and rural areas is connected to each other. Urban (and rural and industrial) mission aims at the poor, the victims, the disadvantaged worldwide, but always out of a local position. Urban mission wants to start at the bottom. The aim is humanization of society, understood as the liberation of the oppressed, not only on behalf of the victims of dehumanization, but by the victims themselves. First the workers in the mission have to learn from the victims. They can only learn from them by sharing their lives. From now on this is the most important characteristic of urban mission, that you learn from the people. When the missionaries want to do something, they sustain the poor in their struggle for a justice, but the poor stay subject. There is a strong emphasis on struggle and the missionary worker is especially a community-organizer.

This is the concept of urban mission in the seventies and eighties. In 1987 the World Council of Churches publishes an important book about urban and rural mission, *The community of clowns*.² The author Hugh Lewin has collected lots of stories out of the practice of urban and rural mission. This narrative approach is a deliberate choice. The sharing of stories is considered as a way to work on empowerment and has also become an important characteristic of urban mission. So we saw how urban mission secularized and radicalized and wants to work locally, sharing the lives and sustaining the struggle of the oppressed in their daily life and from there wants to move further on.

THEOLOGICAL MOTIVES

Theologically urban mission is strongly based on the concept of *Missio Dei*. Originating from Karl Barth and further developed by Hartenstein (although he didn't use the exact term *Missio Dei* till 1952) mission is seen first of all as an activity of God, instead of an activity of the church or the individual Christian. In this concept mission was understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It was thus put in the context of the Trinity, not of soteriology or ecclesiology. The classical doctrine on the *Missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God and the Son sending the Spirit, was expanded to include yet another movement: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world. The church stands in service of God's turning to the world. 'Our mission has no life of its own, only in the hands of God can it be truly called mission'. In this manner speaks the International Mission Council in Willingen in 1952. Mission was not seen in triumphalist categories, though. The IMC in Willingen also recognizes close relationship between the mission of God and mission as solidarity with the incarnate and crucified Christ. Since Willingen and especially since the book of Vicedom in 1958 the understanding of mission as *Missio Dei* has been embraced by virtually all Christian persuasions from the Pentecostals to the Roman Catholics, but in the oecumenical movement around the World Council of Churches, among others influenced by the Dutch theologian Hoekendijk, the church fades rapidly out of the concept. The church serves the *Missio Dei* in the World when it points to God at work in world history and name him there. It appeared that God was primarily working out his purpose in the midst of the world and its historical processes. That is to say: outside of the church. In 1971 Aring writes in his book: *Kirche als Ereignis: 'We'*, and he means the church, 'have no business in articulating God. In the final analysis *Missio Dei* means that God articulates himself without any need of assisting Him through our missionary efforts in this respect.'³

This makes me think of a joke about the minister, the priest and the rabbi. They all three have the money that is collected during the service in their church or synagogue and they ask each other: 'How do you distinct between the money for yourself and the money for the community?' And the rabbi says: 'Well, I throw everything in the air and then I see how it falls. Head is for me, and tail is for the synagogue'. The

² Lewin, H., *The community of clowns, Testimonies of People in Urban and Rural Mission*, Geneva 1987.

³ Cited in and translated by Bosch, David J., *Transforming Mission, paradigm shifts in theology of Mission*, Maryknoll 1991, 392.

priest says: ‘Well, I throw everything in the air and the coins that fall on the edge are for the church. The rest is for me.’ The minister says: ‘Well, I throw everything in the air and God can take all he needs.’

The development in *Missio Dei* seems to be the more you leave to God, the less is left for the church.

In this country Hoedemaker⁴ writes that the concept of *Missio Dei* is used for so many things that it has lost its meaning. I think he is right concerning the missionary debate, but in Urban Mission the concept is still alive. In urban Mission the concept of *Missio Dei* is concentrated around: The gospel is good news for the poor. In Urban mission this is turned around: The gospel happens there where there is good news about the poor. Especially where there is good news of the poor. Mission is going there where God went in advance.

In particular about this Hoedemaker recognised that you risk to cancel the missionary tension too early. In his opinion mission is based on the reality that there are areas of life where the gospel till now is not true.⁵

In Urban Mission this tension becomes visible in the motive of the kingdom of God. In urban Mission it is emphasized that the kingdom has arrived. That is why we can see signs of it, in particular where the oppressed stand up. At the same time the Kingdom still has to come and is coming and we can find God in the struggle of the poor for justice. The missionaries can let themselves be joined in this struggle. For the missionaries struggling is obedience. The dignity of the oppressed can grow even when the struggle is lost. Lewin⁶ derives this from the motive of the cross and resurrection. I think especially in this case it is important to notice that Lewin writes about the struggle of the poor themselves, because usually the poor pays the highest price no matter if the struggle is lost or won. Think by example of the economical boycotts of South Africa and Iraq.

More hidden as a theological motive of urban mission is the important motive of the people. The poor and disadvantaged are being compared with the people of Israel in the Old Testament, the people on the way, in particular the people suffering in slavery, the liberation of the people and the people in the desert. The people that is consoled by the prophets.

What applies for the missionary worker is the motive of the kenosis. The worker tries to free him or herself from of the advantages and prejudices of his or her class, to be able to learn from the poor. Of course this only partly succeeds and this kenosis mustn't degenerate into a new pietism. Hence the title of the book of Lewin: *The community of clowns*. You don't need to take yourself too serious. The missionaries have to be able to laugh at their selves and let the people laugh at them.

URBAN MISSION IN THE NETHERLANDS

We can consider it as an example of the desired turnabout of mission that this concept of urban mission, mainly developed and radicalized in the Third World countries of that time, was picked up in Western Europe in the seventies. From that moment the concept of urban mission is developing in its own first Western- and later European way. I want to concentrate on the *buurtpastoraat* in the Netherlands, in particular in Rotterdam, because I think the developments there have been both illustrative and inspiring for the rest of the Netherlands. Especially in Rotterdam the *oudewijkenpastoraat* has a history of its own, namely the community-work that was started after World WarII, out of the churches, also as an effort of evangelization or mission. This community-work in the context of ‘mission’ wanted to approach the people as a whole. That is to say as a person with his needs and his strength, as an individual and as part of a family and a community. This method of working also came out of the International Council of Mission and was called the comprehensive approach. This community work in the so called working class neighbourhoods has been rapidly secularized in the sixties and seventies. A small group of ministers with the special task of evangelization deliberated that a kind of missionary presence should remain necessary and they wanted to connect with the interests of the people. In Rotterdam this was seen as a Copernican turn, because in their eyes one stops to think from church to society, but started in the society. In 1978 a

⁴ Hoedemaker, L., ‘Het volk Gods en de einden der aarde.’ In: Camps, A. e.a (red), *Oecumenische Inleiding in de missiologie*, Kampen 1988, 171.

⁵ Hoedemaker, L., ‘Op zoek naar Gods aanwezigheid onder de mensen.’ In: Schippers, K.A. (red), *Discussies rond kerkelijke presentie in een oude stadswijk*, Kampen 1993.

⁶ Lewin, H., *The community of clowns, Testimonies of People in Urban and Rural Mission*, Geneva 1987.

group of Third World theologians has visited the Netherlands. They have been invited to consider critically the practice of the churches in the context of ‘Zending in Nederland’ (Mission in the Netherlands). The theologians were shocked by the secularization in the Netherlands and concluded there was too much distance between the churches and nearly all aspects of life. The national council of the Gereformeerde Kerken reacted by allocating some money for mission in the Netherlands. Mind you that before part of this money was set aside for mission in the Third World. The local church of Rotterdam effectively applied for this money with the aim to turn the existing work of the church towards a more missionary attitude. I think in daily practice this last point recedes often into the background.

As from that moment, the primacy of the neighbourhood, in particular the disadvantaged neighbourhood, is the only thing that counts for the *buurtpastoraat*. The neighbourhood was supposed to shape the ministry. The official aim of the *buurtpastoraat* became this: To sustain people in a disadvantaged neighbourhood in their struggle for dignity and control over their lives, on grounds of the gospel. We recognize as the most important motives of the international concept of urban mission: The emphasis on struggle, their struggle, not yours. There is also the expression ‘on grounds of the gospel’. I have to say In Dutch this is mentioned first. It means that the gospel can only be grounded in the everyday life of the disadvantaged. Another distinguishing feature: The church is not mentioned at all. The aim has to do with the humanization of society. Usually a worker, or a team of workers have in his or her or their working-plan the chapter mission to the church, but it is not the central aim.

POVERTY AS EXCLUSION IN A RICH COUNTRY

Before I start to talk about the practice of Urban Mission I have something to say about the disadvantaged in the Netherlands. Who are they in such a rich country where nobody is starving and nearly all kids can go to school and have access to medical care?

We can think of people who have been poor from generation to generation. They have always worked at the bottom of the labour market. Depending on the economical situation they are unemployed or have casual work. In former days they were sometimes named the ‘*asocialen*’ (anti-socials). We can think of people who have felt out of their social position by illness, madness, divorce, discharge, a handicap, addiction, a combination of this, or any other trouble. Life has become very complicated and there are very many risks of a breakdown.

We can think of working class people who worked very hard, but have been discharged in the seventies, the first wave of deindustrialisation. Many of them have been declared disabled to work, a typical Dutch solution for this problem in this generation. In this group we see also many migrants of the first generation.

Then we can think of migrants from poorer countries in general. From all countries of the world. A mixed group concerning their culture and religion, but also concerning their past, their education, their reasons to come and their possibilities in the future. But still they have to start in this society. Among them we have the group of the people without the right papers, the illegal people, or people waiting for a residence permit, often refugees. For them it is nearly impossible to get a regular life.

All these people can live everywhere in the Netherlands, also here in Kampen, but in what we call the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, especially in the cities, they all live together in one area, in one street, in one flat. They are rather different from each other, but they have one thing in common: they belong to the last, the lost, the least and the latest, according to the saying of Gandhi. And that matters, also in a rich country. They don’t belong to the so called main stream of society.

As you can imagine they all have different problems and they aim for different solutions. And there we come across an important problem for the missionary worker inspired by the concept of urban mission. The people are not the people. The people are not one. And when you want to learn from the people you are vulnerable because of that. When the people say by example: Fuck the Turkish (or the Moroccans, or the refugees). Or when the fundamentalist Muslim wants to blame those bloody homosexuals or Jews for everything. And the drug –addict drives his neighbours to madness and the psychiatric patient is afraid of the new lover of the single mother that lives downstairs. And they are all applying for the same jobs and the same houses. When the theologian happens to have a concept of wholeness, she has to be prepared to live with the fragments.

THEOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

As we have seen the concept of urban mission is heavily loaded with theology and ideology. What happens when this concept is used in practice, when the concept becomes flesh again? I shall concentrate on my own praxis in the nineties in Rotterdam. This should be the moment that I start to tell the stories, but I'll have to keep it short. I want to discuss the inner tensions in the concept of urban mission. Then I want to work this out for the theological theme of the kenosis. It turns out to be very important to take time and to make room for what is not happening.

There are several tensions or you could say paradoxes in the concept of urban mission, and I think in all theology, but it becomes urgent when you want your theology into action. There is the tension between a theology of sharing the life (partly the suffering) of and learning from the people on the one hand and on the other hand the theology of liberation and revolution. It is the tension between letting it go and doing as much as you can. The worker tries to do both. The worker does not want to start something her self. She wants to wait for the disadvantaged, maybe for God, the Spirit and all the Saints, but on the other side the worker has to believe in liberation, in exodus, in resurrection and not in the hereafter or far-away ahead, but here and now in everyday life. The worker can't wait. There's no time. The poor have suffered long enough.

There is also an ecclesiological and missionary tension in the concept. The church is not necessary for the mission. The church is seen as part of the problem. The church can be aim of the mission. The worker leaves the church and chooses for the primacy of the neighbourhood. She knows she has nothing to bring there. But then why she had to go there? These are some of the tensions of the concept itself. We will see how this works out in the theological motive of the kenosis, because that especially applies to the workers. I will not discuss the ecclesiological questions that emerge from the praxis. Tomorrow you will visit Gerrit Jan van der Kolm in Dordrecht. He wrote a thesis about this subject and can tell you more.⁷

A worker in urban mission in the Netherlands usually starts with an exposure in the neighbourhood where she is supposed to work. That is to say going around especially on the street and taking notice of what you see, what you think, what you feel and so on. She is emptying herself from all ideology and theology, prejudices and concepts except from this: we want to learn from the people. Tomorrow you are going to do such an exposure, only one morning and not only on the street, but also meeting people, because some arrangements have been made. In normal practice it can take long time before you get such contacts.

What is the reason to work so slowly? When you just want to know what people want or need, you can visit them and ask, you can do research or read a book, you can organize a party, you can make a pot of coffee and sit and wait till they come. Well, sometimes the workers and especially volunteers of the church are acting like that. Sometimes a professional missionary worker works as a volunteer in projects organized by other organizations in the neighbourhood. To make it easier to get known to the people. All things are lawful in this case, but don't make the hanging around superfluous.

Going as slowly as that, starting in public, has a reason. The worker is not looking for knowledge about the people although she will learn a lot. When you come in the neighbourhood the worker will discover that the local residents are not waiting for her. Maybe they are not waiting for a cheap message of salvation, but they are also not waiting for somebody who has an unclear mission, who only wants to learn and to listen. This is not the exclusive privilege for the good-willing missionary worker, although some missionary workers think so. Nearly all institutes, including the church, and their representatives have lost their touch with everyday life and especially with the people in the disadvantaged neighbourhood. In the Netherlands we recognised this last year with the surprising rise of Pim Fortuyn. The missionary worker comes into the neighbourhood and hopes to be received by 'the others' - in the eyes of mainstream society -, but he will discover she is the other - in the eyes of the people in the neighbourhood - herself. People in the disadvantaged neighbourhood have learned to distrust beautiful stories, but also the silence of the worker. They have learned to be very careful to show oneself to others from that other world. Maybe the others want to cut down your social benefit, maybe they want to meddle in the growing up of your children, maybe they need you for a project, and in particular they will tell you again and again the

⁷ Kolm, Gerrit Jan van der, *De verbeelding van de kerk. Op zoek naar een nieuw-missionaire ecclesiologie*, Zoetermeer 2001.

you are not doing well and that you have to change. The people have learned to consider others from outside as useful or not useful. And the people have learned that it doesn't matter what you do or try, but nothing will change the situation.

The worker comes in the neighbourhood and starts to learn this: Nobody needs me. This is a waist of time. And that is part of the process. The time is needed, to be there, 'being present', being received in stead of receiving, not starting as a helper or community-organizer, although you will that all do, in future. Slowly the worker enters a new world with other needs, other strength, other jokes and other codes. This takes a lot of time.

At the other side the kenosis has a limit. The conception of kenosis has the risk of being exclusive (for the workers!) and triumphant. The worker has to recognise the differences between herself and most of the residents. She is there by choice and can always go back. There is a difference between 'going native', that is to say loosing yourself in the neighbourhood, or make yourself, including the benefits of your education and your relatively privileged position into a servant, or better said: a neighbour. There is a lot of room between imposing one's concepts or ideals on a situation or a person and totally agree with somebody's interpretation of life. In that space the worker can act and live and laugh, make faults and maybe mean something. It is not only about loosing yourself but also about finding yourself in another situation.

And when there is talk of theology it is distinct from the theology before. It is not about the struggle but it is about waiting, about keeping the faith, it is about perseverance. And the perseverance of the saints doesn't mean that they do everything in the old fashioned way, we already know, but it means that we keep up believing that it is going to be different, maybe already today. It is not only about the faith of the worker, but first of all of the faith of the people, in this case the residents. Perseverance is a classical theological concept that is useful in the 21st century, where acting and waiting meet each other in the theological reflection and lived spirituality.

You can also give the 'waist of time' another name: You can see it as a kind of luxury, a kind of grace. Time to see the fragments without being forced to put them together too quickly.

Of course urban mission has to be more than a spiritual exercise of the worker. Fortunately there has been comprehensive research on what this type of work can do for the disadvantaged in the Dutch situation. Andries Baart has written about this in his book: *Een theorie van de presentie* (A theory of the (method of) presence).⁸ In this book the practice of *buurtpastoraat* turns out to be very effective. People feel respected and sustained by the workers. Sometimes they start to organize projects for themselves and others in the neighbourhood. Others can change their situation. Others manage to keep up their complicated life. The attention of the workers seems to help to find what is already there. And the worker maybe learns that it is not so easy to change situations as she thought before.

Not so many workers or local residents are involved in political struggle today. Political and economical decisions that directly affect the interests of the residents, prove to be taken far away.

When Professor Schippers, a former teacher of this university, did the first important comprehensive research on the practice of urban mission and labelled it 'presence of the church' he concludes that the workers were not able to do anything else than create a little room in everyday life, while all the dehumanizing political and economical structures stays nearly untouched. For Schippers the question if that is enough, is a theological question.⁹ For him it is not enough. I agree with that. But I have learned in my practice and in particular from the people that we can't afford to neglect that little room. And I think also the theology should have the courage to start there. It is like Elijah (I Kings 19) who killed four hundred prophets with his own hands and after that he had to flee for his life. He is totally exhausted and after his big political struggle he has to discover God in the sound of a sheer silence. So I think it is part of the kenosis that somebody empties oneself from a ridiculous concept of God being present only in political struggle and also, more painfully, that somebody empties from a less ridiculous concept of socialism, feminism, community and so on, without loosing the hope for justice, struggle and community!

⁸ Baart, Andries, *Een theorie van de presentie*, Utrecht 2001.

⁹ Schippers, K.A. (e.a.), *Kerkelijke presentie in een Oude Stadswijk*, Kampen 1990.

In the 'waist of time', or room or void that I mentioned above the worker can maybe discover the struggle that has been put up already, but in a different way than she recognised before.

On the other hand I will say that also in urban mission the missionary tension has to be kept. The concept of *Missio Dei* becomes crude when we know beforehand where God will be. I don't need to explain this further, I think. We can't talk about (traces of) the presence of God in everyday life, when we are not allowed to speak about God for sake.

Finally I want to say something about public theology, the theme of the day. Can we consider the practice of urban mission as a form of public theology? I don't think so. I think the workers of urban mission have lots of useful knowledge for this society. But a very important characteristic of the practice of urban mission is that the worker is simply not speaking, but listening. In the confusing debates around the politics of Pim Fortuyn I have missed the contributions of the workers in urban mission. I think they could have contributed a lot. Maybe the workers are too afraid of losing the contacts with people who are not allowed to speak. Maybe the workers are right. This is also a tension in the concept. There are very many examples of people speaking in the public and losing grass-root contacts with the people. I think the way of acting in the practice of urban mission can be named a theological performance¹⁰ in itself. It is a form of theology in the public. Acting, not speaking, but with two words. Keeping the tensions alive. 'Slowly, as fast as we can'.¹¹ 'A wild patience has taken me thus far'.¹² Mercy and justice. Mission and church.

And when we try to gather the fragments we discover that we have to make some room in the baskets first.

¹⁰ cf. Korte, Anne-Marie, 'Verhalen van ontzetting' Theologische reflectie over tekstfragmenten uit het dagboek van buurtpastor Anne' In: Baart, Andries en Vosman, Frans, *Present. Theologische reflecties op verhalen van Utrechtse buurtpastores*, Utrecht 2003, 25-44.

¹¹ Tellegen, Toon, *Langzaam, zo snel als we konden*, Amsterdam 1980.

¹² Rich, Adrienne, *A wild patience has taken me thus far*, New York 1981.

Teaching
Theology
as Academic
Discipline

TEACHING NEWER INSIGHTS IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Riemer Roukema

This lecture will deal with Biblical theology, and let me say from the beginning that, as a professor of New Testament, I will mainly – though not exclusively – pay attention to NT theology. Since the recent developments in this field of research go beyond the limits of NT theology in a narrow sense, I will pay attention to these newer insights as well. To illustrate this, I will start with an text that may surprise you, since it is taken from the Gospel of Thomas, logion 28.

Jesus said: “I took my place in the midst of the world, and I appeared to them in the flesh. I found all of them drunk; I found none of them thirsty. And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men, because they are blind in their hearts and do not have sight; for empty they came into the world, and empty too they seek to leave the world. But for the moment they are drunk. When they shake off their wine, then they will repent.”¹

Although this text is often considered as having a Gnostic ring, that does not alter the fact that it is very evidently a Christian text; it is not even necessary to interpret it as being Gnostic. Some of its separate elements occur in the canonical NT, but as a whole this text does not occur there. Let us assume that it has been attributed to Jesus around 100 CE. This would be one or some decades after the composition of the canonical gospels, which also contain words of Jesus that must have been attributed to him by the early Church or by the evangelist. Of course, such attributions do not preclude that such words may have corresponded to Jesus’ original teaching.

We will not deal with the precise interpretation of this logion, but I want to ask: If this text belongs to early Christianity, is it thinkable to include it in a NT theology? Since this text does not occur in the NT canon, it is most logic to exclude it from a NT theology. But if a NT scholar intends to give a description of early Christianity in general, there is no reason whatsoever for the exclusion of this logion.

Here we are at the heart of the matter that I want to introduce to you. Since a long time, but most particularly since the last decade, it is customary to make a clear distinction between NT theology on the one hand and the history of early Christianity on the other hand.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF RELIGION

In NT theology, scholars intend to give a fair description of the contents and the theology of the NT canon. The same is true, of course, of Old Testament theology, with regard to the OT canon. Biblical theology (to include both testaments) is usually studied on the assumption that the contents and theology of the Bible are precious and witness to the truth or the salvation which God revealed to mankind. So Biblical theology is usually an affair of Church-related theology and intends to serve the Church. Its presupposition is that the Biblical message is relevant for our time – although this does not mean that a critical approach of the Bible is eschewed.

On the other hand, one may also study the Bible differently, namely from the point of view of history of religion. For the OT this means that one examines the ancient Israelite religion in its interaction with other ancient religions, like the Canaanite, the Babylonian, and the Egyptian religions. Moreover, to those who are considered as false prophets in the OT the same “impartial” attention is paid as to the canonical prophets (as far as this is possible, for we do not have the sayings of the other prophets at first hand). In this approach, the Jews who venerate the “Queen of heaven” (e.g., Jer. 7:18; 44:17ss) or Tammuz (Ezek. 8:14) are not considered as idolatrous, for the qualification of idolatry is unusable in the approach of history of religion. In the study of the NT, one is very careful not to adopt the negative and rhetorical

¹ Translation Lambdin, Th.O. In: Layton, B. (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7 I* (NHS 20), Leiden 1989, 65, except for “drunk”, which twice replaces “intoxicated”. The text has been transmitted in Coptic and partially in Greek (p. 118-119, 127).

qualifications of the Jews who do not believe in Christ (e.g., Mat. 23; 27:25; Rom. 2; 1 Thess. 2:14-16). In this merely historical approach, those whom Paul decries as his opponents are not considered as opponents of the gospel, but as other Christians who disagreed with Paul, e.g., because they kept closer to their Jewish background. Moreover, it is most important that, in this historical approach, the boundary of the NT canon does not have any value. If one wants to describe early Christianity as a whole, the apocryphal and other early Christian texts are on the same footing as the canonical ones; all sorts of texts witness to different sorts of Christianity. In this approach, the question of religious truth or divine inspiration is unimportant. This implies that, in principle, sayings of Jesus that occur only in the Gospel of Thomas are equally valuable as canonical sayings.

Thus far, I gave a brief sketch of what I want to expound. Now we will examine the question of Biblical theology and the other, historical approach of early Christianity more in depth.

THE ORIGIN OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Usually, Johann Philipp Gabler is considered as the scholar who introduced the program of Biblical theology in his inaugural lecture in Altdorf, in 1787.² Gabler proposed to distinguish between Biblical theology and dogmatic theology. In his view, dogmatic theology was a sort of philosophy which was changeable in the course of the centuries and in different countries. The variations of all sorts of dogmatic theology were brought about by human and other contingent factors. In comparison with dogmatic theology, Gabler considered Biblical theology as an historical discipline which dealt with the religion which is described in the Bible. To be sure, his intention was that Biblical theology would be used as a basis for dogmatic theology. In order that Biblical theology might perform this function, one had to distinguish between the divine and the human or temporary elements in the Bible. Most of the OT institutions were considered as temporary, since Christ had already abolished them. But even the NT contained contingent and human elements, as it appears in Paul's epistles. As an example, Gabler mentions Paul's instruction that women have to cover themselves in the assemblies of the congregation. In Gabler's view, Biblical theology should give a description of the different views of the Biblical authors and of those teachings which, as *dicta classica*, are truly divine. This pure religion should function as the basis for dogmatic theology. Thus, Biblical theology had a mediating function in the whole of theology.

From a modern perspective, it is clear that Gabler's intention was fairly optimistic and even naïve. For who decides which texts are meant to be divine and classic and which texts are not? However, it is most important that Gabler basically wanted to free the Bible from the way it was used in dogmatic theology, as a book full of proof texts that could sustain the Church doctrine, and that he wanted to point to the Biblical religion as an independent phenomenon. Moreover, he was aware of the fact that the Bible contained different voices, which had to be distinguished before they were put together in one comprehensive system.

THE HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

We will skip the studies which have been carried out in line with this program in the 19th century, and go on to another classic in the history of Biblical theology, namely William Wrede's essay *Über Aufgabe und Methode der sogenannten neutestamentlichen Theologie* (On the Task and Method of the so-called New Testament Theology), of 1897. After mentioning Gabler's lecture and several 19th century studies, he proposed an approach of the matter that differed from Gabler's. Wrede's interest was not to describe the contents or the so-called theology of the NT and of its separate writings. He castigated the minute and utterly detailed studies of his time, in which NT scholars tried to establish far-fetched "theologies" of the different NT authors. Wrede's interest was to establish how early Christianity as a whole had developed and what sort of religion it was. He declared that the doctrine of divine inspiration of the Scriptures and the delimitation of the Biblical canon were of no use for the historical study of early Christianity as he

² Gabler, J.Ph. 'Von der richtigen Unterscheidung der biblischen und der dogmatischen Theologie und der rechten Bestimmung ihrer beider Ziele.' In: Strecker, G., (Hrsg.), *Das Problem*, 32-44.

envisaged it. This implies that Clement's epistle to the Corinthians (of ± 96 CE), the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch (± 110), the epistle of (pseudo-) Barnabas, the Didache, apocryphal gospels, Justin Martyr, and whatever other texts give information about the beginnings of Christianity, have the same value, in principle, as Paul, the deutero-pauline epistles, the Gospel of John, et cetera. In Wrede's view, the discipline of NT theology had to establish "the history of the early Christian religion and theology". For that reason, he suggested to call the discipline by this name, or: "early Christian history of religion" ("urchristliche Religionsgeschichte"). In his view, it cannot be the purpose of historical research of early Christianity to serve the Church, although this may be the scholar's private intention. We see that Wrede's intention is definitely different from Gabler's: Gabler wanted to free Biblical theology from dogmatic theology, but Wrede wanted to shift from NT theology to the history of early Christianity, without taking account of any ecclesiastical motives.

This was written in the end of the 19th century, but Wrede's program was not fully carried out. Although some important religionsgeschichtlich studies on the background of the Bible and the Bible itself were undertaken in the beginning of the 20th century, I will not concentrate on the interesting results of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, as it is called (some names: Wilhelm Bousset, Johannes Weiss). The First World War, the rise of Karl Barth's dialectical theology, and the Second World War caused that in general other needs were felt than the purely historical study of the Israelite and early Christian religions. In this context one may refer to Gerhard von Rad's OT theology³, which had an important theological impact. In the last decades, several NT theologies were written, e.g., by Hans Conzelmann (1967)⁴, Leonhard Goppelt (1976)⁵, Joachim Gnilka (1994)⁶, Hans Hübner (1990-1995)⁷, Georg Strecker (1996)⁸, Peter Stuhlmacher (1992-1999)⁹, and Ulrich Wilckens (2002).¹⁰ The authors of all of these books tried to give a congenial description of the contents and overall theology of the NT. Their intention is to highlight the kerygma about Christ the Saviour or the justification of the impious. As a matter of fact, the NT is considered as a book of the Church, which is to be read for personal and communal edification of faith and which is to be preached about. Another tendency was, to combine OT and NT theologies; thus Brevard S. Childs wrote a Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament (1992)¹¹, and Gisela Kittel *Der Name über alle Namen* (in two volumes, 1989-1996).¹² These books emphasize the fundamental unity of the canon and of God's covenant with Israel and the new covenant in Christ. Usually all of these "theologies" were written for other theologians, like Church ministers. Sometimes you can read them as learned sermons. Often the overall content corresponds in some way with the confession of the scholar's Church. E.g., Gisela Kittel centred her two volumes on the theme of faith/confidence in God (OT) and in Jesus Christ (NT). This reminds one of the Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith.

THE HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

For our theme (teaching newer insights in biblical theology) it is important to notice that in the last decade of the 20th century Wrede's program was deliberately taken up as a renewal of Biblical theological studies,

³ Rad, G. Von, *Theologie des Alten Testaments 1-2*, München 1960, 1987⁹.

⁴ Conzelmann, H., *Grundriß der Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1967, Tübingen 1992⁵.

⁵ Goppelt, L., *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Göttingen 1976.

⁶ Gnilka, J., *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1994.

⁷ Hübner, H., *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments 1-3*, Göttingen 1990-1995.

⁸ Strecker, G., (Hrsg.), *Das Problem der Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Darmstadt 1975.

Strecker, G., *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Berlin / New York 1996.

⁹ Stuhlmacher, P., *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments 1-2*, Göttingen 1992-1999.

¹⁰ Wilckens, U., *Theologie des Neuen Testaments I,1. Geschichte des Wirkens Jesu in Galiläa*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2002.

¹¹ Childs, B.S., *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, London 1992; German translation: *Die Theologie der einen Bibel 1-2*, Freiburg etc. 1994-1996.

¹² Kittel, G., *Der Name über alle Namen I-II. Biblische Theologie AT / NT*, Göttingen 1989-1996.

or even as an alternative to Biblical theological studies.¹³ As I noted earlier, I will mainly pay attention to the NT and to early Christianity, not to the OT.

In 1990 the Finnish scholar Heikki Räisänen published *Beyond New Testament Theology*, in which he gave a survey of the history of the discipline (including Gabler and Wrede).¹⁴ He particularly drew attention to the fact that Wrede's program, to study early Christianity from a merely historical standpoint, had not yet been carried out. A second, enlarged printing appeared in 2000.

Perhaps Klaus Berger was influenced by this study – but it is also possible that he had the idea to write a history of the theology of early Christianity directly from Wrede and independently from Räisänen. In any case, in 1994 he published his *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums*, yet subtitled *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, of which a second, enlarged printing appeared in 1995.¹⁵ Berger declared that he wanted to carry out Wrede's program. His book is far too thorough and too lengthy to fully review it here, but I will give a brief impression of it. Like in other NT theologies, Berger deals with the function of the OT, the image of God, Christology, soteriology, eschatology, and the sacraments. It is typical for Berger that he explicitly pays attention to mystical experiences, to early Christianity as a charismatic movement, and to metaphorical acts like the holy kiss as a sign of reconciliation. He deals with unusual themes like the apotropaic character of baptism and exorcistic practices, and thus he points to the similarity of the Christian sacraments and contemporary magic. Berger tries to describe the trajectories of early Christian traditions geographically, distinguishing between Palestine, Antioch, Ephesus, and Egypt. In line with Wrede, he refers to the NT and to other writings, like the Gospel of Thomas, other apocryphal gospels, the Apostolic Fathers, and Apologists like Justin Martyr. To give some examples of his "impartial", historical approach: he considers Simon the Magician (Acts 8:9-24) as a representative of Samaritan Christianity, which had originated independently from the Christians in Jerusalem. Thus, historically spoken, Berger does not accept Luke's polemical description in Acts according to which Samaritan Christians needed the blessing and approbation of the apostles from Jerusalem (§ 89). Likewise, Paul's opponents are presented as Christians in their own right (§ 312-314). Berger looks upon early Christianity as a tree with many ramifications, and does not look for a central or major theme of the whole of the NT.

A disadvantage of Berger's huge book is that it contains much fragmentary information and a lot of speculation about the different traditions. Räisänen concludes (2000, 136) that as a synthesis it is hardly readable – and I agree. Yet it is also refreshing, since it gives an independent and stimulating look on early Christianity in all its embarrassing strangeness and huge diversity.

The last book I want to mention is Gerd Theissen's revision of his lectures on *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion*, held in Oxford in 1998-1999, published in German as *Die Religion der ersten Christen. Eine Theorie des Urchristentums*, in 2000.¹⁶ This book has been highly praised as a really renewing approach of early Christianity. Theissen is positive about the NT theologies that have been written and admits that they are useful for ministers and future ministers. But like Berger, and yet very differently from him, he tries to historically ("religionswissenschaftlich") describe early Christianity. He writes that he is a Christian and a minister himself, but in order to write for a broad scientific readership he intends to describe Christianity from the perspective of an outsider. He presents himself like a guide in a cathedral, of which he likes to explain the whole and the details to interested visitors – and not necessarily to believers. He deals with religion as a semiotic phenomenon and as a cultural sign system. In this sign system he distinguishes between myth, rite, and ethos: i.e., the stories about the gods or God, the sacred acts, and moral behaviour. By means of religion mankind can deal with this world and give sense to life. Religion is a most important social factor and shows how to overcome crises and conflicts. From this perspective, Theissen describes, e.g., how it happened that Jesus was divinised and what early Christian

¹³ Wrede, W., 'Über Aufgabe und Methode der sogenannten Neutestamentlichen Theologie.' In: Strecker, G. (Hrsg.), *Das Problem*, 81-154.

¹⁴ Räisänen, H., *Beyond New Testament Theology. A Story and a Programme*, London 2000².

¹⁵ Berger, K., *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums. Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Tübingen / Basel 1992².

¹⁶ Theissen, G., *Die Religion der ersten Christen. Eine Theorie des Urchristentums*, Gütersloh 2000, Darmstadt 2003³.

morality was like. Like in NT theologies, Theissen deals with the sacrificial meaning of Jesus' death, but as for its existential truth he tries to keep distance. Like Berger, he pays attention to – as he calls it – the ritual sign language of early Christianity, which is expressed in gestures like the laying on of hands, the washing of feet, the unction of the head or of the whole body, the holy kiss, and he pays attention to speaking in tongues. Theissen is positive about the emergence of the NT canon and critical about second century Gnosticism, which he considers as an adaptation of Christianity to the Hellenistic environment. However, in his view the Gospel of Thomas is neither a Gnostic nor a heretical text, so that it merits to be recognized as yet as a legitimate witness to Christian mysticism. He sums up 11 characteristics of early Christianity which make up its coherence: God, Wisdom, miracles, alienation from God, renewal, the motifs of vicariousness, divine indwelling, faith, love, the change of high and low positions, and judgment. At the end of the book, he tries to show in how far the early Christian religion, and thus the Christian religion as a whole, is plausible. In this final chapter he seems a modern apologist of the Christian faith. He presents himself as a guide in the semiotic cathedral of Christian faith, but it is very difficult for him to deny his Christian conviction. Yet he intends to present his religion from the viewpoint of an outsider.

It is most stimulating to read Theissen's book; I consider it – as many readers do – as an impressive accomplishment. It was written as an alternative to NT theologies, but in fact there is very much of NT theology in it.

As a critical remark about Theissen's attempt, I might say that although he has tried hard to keep distance from his theme as if he were an outsider, he has not always succeeded in doing so. In fact, the Christian preacher Theissen appears both in short inconspicuous evaluative remarks throughout the book, and in the end, where he tries to show the plausibility of early Christianity. I wonder if this book, just like Berger's, will find other readers than those who also read NT theologies: theologians, ministers, theological students. But since many Christians in Western Europe are not so sure about their religion anymore, they may feel comforted by such a book which is presented as if it had been written from an outsider's perspective. So I think that the inner secularisation of Christianity in Europe is an important reason why Christian theologians appreciate Berger's and Theissen's books. However, I wonder if non-Christian historians, who are interested in early Christianity, will really reach for them, as if finally there are some impartial descriptions of early Christianity. If they do, they may be less hindered by the assumption that everything that is described in it witnesses to God's revelation that is supposed to be true for the readers.

CONCLUSION

An advantage of the historical, religionsgeschichtlich approach of early Christianity is that it confronts us with its relative strangeness in comparison with the daily practice of traditional middle-class ("bourgeois"!) Protestantism. These historical studies confront us with a type of Christianity that we can find nowadays among Pentecostals, in independent African Churches, or, e.g., in the Rumanian countryside. If we take early esoteric and Gnostic Christian texts into account, we see some similarity with the convictions of "New Age" Christians. Biblical theologies tend to give a treatment or even a selection of the Biblical material that suits middle-class Protestants or Catholics, but as soon as one abandons this Church interest, the same material appears to contain some neglected features that reappear in charismatic Christianity or in esoteric groups. So the paradox is that the merely historical approach of the NT and other early Christian texts prepares us for the dialogue with Christian traditions that diverge from our own ones.

INTEGRATION OF THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Tamás Kodácsy

“The churches, in paradoxical unity with their Spiritual essence, are sociological realities, showing all the ambiguities of the social self-creation of life. Therefore they have continuous encounters with other sociological groups, acting upon them and receiving from them... It must try to formulate the ways and principles by which the churches as churches relate themselves to other social groups.¹ Nevertheless, this formulation is always ambiguous, since the church has at least two levels of existence. The church is a group of people, participating in the society and history, and the church also has a transcendent existence or identity, namely the church is the people of God. In the integration of theology and social sciences it would be the easiest way to ignore this non-scientific, transcendental attribute of church, but this attribute is the distinctive feature of the church. Without this, the church would become only an association or civil organisation and it would be needless to talk about integration of social sciences and theology.

In this twofold aspect, the social sciences and theology speak about the same problems with two sets of concepts, methods and backgrounds. There are double disciplines in the integration: counselling and psychology, ecclesiastics and sociology, church history and world history, etc. For example, in relation of church history and world history Paul Tillich explains the contrast of the two fields as it follows. “The difficulty of this question stems from the fact that church history, as the representation of the Kingdom of God, is a part both of world history and of that which transcends world history and from the other fact that world history is both opposed to and dependent on church history (including the activities of the latent church which prepare for church history proper). This obviously is a highly dialectical relationship, including several mutual affirmations and negations.² And similarly, counselling and psychology, ecclesiastics and sociology have the same dialectical relationship.

By providing archaeological data, sociological theory, demographics and economic data, psychological insights, and new methods of historical interpretation, social sciences can open the way for a more sophisticated understanding of the social nature of human existence. Theology challenges social sciences through moral and transcendental questions as well as informs the social sciences through its larger and deeper perspectives.³

Henceforth, I would like to present an example to integrate of theology and sociology. This study analyses the results of a recent survey about religiousness of people in Hungary. The survey based on a questionnaire made by Dr. Sándor Fazakas, Institute of Sociology and Ethics, Debrecen University of Reformed Theology. The institute is thankful to students for taking the questionnaires to their residences and asking people to fill out them. In this way the survey played role in the minister training in our seminary as well.

794 useable filled questionnaires came back to the institute, and the questions answered anonymously. The questionnaire was interested in not only the religiousness and piety but in some personal information regarding age, occupation, type of permanent residence and marital status. Twenty-eight questions referred to the belief in God and religious commitment. Inasmuch as mainly reformed students of our seminary were asking the people, so this sometimes determined the environment of survey. I have to consider that some particular answer does not represent the opinion of whole Hungarian society. Therefore the questionnaire is very detailed and suitable for focusing on the relationship of believers and church, and what do people think about the present and further situation of churches in Hungary.

¹ Tillich, P., *Systematic Theology*, Vol.3. New York 1978. p.212.

² Tillich. p. 382.

³ ed. Barnes, M. H., *Theology and Social Sciences*. Maryknoll 2001.

<http://www.sirreadalot.org/religion/index.htm>.

In this essay I present an analysis of answers in four groups: general information (domain of survey), everyday questions about the religiousness, piety and commitment, and the church. Every part begins with a summarized table of answers, in which the headings show the questions, and the columns contain the percentage of actual answers.

General Questions

<i>Q1 Age</i>	<i>Q2 Occupation</i>	<i>Q3 Residence</i>	<i>Q4 Marital status</i>
15-20	16 student	27 village	44 single
21-30	30 intellectual	23 small town	18 married, live together
31-40	14 employee	6 city	29 divorced
41-50	17 industrial	19 industrial region	1 widowed
51-60	11 agricultural	1	
61-80	9 self-employed	2	
81+	1 retired	16	
n.a.	2	6	8
			4

*No answered questions marked with 'na'.

These answers show us that our survey is wide-ranged in general sense. One can observe that people from every generations gave answers though age of 21-30 has the highest percentage with 30%, which would indicate the attitude of young generation in Hungary, their attitude is the key to the future of Hungarian churches. Answers to question 2 represent the occupations of the respondents where the students, intellectual workers, industrial workers and retired people are significant. It is easier to take a survey in a densely populated area (e.g. city or town), where the monitored living area of people is not too densely populated. However, our questionnaires were also sent to countryside as you can see a high percentage of people who are living in a village. The 6% of divorced people refers to people who divorced and have not get married again. In the past every second marriage ended by divorce in Hungary statistically, so nowadays living together without lifelong commitment is more and more popular.

Everyday questions about the religiousness of respondent and his/her family.

<i>Denomination of</i>	<i>Q5 yourself</i>	<i>Q8 partner</i>	<i>Q9 children</i>	<i>Q10 parents</i>
Reformed	68	37	38	56
Roman/Greek	21	14	9	15
Lutheran	2	1	1	1
Free Church	1	0	0	0
Other	2	2	1	2
More than one	---	---	1	14
No answer	6	46	51	11

Q6 Have you received religious or any ideological education?

Yes	68
No	22
n.a.	10

Q7 Have you ever changed your denomination?

Yes	4
No	80
n.a.	16

Q11 Occupation of your parents:

intellectual worker (e.g. teacher, lecturer, writer, journalist)	15
employee	4
industrial worker	16

farmer or agricultural worker	3
self-employed	3
retired	26
n.a.	33

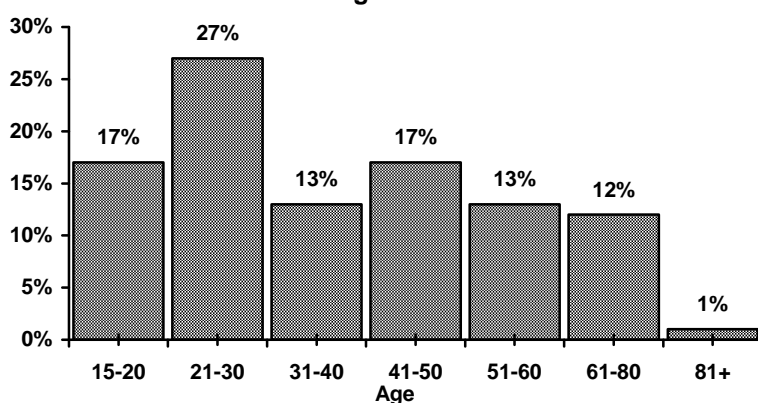
<i>Frequency of churchgoing</i>	<i>Q 12 Self</i>	<i>Q13 Partner</i>	<i>Q14 Children</i>
many times a week	17	6	8
once a week	26	10	13
once a month	7	4	3
on major Christian festivals	26	14	14
on major family event	34	21	19
very rarely	7	4	4
in times of crisis	1	0	0
Never	6	2	2
n.a.	---	---	---

Q15 How often do you listen to church services on radio or TV?

every week	22
once a month	5
on major Christian festivals	5
sometimes	46
never	20
n.a.	1

The country-wide proportion of Roman Catholic and Reformed people is in reverse order: Roman Catholic (60%) and Reformed (20%). This difference can be explained with the denomination and residence of survey-taker who usually come from the eastern part of Hungary where reformed denomination is more dominant. Figure 1 suggests that the age of people who have received religious or any ideological (including Marxist) education is proportional with ages of all respondents. People who changed their denomination (4% of all) belong to Reformed (43%), Roman or Greek Catholic (36%), Lutheran (4%) and other (17%) churches.

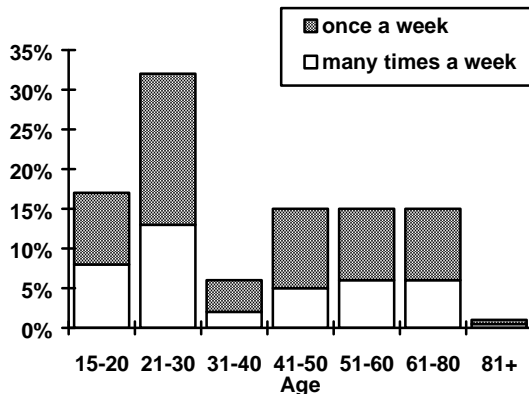
Figure 1.



It may be interesting to see how many mixed marriages are in each denomination. I calculated that 22% of Reformed married and 42% of Roman or Greek Catholic married are in mixed marriages. Relative to Hungarian Reformed Church, it is a frequently asserted hypothesis that the reason for decreasing of Reformed population is the mutual concessions. It says that when a mixed couple want to get married in Roman Catholic Church, then church has demand on children to be baptised into Roman Catholic. In same case, Reformed church has demand on children to be baptised into Reformed only whose parent of

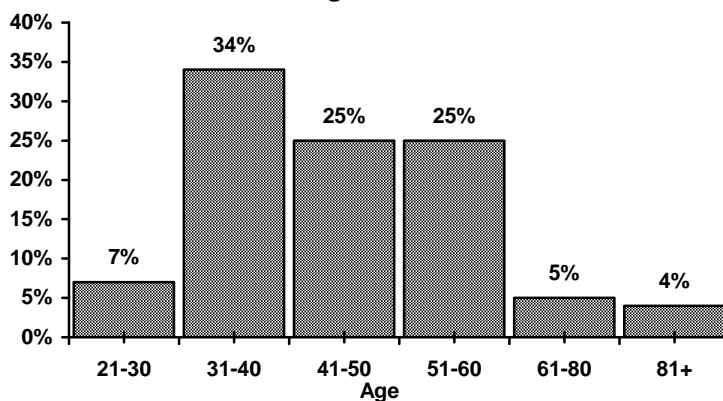
the same sex is Reformed. In spite of these, this certain 22% is not such a high percentage which can be the main reason for decreasing of reformed population anywhere.

Figure 2.



The frequency of attending a church is very various. It seems that the church has only a small part in case of crisis, on the other hand it is a usual place for major family events. It means that attending church is as much a matter of tradition as of personal conviction. Unfortunately, people are in crisis, that would be motivated for getting spiritual help, do not go to church in the time of trouble. If we examine how many people go to church many times a week, it does not refer to the same result in their family. Probably, it is one of the most difficult thing to speak about Jesus Christ in own family seeing that regular church attendants are usually go there alone. Figure 2 shows the age of people who go to church many times or once a week. It is very hopeful to look at a high percentage of younger generation, though they are the greatest in our sample. Age of 31-40 generation usually called "the victim of communist regime" which is proved by the lowest percentage of church attendants, but their children seems to pay more attention for the church. After 1989 there were more young people in a church services than middle-aged, because several parents thought going to church is none the worse for children. Consequently, sometimes the children invited and brought their parents to church.

Figure 3.



I examined how many parents who go to church rarely than once a week, have a child going to church at least once a week. The result is on Figure 3, which argued the hypothesis: the church can contact middle-aged parents more easily through their children.

It is also very useful to look at a feedback of religious issues of TV or radio. It seems that these programmes are not too popular among the respondents, 46% of them sometimes, and 20% of them (together 66%) never have been watching or listening these. Therefore, there is 22% who wanted to listen or watch these programmes every week, although 82% of these people are older than 40, so religious programmes are not interesting for young generation.

On piety and commitment of respondent

<i>Q16 Read Bible or Rel. lit. at home?</i>		<i>Q17 Pray out of church?</i>		<i>Q18 Pray at home?</i>	
every day	29	prayers by heart	48	at meals	24
sometimes	54	free prayer	55	evenings w children	12
never	13	religious songs	13	with partner	7
no such book in my house	1	contemplation	7	in crisis	39
		meditation	2	occasionally	43
		other forms	7	when lonely	37
		never	14		
n.a.	2		---		---

Q 19 Did you, or will you want to, get married in church?

Yes	78
No	15
n.a.	7

Q 20 Are your children, or will you want your children to be, baptised?

Yes	81
No	8
n.a.	11

Q 21 If you have children, what do you think about their religious education?

Yes	65
No	6
It won't hurt them	10
It is my children's decision	16

Q 22 If you have children, do you want them to be confirmed?

Yes	58
No	12
It is my children's decision	19
n.a.	11

Q 23 What is most important in your life? Place these in rank order, with 1 representing the most important. (most supported ranking is presented):

- 1 family
- 2 career and work
- 3 leisure time
- 4 friends
- 5 relatives
- 6 church and religion
- 7 politics

Q 24 Whom do you speak about religious topics with?

with my wife/husband	25
with my children	28
with my parents	24
with my pastor or priest	17
with my friend(s)	43
with my colleagues	12
with nobody	7
occasionally people I don't know personally	16

Q 25 How often do you speak about religious topics?

Often	26
Occasionally	41
Rarely	16
Never	6
n.a.	11

Q 26 Usually when people are in trouble, they try to find spiritual help. Which way do you prefer?

horoscopes, astrology	11
future-telling (cards or from palm reading)	2
yoga, transcendental meditation	6
natural therapy (e.g. acupuncture)	11
psychotherapy	14
counseling	63

Q 27 What do you think about death and the life after death?

Everything comes to an end at death.	8
Death is a natural thing,	37
Resurrection and eternal life after death.	48
There is reincarnation after death.	6
Death is a transition to a new existence.	3
Contact with the spirits of dead people.	3

Reading the Bible and religious literature is closely linked with attending church. In Figure 4 the vertical axis indicates the frequency of attending church and the bars indicate reading religious literature. Reading Christian books is typical of people who go to church many times or at least once a week. Churches should pay attention to people who do not go to church very often, for example just on major family event or high festivals, since even though they have demand on listening or reading about religious topics. They would rather read Bible and religious literature themselves at home, than participating on a church service.

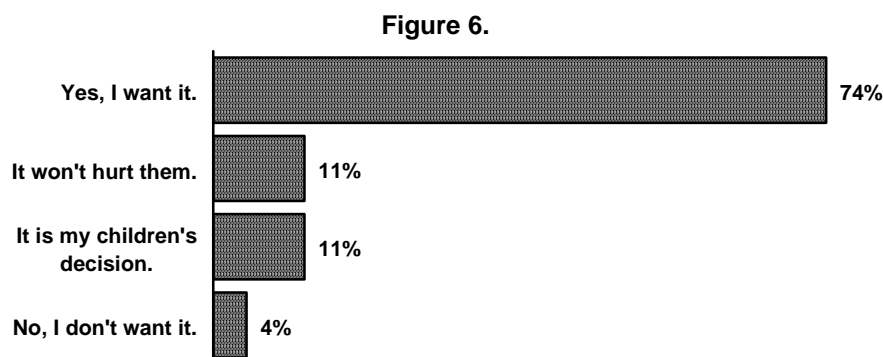


The 14% of respondents never prays out of church and the 48% prays what they have learned. It follows from this, that almost every second respondent knows a prayer by heart, such like the "Heavenly Father" or any traditional one. I think that the free, spontaneous prayer refers to a simply vocation of God rather than a regular participation of a worship community, as a high 55% indicates it. Prayer at meal is not so ordinary, it is practised by the 24% of respondents. The 37% prays if they are alone. One would expect that mainly older people pray alone which is supported by Figure 5, because of a high percentage of 61-80 age in comparison with their number in the general sample. Nevertheless, the young generation in Figure 6 are in tune with the general proportion of age, which means that the loneliness and need for help does not respect to the time of life.



The causal church services, like wedding and baptism, are still popular quite in Hungary. It is astounding that intention of respondents to bring their children to baptise is 3%, what is higher than the percentage of intention to get married in a church. It indicates a deal, as if parents are not baptised or they had no church wedding, at least they want their children to belong to the church. In practise, it is usual when parents who had not church wedding, bring their children to baptise. Sometimes, they ask a church wedding after several years of civil marriage.

In the church, the infant baptism is one of the most controversial issues. I do not want to detail infant baptism but it is obvious if pastors baptise children then parents' commitment and intention is necessary for further catechism of their children. Concerning infant baptism, it is inevitable that church asks the parents to send their baptised children to catechism. Such as in the Great Commission of Christ, the baptism and the catechism are inseparable: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them..." (Mt. 28:19) How many parents want to make baptise their children and send them to catechism at same? Answers are shown in Figure 6, where the 74% of definite yes is good result. Nonetheless, the rest 26% shows that there is some misunderstanding about baptism, plainly they think about baptism as a tradition or service, which is not imply further commitment.



In case of question 23, I would point out that the most important thing for the people is their family and the less important is politics.

SPEAKING ABOUT RELIGION	often	occasionally	rarely	never
with my spouse	11	14	4	0
with my children	12	17	2	0
with my parents	9	14	4	0
with my pastor or priest	9	8	1	0
with my friend(s)	19	23	8	0
with my colleagues	5	6	2	0
with nobody	0	0	0	7
people I do not know personally	7	8	3	0

Nor pastors, neither family is the most likely company for speaking about religion, people usually speak about it with their friends (43%). The low percentage of speaking about religion with pastor or priest is a sharp critic, perhaps pastors or priests are not enough open for communicate to people, generally it may mean that their communicative duties are confined only to preaching.

The most preferred answer in question 26 is the counselling with 63%. Of course, it does not imply that everyone, who chose this answer at the survey, will go to counsel in case of trouble. It means that in trouble they would go to pastor rather than use horoscopes, astrology, prophecy or yoga. Horoscopes (11%) and natural therapy (11%) has better reputation than yoga and prophecy. Probably the percentage of using this kind of therapies is much higher in everyday than in troubles (and most likely vice-versa: counselling is less popular in everyday).

Our life is strongly determined by what we are thinking about death. One think that everything comes to end at death is living differently, like whom think death does not mean the end absolutely. Answers for this question about death represent people's resoluteness in life. 37% of "no idea what will happen after death" indicates a little hesitation because it is not such a strong statement as everything comes to an end at death, but says it will be some uncertainty after death. I assume that this uncertainty shows what is happening in depression or pessimism of respondents' everyday life.

The church

Q28 Which statements do you agree with?

The membership of a church has no significance for me.	19
If not a Christian, I would think differently about many questions.	10
I do not agree with some doctrines of my church.	6
Membership of a church does not mean you should go to church.	39
I have been a member of a church all my life and I will remain so.	32
It is possible to believe in God without church.	43
The church is a community which I need.	35
I am a member of a church because I was brought up in this church.	22
I cannot be a Christian without the church.	16
I am just interested in baptisms, weddings and funerals in church.	7
The church represents values which are important for me.	37
The church has the role of educating young people.	50
The church should do more charitable work.	27
The church should be more active in public life.	13
The church mustn't talk politics.	35
My church should work more closely with other denomination.	17

Q 29 Have you participated in any ecumenical church services?

Yes	51
No	47
n.a.	2

Q30 Which statements do you agree with?

All Christian denominations stand for the same values.	33
All Christian denominations have same value, but I am most happy in mine.	31
All Christian denominations have same value, but only mine is right.	3
I cannot see any differences between Christian denominations.	8
Essentially all religions say same things, the differences are only in details.	24
Division churches is sinful. There will be no differences in the Kingdom of God.	23

Q31 What would happened if the church was closed down?

Many people would not know what the meaning of life is.	36
People would be less friendly with other people.	46
The Christian faith would die out.	22
There would be fewer old-fashioned ideas.	5
There would be more suffering people and there would be no help for them.	40
Something that prevents the development of society and the economy would have been closed down.	5
There would be much immorality.	50

There would be less people who give voice to justice and peace.	31
Homeless, alcoholic and drug addicted people would have less help.	58
Small Christian communities would come into existence where people would live in love and peace.	27
<i>Q32 To what kind of organisations did you give a donation in the last year?</i>	
a church-run charity	47
a secular charity	11
a sports club	4
a political party	1
a cultural organization	10
other clubs	6
I did not give a donation.	30

Question 28 refers to what respondents require of the church. Respondents think with highest percentage that the church has to participate in education. Nowadays, there are faith-based schools where parents can send their children, and usually these schools have a good reputation. Therefore, schools are not the only way to educate young generation, it would be very important to reach young people who do not go to a grammar school. Unfortunately, Christian young associations, which were brought to life again, are not working as effectively as they were working before communism. According to demand of society it would be worthy to reinforce these associations.

Also respondents wish the church should do more charitable work. The church has to pay more attention for this area of service. There is not an established and fixed social network yet in Hungary, i.e. there are not yet long-time worked charities supported by government. Today every organisation, including churches, what do social work, have equal chance to get money from foundations and state. Obviously, the charities can prove they working well and effectively, will have more chance to do their works in the future, but the competition is still open. Church must recognise these facilities hence people would support them. Hopefully, Catholic as well as Protestant churches have active and working charities, which are the most supported by question 31.

The membership of the church is a main point, when one observes the answers signed a, d, e, f, g, h, i. Opinions of such like as the membership of a church does not mean that someone should go to church (39%), or it is possible to believe in God without church (43%) supported by a lot of respondents. This indicates a large number nominal Christians. Churches must face up to the fact that people have an image of God, even they do not want to go to church, and they also recognises themselves as believer. Even if it was not church's fault to make these people unfamiliar from church in past fifteen years, churches have to do something to reach this considerable large body of people. On the other hand, there are people (22%) who are Christian, because they were brought up in their church. It means that growing-up in a Christian family and in a church has not been died out yet. Although this kind of Christianity would be also nominal, but in era of secularisation it would be an important traditional basis on which church can built. However, the church plays role much as a community than a place of worships (answers g), certainly church can find ways to make more committed people.

Church-members who do not agree with some doctrines of their church are 6%, which could be interpreted two ways. Firstly, one can consider that our church have good doctrines and who do not agree with these are heretics or outsider. Secondly, people who disagree with some doctrines they are active thinkers in a church, whom are needed in church. I think the second hypothesis is near the truth, and it would be better to see increasing a little this minority.

The church mustn't talk politics is a well-supported (35%) statement which should be acknowledged. Perhaps after compulsory pause of 40 years churches were talking too much politics during the previous fifteen years.

Ecumenical movement is not unknown among Hungarians. Even people seem be satisfied about ecumenical approach of churches, hence 51% are participated in ecumenical church services, and just 16% like their churches to work more closely with other denomination. It indicates that differences and debates among Hungarian churches are not noisy and spectacular, which makes churches be more attractive probably, though surely there is still a lot of work in ecumenism.

Answers for question what would happened if the church was closed down also indicates a general opinion of respondents about the church. The fact, that answer i) and e) has a high percentage shows that people would like the church to do charitable work. It is also important that people think that morality and ethics belong to the church as shown in answer b) and g), but at the same time 27% look that small Christian communities instead of "historical churches" would be more peaceful and attractive.

CONCLUSIONS

Hungarian churches have a big facility and challenge today. Generally, Hungarian people have not been disappointed in the church yet. According to people's opinion to take a good and respected possession of society, churches have to pay more attention for social and educational work.

The years have gone by when churches and their leaders had to fight in gorilla warfare. Today, they have to learn to work together. The isolation is not a way in the future, and the church must find their active position in Hungarian society.

After the era of communism, the churches had got a lot of support from state and abroad as well. With joining to European Union, the time is near when these official supports will stop. Then it come to light whether a church can be a self-supported one or it will sunk in the sea of secularism.

TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS – BEST PRACTICES

Elöd Hodosy-Takacs

In the higher education we are dealing with students of different background. Some of them has good language skills, some of them received good education previously, some of them came from a so-called ‘good-christian-family’ and some of them had no appreciable background at all. We can discover in each class, that these differences can turn upside down, and the very promising candidates won’t be the best students. It is also interesting that the mentioned changes are usually happening during the first two years.

Besides the student’s background the personal interest is the second key issue in the university education. Without deep interest in the subject nobody can be successful in theology. (And the lack of interest is the greatest enemy for the teacher – just as the boring lecture for the student!)

First of all let us clarify why do we need to require personal research. The answer can be quite simple: because this is the best way to have a deeper insight into a particular problem, and the only way for a student to develop the skills of solving theoretic or practical difficulties; or being more serious I can say when we train students for personal research we teach them to survive alone. My ideas in this field are deeply influenced by Mihály Polányi’s theory about personal knowledge.¹

According to Polányi all knowledge is based on personal participation. There is always an ‘un-teachable’ part of the subject that the student have to discover through his or her personality. This is why we cannot abandon neither the practical classes nor personal research; formal teaching will never be able to tell all the teacher knows, the students must discover alone.

The result is that both the student and the professor will know a lot of things, but neither of them will be able to tell all things fully. This is what we call tacit knowledge. This is an important dimension in research, since while tacit knowledge can be possessed, all explicit knowledge is rooted in what was formerly understood, so explicit knowledge can be understood as transformed or applied knowledge.

The act of knowing is going through ‘indwelling’, that is an activity when the mind dwells latently in the subject. Theologically speaking this process is comparable to worship, or to the act of personal meditation.

During personal research first the tacit knowledge is strengthened, and if the student is well equipped with methods and interest, the personal indwelling will be strong, and the explicit knowledge grows (hopefully).

DEMONSTRATION

Also, personal research is not something figured out for itself. As we help and lead students in their work, we keep in mind: the next step must be a sort of demonstration (scholarly speaking: the good demonstration is like when the explicit knowledge is in front of the public). If the student’s work is not directing toward that, we are not talking about research. Demonstration can be a paper, an oral exam, a lecture, a publication, a presentation or any other form of individual or collective expression of the results of the work done alone or in groups. It means as we supervise the research (I will talk about that later) we also have to develop the student’s demonstration skills.

Why is it so important to mention demonstration together with research? First, without a clear goal sooner or later the above mentioned interest will be lost. Second, and this is the more important, since the

¹ Polányi M., *Personal Knowledge - Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy*. Chicago 1958, corrected ed. 1962.; Polányi, M., ‘Science and Man’s Place in the Universe.’ In: Woolf H., (ed.) *Science as a Cultural Force*. Baltimore 1964. See also T.F. Torrance’s (ed.) *Belief in Science and in Christian Life. The Relevance of Michael Polanyi’s Thought For Christian Faith and Life* Edinburgh 1980 (on pp. 133-147: ‘Notes on Terms and Concepts’ the reader finds a key for the special terms used by Polanyi in his work).

interest is deeply personal, the acceptance or rejection of the demonstration means control for the researcher.

TEACHING? THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

If we accept that through research the individual is growing individually, and in the case of group work the group strengthens and each individual grows, we also have to accept that the supervisor has a very important, but also very limited role. Basically the supervisor is the one standing behind the researcher as long as he or she is a student. In that sense the good supervisor must have a clear understanding on the topic, needs to be patient (unfortunately most students know that we are trying to be patient and this is why we have to know the limits of patience), needs to spend time with the researcher(s), and most importantly: between the researcher and the supervisor must be a relationship based on mutual confidence. This is why I am tempted to use a question mark – is research teachable? I do accept that basic research methods can be taught indeed, but instead of teaching I would rather use another expression. The supervisor is standing behind the researcher helping the personal growth of the student. In this sense the supervisor is not teaching directly. I do not believe that research methods are teachable in large groups; but I do believe in ‘directed study’. Directed study instead of teaching, that is we are standing behind our students pulling them back before they fall into pits, but sometimes we let them making mistakes.

Since we all know each other let me be critical now: I think this is one of the greatest among the weaknesses of our theological education. When the curriculum is based mainly on lectures, on large groups the students are forced to be passive participants. I think each and every student should take part in directed study projects, but obviously this way of (real) education is too expensive. To take a last quick glance on the supervisor I have one more note, and this is critical again. If the supervisor is trying to work with too many students the failure is almost sure.

WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH?

Nowadays in the theological education we basically require library research, and in some cases (e.g. church history) archive research is unavoidable. Besides these we also have to talk about field research. In both cases we are looking for the special needs, objective and subjective problems and needs.

Research in the library

In the first case supervision does not seem to be so difficult. But today we are facing several problems. In Hungary one of the most important problems rooted in the past: after the 2nd World War the fresh theological literature was on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Today for us the greatest problem is the distance – we have to travel abroad recently just to sit in the library. Of course for students it is almost impossible. This is why we tried to develop our collections, and I have to mention our new, re-organized theological library together with the research centers of our institutions. In the higher education this is the responsibility of the institution to provide the students with the best research facilities, and above all library. At this point we have to mention the Internet as a research tool. Month after month there are more and more homepages and we can surf for hours looking for stuff we need. The supervisor has a special role here. The students are facing hundreds or thousands of pages and we have to show them how to separate useful reading from ‘junk’. (A personal note: I am convinced that on small group elective courses if research papers are required the opening meeting should be spent with the available literature, when the group-leading supervisor is talking about the books and journals, showing them to students. For me it never turned to be a waste of time.)

Among subjective challenges I would like to mention three things. First of all a note about language skills. Let me be sharp and clear: in Hungary those students who do not speak any English or German has practically no chance to become a good theologian – of course it does not necessarily mean that he or she won’t be a great pastor! I am talking about personal growth in theological studies. Secondly – the question of the students’ literacy. A student – and unfortunately we all know that this is a sad fact – who is practically illiterate is not ready for personal research. This is also true for ‘theological literacy’. We usually

need to spend one or two years with introductory courses, because the entering students are biblically and theologically illiterate.

Let me show you what I am talking about. In my Biblical Archaeology class usually I am working with students just finished their third semester. Some of them is already able to read in English or German, but most of them are on the beginner / intermediate level. They already passed a few introductory courses, the 'History of the Biblical World' class is a prerequisite. So what can the lecturer do? It is obvious that most participants won't be able to write a relevant, full 25 page research paper. In this case the best practice seems to be something else. The opening class should be spent with a deep orientation. The students are sitting around a large table, on one side they can see original objects from the biblical world, pieces of pottery, etc, on the other side there are a number of books, those we want them to use. During the class each student has to turn in a two-page paper every week (summarizing book chapters, articles, etc.) and we also require an oral presentation in front of the class. In this way the following goals are achieved:

- (1) the beginner student gets a first, directed insight to the literature.
- (2) counting a 12 weeks semester at the end of the class the student (actually worked week after week) has a good (24-25 page) file.
- (3) the development of the student is controlled continuously.
- (4) the two most general demonstration methods (written and oral) are also present, so the supervisor can help the students to develop their demonstration skills.

Research on the field

In our education the research in field has a minor role comparing to library work. But we have to keep in mind, that the field research, or field school can deeply enrich theological studies. Let me mention a few possible examples. There are very expensive ones, like study trips to the Holy Land. These are not available for most students. But if somebody even travels, that is not necessary a research trip. For that a previous preparation, supervision and again the demonstration is needed.

Another examples can also be mentioned, like a sociological research in a particular community. In general I believe that we should require field research from every student. In several Theological Academies of the United States (among others my former school, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary) the curriculum is designed according to this. They teach in the fall and spring semesters, and for entering students introductory Greek during the summer and Hebrew in January. Besides that in January they offer the so-called travel seminars, when the students with professors, as supervisors are going to different places, from the Holy Land to Latin America, or to the next city, it does not really matter. But they are outside, they left the campus. Or a Hungarian example. Before World War II in Sarospatak under the supervision of Kalman Ujszaszy and other professors there was a course called village-seminar. The goal was the same. Students went out to the field, they did supervised research.

One question is raised for me. Our students are serving in communities, they travel to congregations, they spent time out there – so can we say that every student is doing field research probably during the 'legatio'? (during Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, when they are preaching in churches as a practice of ministry) Or even they year long supervised practice of ministry can be considered as field research? My answer is no. During the 'legatio' they are having a special role as preachers for the feast, so (1) we can say they see a 'celebrating community' instead of the everyday life of the church, and (2) in this case they are in the preachers' position, which is again not the natural place for researcher, they are speaking in public, so the people's relationship towards them is again not neutral. In the case of the supervised practice of ministry we have another problem: this is the last phase of education. Since they do not sit back to the class they do not really have an opportunity to develop, use and make use of and convert their experiences. It is great that we have six years of pastoral education in Hungary, and I know all the circumstances that force us to keep the five plus one year system, but I believe it would be better to send out our students in an earlier phase, and then continue their training.

A very special research opportunity could be the mission trip. And again we can say our students are involved in that kind of ministry, since they participate alone and in groups in that ministry, and when they come back they are full of experiences. Why I still hesitate to call this field research? I have two reasons for that. (1) When we are talking about research in field we should not mix it with ministry in the

field; and (2) I am talking about research only if the student is supervised and prepared for the research, and if the results are put together in a form of demonstration. Without preparation-supervision-demonstration I would not use the term research.

Teaching Church Theology

ETHICS BETWEEN CHURCH AND CULTURE

Ferenc Turcsik

When I read the proposal for this working conference and therein the title of this paper, it made me feel uncomfortable. Not because of the theme, but rather of the title: ethics between church and culture. That suggests something that does not even exist. This between could never be a possibility for a responsible church, theology and ministry to live by. This between means a vacuum where ethics could be done. However, this is not what the reality is in everyday life. Ethics can be done only in the church and culture. I, of course, know that the goal of the given title was not a suggestion of something unreal. It rather flashes the ambiguities of our faith, science and ministry. Christian theology is in a constant state of paradigm-change, especially nowadays and sometimes we really feel a shocking experience, which may be terrifying for some, when they meet the requirements of one against the other. Then we find ourselves exactly between church and culture. Therefore, actually we live always between them so that we can never live between them. This is what makes this problem not only a hard one but also a continuous and therewith a basic one. It is basic because when we bring up themes for discussion like church as a member of the public forum or about the possible and necessary relationships between social sciences and theology, we apply our meta-ethical method of the state and mode of the relation between church and culture.

Now I am going to explain my meta-ethical approach through which I view at this problem. First, I want to define what I mean in this lecture by church and culture. Secondly, I want to illuminate the basis for my views. Hereafter, I want to illuminate this not at all simple relationship by using contradictory propositions. With the paradoxical character of the followings I want to invite everybody to go under the deep existence of the feature of the relationship between church and culture. I hope to bring you to a point where you can agree with that it is not only possible but necessary as well to be in dialogues with culture and others.

DEFINING CHURCH AND CULTURE

At first glance, it is not quite clear for a non-scientist why we are to define the notions of church and culture. We just know what these terms mean. On the one hand, it is right to say something like this. On the other hand, it is not enough to feel and ‘just to know’ what these terms are but we have to articulate systematically how we approach and see our subjects to be able to understand God’s will, our limitations, circumstances, suspicions, faults, responsibilities and possibilities better and deeper.

The church, as we see, has many aspects that we should take account of, however now it is not my task to give a full description of what the church is. The same is true in relation to culture. Now I will start from another point of view and that is the meaning of ethics. Following the American Heritage Dictionary the English word ethic is in ‘the Middle English ethik, from Old French ethique (from Late Latin *ēthica*, from Greek *ēthika*, ethics) and from Latin *ēthic* (from Greek *ēthik*) both from Greek *ēthikos*, ethical, from *ēthos*, character’¹. Nonetheless, this word has a wider and more general meaning, which is ‘an enclosed place’, and here we find the roots of how we generally understand ethics. It is an enclosed place wherein the things are legitimate whereas outside the circle of enclosure the things are illegitimate. It is safe to stay within the boundaries, but outside of it life is precarious, parlous and there can happen tenuous things in this unsettled world. When we speak of Christian ethics, our central question is how the life and deeds of man changed or should have changed after the conversion through death and resurrection with Christ. In other words, the answer to Gods love revealed in Christ is central to Christian ethics. In this context, the meaning of ethics is not only to live within certain limitations but at the same time to live in freedom to

¹ ‘Ethics’, *The American Heritage Electronic Dictionary*, Third Edition, version 3.5, Softkey International Inc. 1994. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.)

fulfill God's will. In sum, ethics is articulated in relation to habitual forms and reflects to the range of actions in connection with 'the nature and destiny of man'² where the question is whether they assist to accomplish and realize human being's task which is rooted in God's will in the one reality of Christ³.

To approach the matrix of church and culture on this way means to define the conceptions not exactly from a substantial but rather from a structural point of view. Nevertheless, this structural feature affects the substantial material also. Grasping the church, as I mentioned, means that it has its limitations but there is also freedom to live her life. These limitations mean an enclosed place in two senses: (1) spiritually and (2) sociologically. (1) Its spiritual character is distinctive because it makes the church what she really is. She belongs to Christ Who is arisen by God's redemptive grace. Additionally to this, it means also a place where people live their lives together which life is inspired by their convictions and the church makes it possible for Christians to gather and not only worship God but also to discuss the matters of faith. (2) Its sociological character is not different from other communities but it is still enclosed since there are people who take part of it and others who do not. Nonetheless, her members are lids of other communities too, which influence them.

Culture is the coherent entire range of meanings that orientates human beings to understand and comprehend reality in which they live, and gives them insight (1) to what the point(s) is (are) and what is at stake in their lives and (2) to the norms and values, which direct them in life.⁴ Culture is thus also an enclosed place, which is true not only vertically but horizontally as well (see e.g. the contextual theologies). In history, from time to time ages have come and gone away, theology as such always involved a talk (discussion) about God, but the form of theology changed repeatedly. If we look at the world in one moment and compare the co-existing theologies, we must draw the same conclusion, namely, that they are talking about God but in a different form. In this respect, theology is only a case in point and this conclusion is adequate in connection with other matters, too. Culture means some ideals to follow and some norms, values that direct people's lives in the given context. Different questions, different ideals require different answers and different attitudes to approach and achieve the desired purposes. Culture, so formulated and defined, is an enclosed place.

COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTION, INTER-RELATED COMMUNICATION

Taking responsibility in fulfilling God's commandment means taking part in the ongoing (public, philosophical, etc.) discourses in society. This can happen with positive and negative signs, namely, this kind of participation can be articulated as protest but also as support. The negative protest is as much in question in society as the positive contribution of Christians and the church. In this interaction, there is an objective and a subjective moment. 'Ideals of the good life and moral rules of behavior do not spring from the heads and hearts of individuals, but are embedded in social practices by which people interact with each other. They exist relatively independent of the individual observer.'⁵ They possess a certain symbolic objectivity, which implies epistemological standards of truth. As Frits de Lange⁶ says, 'nothing withholds you from killing another person, but according to the symbolic conventions that structure the fabric of (most, perhaps all) cultures, you are objectively wrong. Morality, seen this way, is a form of practical knowledge, embedded in habits, conventions and social practices, supported by institutions.'⁷ Besides objectivity, which is understood in this descriptive manner, there is also a subjective moment. This subjectivity means that in this embodiment, strictly speaking, there are different traditions which have to understand the same things differently because of their unique principles and convictions. In their

² This is the title of Reinhold Niebuhr's *magnum opus*. Niebuhr, Reinhold, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 2 vols., New York 1945 (vol. 1. *Human Nature*, vol. 2. *Human Destiny*).

³ Cf. Bonhoeffer, D., *Ethics*, London 1993, 161-179. o.

⁴ Cf. Tennekes, J., *De onbekende dimensie. Over cultuur, cultuurverschillen en macht*, Leuven/Apeldoorn 1990, 60.

⁵ Lange, F. de, *With each other, for each other, against each other. Bonhoeffer's Theory of Mandates as a Theological Contribution to Socio-Ethical Pluralism*, <http://users.belgacom.net/fritsdelange/dbmandat.htm>, last visited on 05.02.2001.

⁶ Lange, F. de, *With each other, for each other, against each other. Bonhoeffer's Theory of Mandates as a Theological Contribution to Socio-Ethical Pluralism*, <http://users.belgacom.net/fritsdelange/dbmandat.htm>, last visited on 05.02.2001.

⁷ Ibid.

diversity, they embody shared meanings but they represent and stand for different things as well. We have to live under the aegis of this objectivity and subjectivity.

Until now, we saw that the objective and the subjective moments are not only different but also inseparable. What can we do? What is the church's role? Where is our place in the social matrix of plurality and of shared meanings? I think the church has two responsibilities where she has to take action: (1) her critical account presented in front of the dominant culture and (2) her participation in the contemporary discussions, which can be critical, but supportive as well. The first one can be done, in my opinion, under the motto of communicative interaction. This is an open network that works in its interactive character to understand the present culture deeper and easy to be understood by the contemporary culture. This means not exactly a participation in the everyday sense but rather a church functioning as a mirror. A mirror which is a part of the communication but she rather reflects and holds up a mirror to her contemporaries in spite of creating her own part in the given situation. Secondly, the church must participate in the ongoing dialogues and debates. In these, the church must balance what is to be supported and what is not. We all know that the church has not got The Truth, she only knows Who is The Truth. Nevertheless, in these dialogues we cannot participate as the owners of the truth⁸, but we have to be people of humble heart and open to the Holy Spirit of God to be able to see and recognize what we can learn from others, and what side we can never accept and what we can teach the other people. This activity will never be a static one but rather a reflexive dialogue, which is an inter-related communication between the parties.

THE PRAGMATIC BASIS

How can we, as Christians, provide a basis for this communication? David Fergusson presents a possible alternate. The dialogue could be built on the language of human rights. Although, if we want to speak this language, first, we have to answer another question, which is, whether this dialogue is possible at all. After that, we can discuss how and on what theological basis it is achievable. First the pragmatic basis and then the theological one. To answer this question, I invoke Michael Walzer's theory of the 'thick' and 'thin' moralities. Let me put it on this way, as a paraphrase of the title of Walzer's book: there is difference between arguing at home and arguing abroad. We, as Christians, do not formulate the matter under discussion proceeding from the same principles, from the same traditions etc. either others. However, Walzer's point is that this is not necessary and at the same time, we can understand each other. 'Moral terms have minimal and maximal meanings'⁹ but these thick and thin accounts do not occur in the same context, because they are appropriate to different contexts. Nevertheless, these two accounts cannot be disconnected.

Maximal and minimal meanings do not exist independently of each other, rather minimal meanings rest on maximal meanings (and not otherwise). We meet each other in minimal cases not because of an epistemological commitment, but rather our understanding comes 'naturally'. We, Hungarians lived through the events in 1989, but people from the other side of the world agreed with us 'naturally'. They understood what we wanted and what we did not... and not because of a specific commitment to specific ideas or conceptions. In these cases our sense of justice is operated, rather than our ratio to support some unknown human beings with whom we probably differ in our concepts of the good, justice, etc. 'Minimalist meanings are embedded in the maximal morality, expressed in the same idiom, sharing the same (historical/cultural/religious/political) orientation. Minimalism is liberated from its embeddedness and appears independently, in varying degrees of thinness.'¹⁰ The relationship between thick and thin cannot be described as thin morality having existed in principio, and as man gets older, this thin becomes thicker and thicker but au contraire our morality is thick from the beginning, 'culturally integrated, fully resonant, and it reveals itself thinly only on specific occasions'.¹¹

⁸ Cf. Niebuhr, R., *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, New York 1960. 117.

⁹ Walzer, M., *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, London 1994, 2.

¹⁰ Ibid. 3.

¹¹ Ibid. 4.

Moral philosophy is a twofold enterprise. On the one hand, it is to provide a foundation for minimalism. On the other hand, it is to build a more expansive structure on this basis. This minimalism cannot be described as it ‘serves no particular interest, expresses no particular culture, regulates everyone’s behavior in a universally advantageous or clearly correct way... carries no personal or social signature’¹² This minimalism is not objective, is not freed from being bound up to special persons, ideas, circumstances, interests, culture, etc. It is rather particular, and expressive intimately ‘connected’ to the maximalist moralities.¹³ Behind thick moralities there are always thin moralities. Minimum, thus, does not exist without maximal morality.¹⁴ ‘In context, everyday, they provide contrasting perspectives; seen from a distance, in moments of crisis and confrontation, they make for commonality.’¹⁵ Minimalism, as Walzer painted, is applied primarily to crises and confrontation. Nevertheless, I do think that this minimal morality, this minimalism, this universality does exist beyond these situations as well. In fact, it is for sure that this minimalism occurs in those crises most characteristically, but this complementarity does exist not only at these times, but also on another occasions. This minimalism is there because there are maximal moralities. In the existing plurality of our society, which pluralism can enrich our thinking, there is the possibility of being in dialogue with hope to reach any agreement at one point.¹⁶ On our way of understanding, the relationship between church and culture begins here, or at least I expect so.

THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS

First, we must find an acceptable theological framework to be able to approach this relationship. A theologian of the last century has a theory that can be applied here if we grasp it in the right way and put it into our context. This theologian is Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the theory is of the mandates. I will not examine here the historical developments of this theory; it is out of the scope of this paper. I will base my argument on the historical analysis of Frits de Lange¹⁷ where he explained the historical and theological circumstances in which each piece of text¹⁸, where Bonhoeffer deals with the mandates, was born. He argues that it is possible to interpret Bonhoeffer’s theory as a theology of life. I will here paint a picture with the colors of Bonhoeffer to represent how I understand the theory of mandates as a framework to view it as a theology of life concerning the relationship between church and culture.

The four mandates are the followings: church, government, family and work (culture). The mandates do not stand by themselves. Neither of them is superior or can claim to replace the others. Their relation is with, for and against one another.¹⁹ Bonhoeffer illuminates the cooperative, subsidiary and polemic character of the mandates.²⁰ If we take these mandates and bring them to the reality where we live, we can see that they do not exist as separated entities but as complementary institutions in the establishment of man’s everyday life. Their relation is really with each other, for each other and against each other, which relation is not a static, but rather a dynamic one which dynamicity can be found in their complementarity.

¹² Ibid. 7.

¹³ Ibid. 7.

¹⁴ Ibid. 11.

¹⁵ Ibid. 17.

¹⁶ Cf. Stout, J., *Ethics After Babel*, Boston 1988; J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, New York 1993.

¹⁷ Lange, F. de, *With each other, for each other, against each other. Bonhoeffer’s Theory of Mandates as a Theological Contribution to Socio-Ethical Pluralism*, <http://users.belgacom.net/fritsdelange/dbmandat.htm>, last visited on 05.02.2001.

¹⁸ There are four passages in the corpus of Bonhoeffer’s writings where he wrote about the mandates. Three can be found in the *Ethics* (Bonhoeffer, D., *Ethics - E*) and one in his *Letters and Papers from Prison* (Bonhoeffer, D., *Letters and Papers from Prison*, London 1971; I refer to the Hungarian translation of this book: Bonhoeffer, D., *Börtönlevelek. Fogságban írt levelek és feljegyzések*, Bonhoeffer, D., *Börtönlevelek. Fogságban írt levelek és feljegyzések*, Budapest 1999. These passages occurs as follows:

In the essay titled as ‘Church and State’ (E 297-318.);

In the section of ‘Christ, Reality and the Good’ (E 161-185.);

In the piece on ‘The Concrete Commandment and the Divine Mandates’ (E 252-267.);

In his letter from prison of January 23, 1944 (LPP 92-95.).

¹⁹ Bonhoeffer, D., 1993, 258.

²⁰ Tödt, I., (ed.), *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke 6*, München 1992, 433.

People live in a family, but at the same time, they work somewhere and live within the boundaries of a country where they are grown up into a culture, and (maybe) they are members of a church too (there are always intersections!). These factors of life sometimes give support to one another, but at times, they are in conflict with each other. The individual is part, and an important one, of the matrix of the mandates and represents a separated sphere. However, it would be unfortunate to take this separate sphere to the same level as the mandates, because it is not a mandate. The individual is someone who lives in the world of the complementary mandates. This takes it to another level where the mandates are. After all, there are naturally similarities in spite of the dissimilarities between the individual and the mandates, e.g. in the ever-existing present both must be interpreted, explained and this is not only a possibility but a necessity as well.

The mandate of government is limited. It ‘has the divine task of preserving the world, with its institutions which are given by God, for the purpose of Christ’²¹ but government cannot itself engender life because it is not creative, only regulative. Bonhoeffer rejects the usage and application of the ‘people’ (Volk – Volkstum Theologie) as an order of creation – out of accordance with the Deutsche Christen²². People do have a historical meaning and weight but it is not an order of God. Bonhoeffer accentuates that instead of two there is only one reality, which is in Christ.²³ The roots of the mandates are in God’s commandment. Bonhoeffer’s theory is a useful weapon against any authoritarian and totalitarian forms of social life. No one can say that his/her opinion is The Opinion. These are the reasons why I think that the mandates are obviously and explicitly a good choice to be applied to a situation in a post-communist land as Hungary. Consequently, the range of effects of this theory cannot be restricted to the regimes and these boundaries must be overridden. The post-totalitarian states must belong to this group, because the past is not absolutely over yet – at least in the minds and hearts of the citizens. As a result, the post-communist countries where we lived quite a long period under the leadership of a totalitarian regime, can make a good use of this theory because it can help to understand the society better and the institutions therein. The Gestalte of the mandates have a complicated relationship and this pluralistic model can be a good framework to show how to understand our present theme. The mandates teach us to look behind the mandates to see what the basis of them is, and to look over the mandates to see that the form is not the mandate itself, in order to be able to perceive what or rather Who is the Truth and where it can be found: in Christ.

Life is formed life, which is under the commandment of God. As I understand the church as a complementary-community, it is the product of the complicated relations and the plurality of the mandates. The church does not always have to form a counter-community, e.g. in the Hungarian situation against liberalism, the liberal values, the contemporary culture, etc. Alternatively, let me take another example! It is neither possible nor satisfactory just talk about human rights. It is not enough to indicate that there is or can be a basis for them in our Christian belief, but it is also necessary to go further and ask questions, like what it means for us, what it means for our society, what we are to do for a better future, etc. I think the church have to follow Reinhold Niebuhr’s methodological circle, which he was consistently traveling, ‘employing Christian symbols to illumine the human drama... and then revising the articulation of those symbols in the light of the drama as it unfolded’²⁴.

There is plurality in God’s creation but this plurality is still God’s creation. Some theologians view the world pessimistically – like e.g. in my opinion Hauerwas, and we have to ask this question: does the theory of mandates not represent a too optimistic worldview? The answer is a negative reply because the mandates accentuate that the world is guilty (there is only one reality in that Christ, Who came for and because of us to give us redemption from the curse of sin and guide into salvation through the grace of God), but it is guilty as much as it is accepted into God’s grace. The church has an integrating role between the mandates. They are different but they embrace the whole life of man in front of God, Who is the Creator, Deliverer and Reconciler. Only the faith in God shows their unity.

²¹ D., 1993, 308.

²² Burtness, J.M., quotes a declaration, where race, nation and the people are dealt with as orders. Burtness, J. M., *Shaping the Future*, Philadelphia 1985, 80.

²³ Bonhoeffer, D., 1993, 161. ff.

²⁴ Rasmussen, L., *Reinhold Niebuhr: Theologian of Public Life*, London 1989, 2.

Another considerable and noteworthy feature of this theory is the relation between the mandates and their ‘form’ (Gestalte): they are different but at the same time they belong to each other and still the existence of the mandates does not depend on their Gestalte. Nevertheless, on the other hand, they are the outward forms of the mandates and accordingly, in a sense they belong to each other. When shifts take place, unexpected events occur as well. Sometimes we are afraid of changes because the answer to the question of ‘what’s going to happen’ can never be grasped and answered absolutely for sure. Changes and shifts mean taking risks but if the forms of the mandates are no more the same as they were, it does not mean that the mandates are lost. They are still present but in a new culture, in a new society they do get their new form. We do not know it for certain if we have chosen the best way to avail ourselves of the opportunity to take our responsibility but new constellations expect new forms – and I think these ‘news’ are appropriate and legitimate as well. The church has to have her past in her mind but it is not necessary to cry for the ‘old times’ and to be after this past. She has to enter to the present and take the risks of her responsibility to be able to express herself in the present for the future based on the past.

This responsibility does not mean paying God back for his gifts, because after all, then it would stop being a gift. This responsibility of freedom is not permission but a commandment.²⁵ In this context and in the light of Bonhoeffer’s letter from prison of January 23, 1944, there is a substantial addition to the theory of mandates, which has to be taken and discussed. This addition in the letter accentuated freedom which did not get so much attention before as it does here. The areas of mandates are compassed with freedom.²⁶ In his Ethics, Bonhoeffer accentuated rather the necessity and imperativeness of the mandates, but besides this ‘must-aspect’ there is also the ‘freedom-aspect’. In this context the basis of the mandates changed. It is not absolutely different (because freedom may also be a gift, or the catharsis of God’s commandment and also a commandment) but it is changed. Moreover, this opens new dimensions in viewing the mandates not only as an absolute commandment, but also as a place for freedom, which makes possible and opens new direction for human beings.

CONTRADICTIONARY PROPOSITIONS AS ILLUMINATING FRAMEWORK

Challenge: failure – chance – cheating

Every situation bears two resolutions: one which frightens us and another which fills us with joy. These are feelings, and generally feelings are not exactly scientific facts, but I think these are appropriate to express what man thinks and feels in these situations. When an unusual or maybe usual occurrence in our surroundings or circumstances intend to change our position, man feels frightened rather than calm, peaceful and happy. It springs from this fact that it is not quite welcome if we are challenged by a new situation – or very few feel himself/herself comfortable in these cases. It involves failure. We can die at that moment. We cannot see a way out from the situation – because we do not try to find it. We cannot see any acceptable answers and responses to the ongoing happenings and challenges – because we do not look for them.

However, on the other side, this situation includes another possibility as well: the possibility of chance. This is the possibility of being challenged and through this, it is the possibility of getting stronger. Nevertheless, this aspect of changes is parlous, because there is only one door through which we can find our way to our future and there are infinite ways of falling down into a deadly gap. This aspect requires courage, courage to dare, courage to believe, courage to take our chances, courage to rest upon God, Who wants us to be grown-up Christians. This courage is not based upon ourselves but upon God. This courage is the courage we can get from the Holy Spirit to see, to hear and to listen to God’s will. If we do not accept this gift we fail to live in this world or we do live here, but then, our habit can be characterized with cheating and giving everything for being accepted, and in this process we make costly grace very cheap, too cheap.

²⁵ Ricoeur, P., LeCocque, A., *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, Chicago 1998. I use the Hungarian translation: Ricoeur, P., LaCocque, A., *Bibliái gondolkodás*, Budapest 2003, 155.

²⁶ Bonhoeffer, D., 1993, 92-95.

Changes are rooted not only in knowledge, but also in feelings, emotions, ways of thinking and traditions. Changes require our whole existence, and if we want to participate in human lives, we have to take the risk to be courageous. We have to find our own way through chances to God's will, to the members of our churches and to find ourselves – if we do not want to lose everything.

Pluralism: unification – diversity and commonality – sectarian loneliness

When the discussion goes on about ethics between church and culture, there are two dangers that can attack us. One is unification. In this sense, unification means unwillingness to tolerate different meanings and opinions. Understood in this way, unifying means uniformity and conformity. Uniformity without diversity and different colors, conformity without commonality is unification, as man wants it but not as God. We are already unified in Christ and there is no need for another unification. We are to allow everybody in the church to be part of the body as it is meant for this person. We are not to see diversity as an enemy and a defeating factor but we can see it as a friend and an adjutant for us to be the person who we are supposed to be.

The another menace is turn to sectarian existence, which, as unification as well, gives us an illusion of giving a good account of our stewardship and of making us feel comfortable with the cheating, dishonest and corrupt thought that we do not sell God's costly grace for nothing. Actually, this turns everything upside-down and we do not see our reality because there is unification and sectarianism before us. Both of them make us lonely. Unification makes us lonely within our own community and sectarianism within our world. This does not mean that we are to give everything for not being lonely, but it means that we have to find our lives and responses in diversity (plurality) and commonality within our own community and within our world, and with people from other traditions.

Style of being: taking – receiving and offering – pushing

The church's most important task is to receive and offer and not to take or push. The church is a place where we can get together. The church is a place to be with God. The church does not take anything. The church receives God's Word and she is to turn towards the people and by moving and opening, she offers a possibility of a place existing nowhere else, where it what usually counts does not count but only one thing: belief in God. In the first place, this is a possibility to be able to be the person who we really are: simul iustus et peccator. When we recognize our nature of existence, we cannot take things from others and cannot push them to be someone who they are not or to do things what they do not really want to do or think. In this mode of living, the only joyful thing is to receive the love and grace of God and to offer ourselves to our fellowmen for the sake of God.

The word taking can mean getting into someone's possession by force, or grabbing with authority. There is some kind of force in this definition, just like in pushing. Pushing has the meaning of applying pressure or exerting force against anything, which will serve the purpose of moving. Receiving and offering does not include this force. Receiving means openness to the One, Who can enrich our lives with His grace. Offering means openness to the people giving them what we have received from God. Receiving and offering belong together. If there is receiving without offering or offering without receiving – there is a huge gap in this person's existence. There is a big problem which is to be resolved. It is like heads or tails of the same coin: they are very different, but in the end, they belong together.

Mode of living: libertinism – freedom – determination

Culture: prison or palace? It is up to us. Actually, there is not an exact choice, because culture is prison and palace at the same time. It is prison, because we cannot get away from it. We cannot escape from the bondage of culture. We are to learn to live with it. It is a prison in this sense. In turn, it is a palace as well because this is where we can fulfill our task given by God. It is a place where we can find others and ourselves too. It is a place where we are part of God's plan. Here it is possible for us to be the salt of the earth with our savor. Here it is possible to be the light of the world and a city that is set up on a hill which cannot be hidden (Mat. 5,13-16). We have a chance of being the people saved by God and the people to shed into the world that we are God's people; otherwise, if we do not live like this, we are good for nothing.

This requires freedom: freedom from prison and freedom for palace. Freedom, which makes us see things in a different way. Freedom, which makes us see that we are in prison. Freedom, which makes us see that there is no other way to live. This freedom makes us see that there are limits which are boundaries that determine us. To see things on this way means we are not determined as we were before. To see things on this way means we cannot do whatever we want because of our limits. This freedom is our reality in Christ, which has no determination and no libertine unsettledness. We are settled down here and now. This is our prison, which can become our palace in Christ.

TEACHING ETHICS

Ethics involves an entire belief-system that shapes one's actions and behaviors. Christian ethics is distinctive not necessarily because of the deeds of Christians, but rather because of its motives. Christian ethics flows out of a theistic worldview, which means, it recognizes God's moral order as present and recognizable in both the created order (*revelatio generalis*) and *revelatio specialis*. It is a response to God's call and a participation in and reflection of God's covenantal love as it was modeled by Christ and revealed in Him. It comes from this that ethics is guided, just like other theological disciplines, by God's special directives revealed in the Scripture and is to be experienced as an act of worship towards God.

If an educational institution wants to fulfill this task, there are things to do. Students are to get to know how to think theological-ethically and philosophical-ethically. They are to know and state the major biblical doctrines in a systematic way and be able to identify a framework where they can imagine doing ethics for themselves. However, to be able to do this, they must know, criticize and analyze the important theologians and their works and in this way, I think, they will be able to express an understanding of important contemporary theological issues, or at least the university will have done everything required to give a possibility for a student to think theologically. Only when it is understood what the ongoing problems are in contemporary Christian ethics, will students be up to identify the major theological problems and their biblical solutions and to be capable of integrating theology and ministry. Without this step, they will not use their ethics practically and therefore, education will need to give them a hand to translate their belief and their ethics effectively in a practical context. Ethics means not only a scientific formation but a spiritual and practical formation as well.

In this paradigm, universities, colleges and seminars are places of service. The critical and challenging ethical issues of today demand our best and that is why the mode and substance of our teaching is so important. Doing less means limiting the power of God. Doing less means limiting the possibility given by God to man. Doing less means giving up our belief in the power of God to change people and to change the world. Teaching ethics means (1) to assist students in discovering and evaluating their value systems and their ways of making ethical decisions. To put it concisely: to assist students to think ethically as well. Teaching ethics means (2) to assist student in discovering others' value systems and ways of making ethical decisions and through this to help them to be open to criticize and to be criticized. Slowly, they will be able to develop a more coherent moral thinking. Passing books and exams, inch by inch, they will be able to develop a more consistent moral thinking. In this educational process, they can achieve greater precision and clarity in their thinking.

There are many things to do in our society – and this is true for all of us. We can do this from our personal belief on a basis of human rights. The Bible can help us and our fellowmen to understand the acute problems of our own society and time better and to look for solutions that are more humanitarian than the existing ones. Nevertheless, if we want to do this, it means not to follow the letter but the spirit of the Bible (cf. 2Co. 3,6). Changes? Naturally! We are not to be afraid of changes. It means, of course, taking risks, but it is part of challenges. Challenging and changing times do involve turns and shifts in the *Gestalte* of the mandates, but mandates are still intact without losing their role and position in human beings' lives. Moreover, the *Gestalte* is to change under new circumstances. Under new conditions, we as church are to follow new directions in forming a moral community in terms of our real circumstances and conditions. The church is under the obligation of continuous consideration of what we can integrate into our faith, how we are to live and what strategies we are to follow. Complementarity means this continuous considering motion of the church. Under the term of complementary community, we can understand a stable but flexible relation between church and culture and we can form a moral community that has a place in this world while remaining faithful to our Lord.

DIE KIRCHENGESCHICHTE IM DISKURSFELD VON GESELLSCHAFT, WISSENSCHAFT UND KIRCHE – ODER: WIE VIEL KIRCHENGESCHICHTE BRAUCHT DIE THEOLOGIE? ZUR HISTORISCHEN DIMENSION DER THEOLOGISCHEN AUSBILDUNG

Hans-Martin Kirn

Zur Standortbestimmung des Faches Kirchengeschichte im Rahmen der theologischen Ausbildung bediene ich mich im Folgenden der formalen Unterscheidung verschiedener Kommunikationsbereiche, wie sie D. Tracy in seinem Buch *The Analogical Imagination* für die christliche Theologie im Kontext des religiös-kulturellen Pluralismus skizziert hat.¹ Demnach hat sich die Theologie einer dreifachen Öffentlichkeit zu stellen: Der Gesellschaft, der Wissenschaft und der Kirche. Versagt sie vor dieser Aufgabe, wird sie zur rein privaten Angelegenheit und damit gesellschaftlich bedeutungslos.

Als historische Disziplin im theologischen Fächerkanon steht die Kirchengeschichte vor der Herausforderung, ihre Position im Blick auf diese drei Referenzgrößen zu bestimmen und ihren Bildungsauftrag daran zu messen. Die Hauptfrage lautet also: Wie positioniert sich die Kirchengeschichte innerhalb dieses dreifachen öffentlichen Diskurses von „Gesellschaft“, „Wissenschaft“ und „Kirche“? Dies schließt Fragen ein wie die: Wie geht die Kirchengeschichte mit den spezifischen Erwartungshaltungen sowie den Plausibilitäts- und Rationalitätskriterien dieser Kommunikationsbereiche um? Was bedeutet die jeweilige Diskursrationalität für die kirchengeschichtliche Ausbildung?

DIE KIRCHENGESCHICHTE IM GESELLSCHAFTLICHEN DISKURS

Im Kontext der okzidentalen Gesellschaften lassen sich drei fundamentale Dimensionen von Gesellschaft analytisch unterscheiden: Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur. Sie bestehen nicht getrennt voneinander, sondern beeinflussen sich gegenseitig und durchdringen sich. Diese Fundamentaldimensionen verweisen auf die Grundelemente der menschlichen Welt: Politik (Herrschaft und Macht), Ökonomie (Arbeit und Geld) und Kultur (Sprache und symbolische Kommunikation).² Theologie bezieht sich dabei nach allgemeiner Überzeugung auf einen Schlüsselbereich des Kulturellen als Sprache und symbolische Kommunikation, die Religion. Diese befragt sie nach dem Verhältnis von Weltanschauung (Glaube) und Ethos.³ Zu einer verantworteten Standortbestimmung von Theologie und Kirchengeschichte gehört somit, dass sie ihr Verhältnis zu den Fundamentaldimensionen der Gesellschaft, Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur, kritisch bedenkt.

Für die Kirchengeschichte bedeutet dies: Sie kann sich im öffentlichen Diskurs der Gesellschaft nur so weit behaupten, wie sie Fragestellungen aus diesen Diskursbereichen aufnimmt und wenn nicht Lösungsvorschläge, so doch Lösungsperspektiven und Hilfen zur Bewältigung von Orientierungsdefiziten anbietet. Diese Form der Zeitgemäßheit stellt sowohl ein Problem wie eine Chance dar:

Das Problem besteht darin, dass das historisch-kritische Bewusstsein als emanzipatives Bewusstsein allgemein verblasst. Es gibt kaum noch dogmatische oder ethische Verbindlichkeiten, die mit historischer Argumentation bekämpft werden könnten oder müssten. Geschichte im Allgemeinen und

¹ Tracy, D., *The Analogical Imagination. Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, New York 1981, Kap. 1: 'A Social Portrait of the Theologian.'

² Vgl. Wehler, H.-U., *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, Bd. 1, 2. Aufl., München 1989, 6-31; Habermas, J., *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften*, Frankfurt/M. 1985 (engl. 1988).

³ Vgl. Tracy, 3f., Wehler, 10.

Kirchengeschichte im Besonderen ist bei vielen in den westlichen Gesellschaften mit dem unausrottbaren Vorurteil von toten Zahlen und Fakten verknüpft. Dass man mit dem Verblässen des historischen Bewusstseins nicht nur seine religiösen und kulturellen Wurzeln verliert, sondern sich auch jeder Zukunfts- und Dialogfähigkeit auf die Dauer beraubt, scheint kaum im Blick zu sein.

Die Chance besteht darin, dass die Kirchengeschichte ihr Potential neu entdeckt und vermittelt: eine Praxis emanzipatorischen Denkens und eine Praxis des Perspektivenwechsels zu sein. Die vergangene Wirklichkeit, mit der sich Kirchengeschichte beschäftigt, ist schon immer eine Einladung zum Durchspielen und Durchdenken pluraler Meinungen und Praktiken gewesen. Die Distanzierung von dogmatischen oder moralischen Einreden gehört zum methodischen Grundbestand historischer Arbeit. Daher wird in der kirchengeschichtlichen Arbeit zuallererst die Freiheit des Denkens im Medium vergangener Wirklichkeit eingeübt – normalerweise konzentriert auf die Geschichte der Kirchen und Konfessionen, in denen wir selbst verankert sind, aber keineswegs darauf beschränkt. Kirchengeschichte wird im weiteren Rahmen von Christentumsgeschichte und damit auch von Religions- und Kulturgeschichte getrieben. Im Einüben des historischen Perspektivenwechsels leistet sie, kurz gesagt, ihren Beitrag zur Gestaltung und Erhaltung einer freiheitlichen Gesellschaft im Zeitalter des Pluralismus. Auch wenn man das historisch-kritische Bewusstsein, wie es sich im westlichen Kontext seit der Aufklärung ausgebildet hat, nicht zu zeitloser und interkultureller Gültigkeit hochstilisieren sollte: Ohne historisch-kritisches Bewusstsein und historisch-kritische Praxis wird es weder Dialog noch Konfliktbewältigung in einer multikulturellen Gesellschaft geben. Nur streng traditionalistische, geschlossene Gesellschaften können sich einen anderen Umgang mit Religion und Kultur erlauben – solange niemand die klerikalen oder weltlichen Selbstlegitimationen wirkungsvoll in Frage stellt. Die Situation innerhalb der Theologie ist im Grunde kurios: Jede theologische Disziplin hat mehr oder weniger starke historische Anteile – doch um den gesellschaftlichen und theologischen Status historischer Argumentation kümmert man sich kaum, und das zum Nachteil des Zusammenhangs der Fächer auf der Basis des historischen Bewusstseins und der gesamtgesellschaftlichen Verantwortung.

Die Kirchengeschichte hat auf dem Gebiet des religiösen Pluralismus und der Toleranz eine wichtige Brückenfunktion. Der kultivierte Umgang mit dem religiös-kulturellen Pluralismus und die aktive Sorge um die Zukunftsfähigkeit der demokratisch-pluralistischen Gesellschaften sind nicht nur für ein künftiges Europa, sondern für die Geschichte der Weltgemeinschaft von zentraler Bedeutung. Pluralität und Pluralismus sind nicht nur Problemfelder der Moderne, sondern schon Grundphänomene der klassischen Antike und der gesamten Christentumsgeschichte. Dies betrifft natürlich nicht den Pluralismus als programmatische Ideologie, sondern die Pluralität als faktische Herausforderung: den Umgang mit spannungsreich erlebter religiös-kultureller Pluralität und – seit der frühen Neuzeit – mit konfessionellen Identitäten und ihren Rivalitätsansprüchen. Selbst die mittelalterlich geprägten Gesellschaften waren weit mehr plural als kirchlich-bürgerliche Einheitsideale von Kirche und Politik vermuten lassen. Gerade die Reformation lässt sich in Einheit und Vielfalt als Musterbeispiel historischer Pluralisierung studieren. Auch das Verhältnis von Christentum und Judentum wie überhaupt für das Verhältnis des Christentums zu anderen Religionen spiegelt die entsprechenden Toleranz- und Konfliktpotentiale. Kurzum: Wer wirklich etwas von Pluralität und Pluralismus verstehen will, kommt an der Kirchen- und Christentumsgeschichte nicht vorbei.⁴

Dabei gilt es zu bedenken: Die Kirchengeschichte kann sich als historische Wissenschaft nur im Medium der Geschichte äußern. Sie kann und will keine schnellen Aktualisierungen. Moderne mediale Präsenz ist daher auch nur von untergeordneter Bedeutung. Mittelbar aber trägt das kritisch geschulte historische Bewusstsein immer zur verantwortlichen Urteilsbildung in Gegenwartsfragen bei. Die Distanz zur Tagesaktualität und zur Aufgeregtheit und Schnellebigkeit gesellschaftlicher Trends ist daher ebenso essentiell wie vorteilhaft. Man mag sich als Beispiel nur an die Diagnose der neueren Gegenwart als der sog. Postmoderne erinnern. Die Rede von der Postmoderne dürfte mehr über die unerschöpflichen Fähigkeiten moderner Selbststilisierung aussagen, als dass sie viel zum Verständnis der Gegenwart und ihres Herkommens beitrüge. Dass z.B. die Aufklärung mit ihrem einseitigen Rationalismus den Holocaust

⁴ Wir können dies in den allgemeinen Auftrag der Kirchengeschichte einbeziehen, also in die Rekonstruktion gesellschaftlicher Wirklichkeit in den unterschiedlichen temporären und lokalen Kontexten. Religiös-kulturelle Sachverhalte der Vergangenheit berühren immer Fragestellungen, die mit der Entwicklung der Gesamtgesellschaft verbunden sind. Dies gilt für dominante Kirchengemeinschaften ebenso wie für randständige Minoritäten, die der Gesellschaft ihre Reformbedürftigkeit vor Augen hielten. Gerade die letzteren – man erinnere sich nur an den radikalen Pietismus - entwickelten des Öfteren zukunftsweisende Denk- und Lebensmodelle.

habe vorbereiten helfen, ist – bei aller Ambivalenz aufklärerischer Rationalisierung - nicht mehr als eine (post-)moderne Mythenbildung.

Kurzum: Die Kirchengeschichte nimmt ihre Verantwortung im öffentlichen Diskurs der Gesellschaft wahr, wenn sie deren Grundfragen wie die eines zivilisierten Umgangs mit dem Phänomen des Pluralismus aufnimmt, historisch vertieft und erweitert - und so an die gesellschaftliche Debatte zurückgibt. Dabei leistet sie einen konstruktiv-kritischen Beitrag zur gesamtgesellschaftlichen Entwicklung. Wenigstens ist das die Intention. Faktisch bleibt die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung der Kirchengeschichte, wie sie heute besteht, eher marginal. Dies teilt sie zu einem guten Teil mit der Theologie als Ganze wie auch mit anderen historischen Wissenschaften.

DIE KIRCHENGESCHICHTE IM WISSENSCHAFTLICHEN DISKURS

Kirchengeschichte kann sachgemäß nur als historische Wissenschaft betrieben werden. In diesem Diskursfeld liegt ihr Schwerpunkt. Wenn sie hier besteht, besteht sie auch im Diskurs mit der Gesellschaft und der Kirche. Die offenbar nicht enden wollenden Debatten, ob und inwiefern die Theologie eine Wissenschaft sei, haben für die Kirchengeschichte nur untergeordnete Bedeutung, was ein gewisses Mitleid mit den angefochtenen Schwesterdisziplinen nicht ausschließt. Im Grunde hat sie mit dem Anspruch auf Wissenschaftlichkeit nicht mehr Probleme als jede andere historische Disziplin. Sie kann sich im Prinzip auch im Kontext der Religionswissenschaft oder der „Religious studies“ ansiedeln. Ihre klassische Bezugsgröße ist jedoch die Geschichtswissenschaft. Die Anschlussprobleme, die sich hier ergeben, haben freilich nicht nur mit dem spezifischen Kontext der theologischen Ausbildung zu tun, sondern auch mit den Entwicklungsproblemen der Geschichtswissenschaft selbst. Es mehren sich die Stimmen, die eine Fortentwicklung der Geschichtswissenschaft zur historischen Kulturwissenschaft fordern. Damit wird dem Siegeszug des linguistic turn in den Sozialwissenschaften (C. Geertz) und der prominenten Stellung des weiteren Kulturbegriffs im Gefolge der historischen Anthropologie Rechnung getragen. Ziel ist eine Integration der unterschiedlichen historischen Forschungsrichtungen und Methodologien, wie sie sich z.B. in der Sozialgeschichte, der Mentalitätsgeschichte, der Alltagsgeschichte (Mikroistoria) oder der Geschlechtergeschichte entwickelt haben. Unhintergebarer Ausgangspunkt ist der Methodenpluralismus, der sich in den verschiedenen Fächern herausgebildet hat. Als Aufgabe kulturgeschichtlicher Forschung wird z. B. die „Rekonstruktion historischer Lebenswelten“ genannt (R. Vierhaus).⁵

Für die Kirchengeschichte bedeutet dies: Will sie in diesem Diskursfeld Gesprächspartner sein, dann muss sie sich dieser Debatte stellen und ihre Arbeit entsprechend ausrichten. Sie kann ihren spezifischen Beitrag darin sehen, dass sie aufgrund ihres praktischen Denk- und Handlungszusammenhangs mit dem Phänomen Religion als gelebter Wirklichkeit (wie ihn die systematische Theologie vertritt bzw. vertreten sollte) auch die vergangene Wirklichkeit von Glaube und Religion in ihren einst gelebten Konkretionen und gesamtgesellschaftlichen Verflechtungen am ehesten angemessen behandeln kann. Das muss sie freilich im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs nachweisen. Die entsprechenden Konkretionen sind in der Regel die der eigenen konfessionellen Tradition, doch dies ist nur eine pragmatische arbeitsökonomische Begrenzung. Ihre eigentliche Perspektive ist die einer Christentumsgeschichte oder eventuell – noch weiter - die einer Religionsgeschichte des Christentums. In deren Kontext muss sich Kirchengeschichte Gehör verschaffen, oder sie verliert ihre Bedeutung im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs der Zukunft.

Damit hat sich faktisch auch der traditionelle Begriff der Kirchengeschichte aufgehoben. Er bleibt nur noch aus pragmatischen Gründen und mangels besserer Alternativen – gleichsam aus Verlegenheit - bestehen. Die konfessionell betriebene Kirchengeschichte ist schon seit dem 18. Jahrhundert mehr und mehr ins Hintertreffen geraten. Das Projekt einer „ökumenischen“ Kirchengeschichte ist nicht einmal bis zur innerchristlichen Ökumene fortgeschritten, und der Begriff der „historischen Theologie“ greift im kulturwissenschaftlichen Kontext ohnehin zu kurz. Wer auf zeitweilig beliebte Definitionen wie die der Kirchengeschichte als Auslegungsgeschichte der Heiligen Schrift (G. Ebeling) zurückgreifen will, muss diese neu interpretieren und z.B. die „Auslegung“ als umfassende, gesamtgesellschaftlich relevante soziale Produktivität des Glaubens fassen.

⁵ Vgl. Kirn, H.-M., *Identität im Widerspruch. Das Verhältnis von Christentum und Judentum als kirchengeschichtliches Thema (Kamper Oratien 20)*, Kampen 2002, 5.

Gemeinsam mit den historischen Wissenschaften hat die Kirchengeschichte ihre Zielsetzung: Die konsequente Historisierung ihres Gegenstands, d.h. die konsequente Kontextualisierung und Pluralisierung von Wahrheits- und Geltungsansprüchen. Die Praxis konsequenter Historisierung erscheint mir gerade im Kontext theologischer Ausbildung unverzichtbar: Sie hat nicht das Ziel, (post-)moderne Beliebigkeit zu fördern. Sie hat vielmehr das Ziel, den für jeden fruchtbaren Diskurs notwendigen Perspektivenwechsel einzuüben und die eigene konfessionelle Herkunft als zukunfts offen, interpretationsfähig und interpretationswürdig zu erfahren. Ohne diese Praxis erlahmt die Fähigkeit zum Aufbau einer dialogorientierten, sprich: relationalen Glaubensidentität.⁶ Die Frage ist, ob das Zusammenspiel von historischen, biblisch-exegetischen, systematischen und praktischen Disziplinen ausreichend entwickelt ist. Ziel wäre, wie bei Tracy im Gefolge von B. Lonergans Methodologie angemerkt, eine funktionale Interdisziplinarität. Interdisziplinäres Arbeiten ist in jedem Fall für die Theologie mehr als nur ein Superadditum – und insofern sind alle Ansätze interdisziplinären Arbeitens, etwa im Bereich der Hermeneutik zu Beginn der Masterausbildung, zu begrüßen.⁷

Ich fasse zusammen: die historische Denk- und Argumentationsfähigkeit ist für die inter- und intrareligiöse wie für die inter- und intrakulturelle Verständigung unabdingbar: Gesprächspartner haben ein Anrecht darauf zu wissen, mit wem sie es zu tun haben. Gesprächspartner haben ein Anrecht darauf, dass das Gegenüber seine eigene Tradition kennt. Damit dient eine sachbezogen praktizierte Kirchengeschichte sowohl dem öffentlichen Diskurs in der Gesellschaft wie in der Kirche. Inwieweit dies auch praktisch der Fall ist, wird man diskutieren müssen.

Ein letztes: Als historische Disziplin ist die Kirchengeschichte auch theologische Disziplin. Sie liefert ihren Beitrag zur Beantwortung fundamentaler religiöser Fragen wie der nach Bedeutung und Wahrheit unseres Daseins, und dies im distanzierten Medium der Geschichte von religiösen Traditionen und Institutionen. Dazu gehört, dass die Kirchengeschichte

- daran erinnert, dass die Wirklichkeit Gottes eine historisch vielfältig erfahrene Tatsache ist und weltgestaltende Konsequenzen hat; dass sie
- daran erinnert, dass zwischen Gott und Kirche bzw. Religion eine unaufhebbare Differenz besteht (*ecclesia visibilis – invisibilis*), dass sie
- daran erinnert, dass lebendiger Glaube immer aus einer kritischen und kreativen Aneignung dessen besteht, was längst geglaubt worden ist – und dass sie
- das Risiko der Heterodoxie nicht scheut.

Unmittelbar hat sie keine normativen Ansprüche – die Ansprüche gelebten Glaubens müssen in der Systematik entworfen und verantwortet werden.⁸ Mittelbar aber dient die Kirchengeschichte auch der Aktualisierung von Glaube und Theologie. Denn: Gott ist für die Kirchengeschichte „nur“ Gott im Zitat – aber das schließt die Erwartung nicht aus, dass er noch heute spricht, und dies kann sowohl für die Gesellschaft wie für die Kirche riskant werden.

DIE KIRCHENGESCHICHTE IM KIRCHLICHEN DISKURS

Hier ist zunächst die Unterscheidung zwischen dem soziologischen und dem theologischen Kirchenbegriff angebracht. Als soziologische Wirklichkeit ist die Kirche nur in pluraler Gestalt präsent. Religiöser Pluralismus ist gesellschaftliche Realität, und was das an Chancen und Schwierigkeiten mit sich bringt, kann man hier in den Niederlanden gut studieren. Die unmittelbare kirchliche Öffentlichkeit der ThUK wird neuerdings durch die im Samen-op-Weg verbundenen protestantischen Kirchen gebildet. Der

⁶ Die Aneignung des Eigenen im Medium der „fremden“ Geschichte schließt die Erkenntnis des Eigenen im Fremden und des Fremden im Eigenen ein. Dies kann einseitige, z.B. fundamentalistische Stabilisierungen von Identität vermeiden helfen. Der Begriff der relationalen Identität eröffnet zudem die Möglichkeit, Mehrfachzugehörigkeiten, Grenzüberschreitungen und die Überlappung von Identitätsbeziehungen zu beschreiben und eine rein binär strukturierte Logik von Identität und Differenz zu vermeiden. Dies erfordert eine komplexe Kulturhermeneutik, welche das Phänomen Religion auch in historischer Hinsicht angemessen würdigt.

⁷ Inwieweit dies zu einer Transformation der Fächer zu funktionaler Interdisziplinarität führt mit „*functional specialities*“, ist weiter zu diskutieren, vgl. Tracy, 15.

⁸ Die Debatte um gegenwärtige theologische Überzeugungen – sei es die der Studierenden, sei es die der Lehrenden – kann dabei durchaus von Bedeutung sein, insofern sie die eigene Glaubensüberzeugung als eine *Möglichkeit* im Pluralismus der Meinungen artikulieren hilft. Die didaktisch-pädagogische Aufgabe des kirchengeschichtlichen Unterrichts besteht darin, den Raum der Entscheidungsfreiheit zu vergrößern und nicht durch falsche Autoritätsansprüche zu verkleinern.

innerkirchliche Pluralismus wird dadurch neu strukturiert, und ist wohl auch mit einer Botschaft nach außen und innen verbunden. Diese zu vermitteln ist Aufgabe der Regisseure und unmittelbar Betroffenen. Dazu gehörten auch die Erwartungen, die sich an die ThUK richten.

Die Aufgabe der Kirchengeschichte sehe ich hier zum einen darin, das Bewusstsein für die historische Entwicklung und damit die gewachsene Relativität der reformatorischen Kirchentümer mit ihren Konkurrenzen deutlich zu machen. Zum anderen gilt es zu zeigen, dass die in der Geschichte vorherrschende polare Logik von „wahrer“ und „falscher“ Kirche mit ihren exklusiven Identitätsbildungen und Separationen einen eigenen Entscheidungsernst besitzt.⁹ Immer geht es um Konkretionen des Glaubens, und immer auch um Kompromisse mit der Realität, wie man z.B. am vielfachen Bemühen um Konkretionen in Kirchengründung und Sonntagsheiligung in der Geschichte sieht, aber es geht natürlich ebenso um Machtfragen und Geld. Auch diese Fragen gehören in die Streitkultur kirchlicher Öffentlichkeit. Hierfür sollte die Kirchengeschichte sensibel machen und den Perspektivenwechsel einüben: Sich hineindenken in andere Rollen und Aktionsmöglichkeiten ist nicht nur eine Frage von Rollenspielen, sondern von historischer Vorstellungskraft überhaupt. So ist es z.B. keineswegs hinreichend, die konfessionellen Streitigkeiten vergangener Jahrhunderte der Streitlust der „rabies theologorum“ zuzuweisen und als überwunden abzutun. Vielmehr bieten diese Einblicke in die Handhabung religiöser Konflikte, die noch heute bedeutsam sind. Kurzum: Die Kirchengeschichte bleibt ein Übungsfeld erster Wahl für die immer neu zu leistende Aufgabe der Kontextualisierung und der Pluralisierung des dogmatischen Wahrheits- und Kirchenbegriffs.

Wünschenswert wäre aus meiner Sicht, dass das „Wir-Gefühl“ der unterschiedlichen Gruppen, sprich: die spezifische Gruppenidentität, nicht aufgelöst wird, sondern wächst – aber erweitert wird im Sinn der Mehrfachzugehörigkeit und Selbstüberschreitung hin zur Identität in pluralen Zusammenhängen. Konfessionelles Reformiertentum oder Luthertum muss sich nicht aufgeben, aber immer neu formen im toleranten Gegenüber und Miteinander – hin zu den Gemeinsamkeiten des Protestantismus und weiter zum gemeinsam Christlichen und Religiösen im weiteren ökumenischen und interreligiösen Kontext, und zwar aus der Überzeugung heraus, dass das Fremde und Unverständene im Anderen immer auch ein Teil des Eigenen ist.

Wenn die Theologie sowohl eine die kirchliche Gemeinschaft aufbauende wie kritisch begleitende Funktion hat, wenn sie sowohl Loyalität als auch kritische Distanz zur empirischen Kirche verlangen kann, dann gilt dies auch für die Kirchengeschichte. Dies gilt nicht unmittelbar und normativ, denn direkte Handlungsanweisungen liefert die Geschichte nicht. Mittelbar aber liefert sie im Medium der Geschichte alles, was der Mensch braucht: um seiner Kirche treu zu bleiben, sie zu verteidigen oder sich von ihr abzuwenden. Die Kirchengeschichte ist und bleibt in dieser Hinsicht ein für die Kirche, aber auch den Glauben riskantes Unternehmen. Sie bietet genug Stoff zum Nachdenken über das Ärgernis, dass der empirisch-soziologische und der theologische Kirchenbegriff in vielem nicht zusammenstimmen, dass zwischen gelehrter Theologie und gelebter Frömmigkeit, zwischen moralischem Anspruch auf Weltverbesserung und praktischer Nächstenliebe oft so wenig Zusammenhang besteht, kurz: dass Anspruch und Wirklichkeit in der Kirche wie im Leben des einzelnen Christen oft auch nicht annähernd zur Deckung kommen und so auch kein Zeugnis für das Evangelium sein können. Doch es gibt auch die anderen Beispiele. Und Anregungen für die kirchliche Praxis im engeren Sinn bietet die Kirchengeschichte allemal: Manche Predigten wären interessanter, wenn die Prediger auch eine Predigt von Luther oder Calvin oder Schleiermacher dazu gelesen und verarbeitet hätten. Doch wo lernt man dies?

Auch im Rahmen der kirchlichen Öffentlichkeit behält die Kirchengeschichte ihre Bedeutung. Die Vernachlässigung des historischen Denkens und die Unterminierung des historischen Bewusstseins in der Kirche ist jedenfalls noch immer ihr eigener Schade gewesen: Ob man nun an ein fundamentalistisches oder ein liberalistisches Verhältnis zur Tradition denkt.

Es wäre reizvoll, zum Schluss die drei Kommunikationsbereiche der Theologie in Verbindung zu bringen mit den drei Arten von Historie, wie sie F. Nietzsche in seinem Beitrag „Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben“ unterschieden hat, die monumentale, die antiquarische und kritische.¹⁰ Hierzu nur

⁹ Wahrscheinlich ist die Kategorie des „Einzelnen“, um dessen existentielle Entscheidung es nach S. Kierkegaard im Glauben geht, nie schwächer gewesen als zur Zeit ihrer Thematisierung. Zur Aufnahme Kierkegaards vgl. Tracy, 4f.

¹⁰ Nietzsche, F., 'Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen, zweites Stück.' In: *Werke in drei Bänden*, Bd. 1, Darmstadt 1997, 209-285.

ein paar Gedanken: Sowohl für die gesellschaftliche wie für die wissenschaftliche und kirchliche Öffentlichkeit könnten Aspekte des monumentalen, des antiquarischen und des kritischen Umgangs mit der Geschichte aktualisiert werden – was für Nietzsche der „Dienst am Leben“, könnte hier die gelungene Kommunikation sein. Diese braucht den Bezug auf positive Handlungsvorbilder (das Monumentale). Sie braucht verlässliche Traditionen (das Antiquarische). Und sie braucht die emanzipatorische Kraft, sich von Überlebtem zu trennen (das Kritische). Ein Übermaß an einen oder anderen schadet nach Nietzsche dem Leben – oder hier der gedeihlichen Kommunikation.

Wieviel Kirchengeschichte also braucht der Theologe zum Leben? Wahrscheinlich mehr von allen drei Arten, als ihm je bewusst gemacht werden kann.¹¹

¹¹ Zu den weiterführenden Fragen gehören z.B.: Welche Rolle spielt die Kirchen- und Christentumsgeschichte im Rahmen berufsspezifischer Differenzierungen? Welche Didaktik wird gebraucht? Wie können historisch-kritische, systematische und praktische Kompetenzen integrativ vermittelt werden?

“TRAINING IN THEOLOGICAL COMMUNICATION” – BEST PRACTICES

J.H. van Haeringen

This paper in the category ‘best practises’ – which has to be proved – offers a look in our practical work with students about theological communication.

The ‘best practise’ consists of a (kind of) morning prayer, delivered by one of the students, as teaching material. The central focus is not the content of the morning prayer, but the experience of making it and listening to it. That’s why afterwards the prayer will be considered in terms of communication process in relation to a more theological point of view. That evokes questions like “Which intention did you want to convey? What happened really to the audience? If there will be a difference (and there always will be), what does that mean?” But perhaps other experiences or questions raised during the morning prayer, both by the student who was praying and his or her audience, regarding the form, the effect, the methods, the content, the use and choice of music or pictures and so on. All can be discussed afterwards, but not in terms of ‘you should do it different’, but always from a questionnaire view: why did you do so, and were you aware of the meaning of doing so. What can you learn about the effects of your appearance, when looking back upon the responses of your audience.

Also, my lecture is composed of such a morning prayer and a short experiential reflection afterwards. I’m lucky to have found Loes Jansen willing to provide the morning prayer. Perhaps it is more appropriate to call it ‘the thought of the day’. Loes, just like the students of the training program, was totally free in her choice about content and form. The only stipulation was that it should be short.

For an optimal demonstration effect I need five volunteers to form together with Loes here in front of the room a kind of inner circle. That little group will afterwards be asked to express their feelings and sensations or awareness.¹

All other persons represent the so-called outer circle. It is their job now, to observe what is happening in the inner group. What are you aware of during the morning prayer, how is the connection between Loes and her audience? If we had time enough, I should ask you afterwards to tell about your observations. Unfortunately that won’t be possible now, because of the very limited time. But still I hope you will actively participate.¹

THE METHOD

Here the “thought of the day”, delivered by Loes, took place.

When she finished I (the teacher) asked the inner circle audience to answer privately in silence the questions. The outer circle audience also could answer privately their questions.

After a short break the inner circle persons in turn reported (a) their senses and feelings, (b) an image or metaphor and (c) questions or topics for discussion, if desired. The ‘minister’ was the last one to report. In three columns the reporting was written down on the blackboard.

Then I asked the ‘minister’ if she needed some more explanation. When every thing is clear to her we choose together at which item we start the reflection. It is important to choose something that makes her, the ‘minister’, curious or something that ‘triggers’ her.

In a normal situation, also during the training program, there will be one and a half hour for reflection.

¹ For the precise questions: see appendix 1.

Unfortunately, there was no time to work out the reflection during this experimental demonstration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This demonstration shows a working method which is part of a nine-week course Practical Theology. During that course students were active with homiletics, pastoral care and catechetics. The course is filled up with instruction and seminar; making a dry run, before the real ecclesiastical teaching practice does start.

Twice a week, nine weeks long, special attention was paid to the art and aspects of communication. We worked, among other theme's with:

- Biography and communication
- Attitude, emotions and feelings
- Job-images: to get aware the image one had created about his or her future profession as a minister
- Role playing

For a good understanding of this practical demonstration I want to explain something more about the basic principles of communication (A) and about the background of this working method with a morning prayer (B).

About communication

My reference of frame approaching the process of communication is the theory of the interactive field.² That means that:

communication is an ongoing mutual interactive and interchanging process. It has to do with sharing and joining of thoughts and feelings, but also of influences you are not aware of. An individual person is influencing the environment, but the environment also has influence on personal behaviour, thoughts, emotions, feelings. Because it is impossible not to communicate, we are always communicating. Even if we are withdrawing, we communicate that withdrawal.

what we call communication is just like everything (may be objects, actions, personal behaviour, events) a phenomenon and part of the wholeness of reality. It is not only me and you who are communicating with each other, for just as we sit here we bring with us a whole world of (different) knowledge, experiences, norms, prejudices, expectations and dreams, feelings, trauma's and pain and so on.³

In my view reality is an interactive field: it is always developing dynamic, as an interrelated changing between an organism an its environment. That is not the same as causality with thinking in cause and effect. The interacting is mutual and you never will be able to point out strictly if I was influencing the other or the other was influencing me; perhaps we both were influencing each other or influenced by something around us, the environment. That's a fundamental process-related way of thinking and viewing.

each detail of the interactive field, may be verbal or non-verbal, may be a thought or a feeling, a personal behaviour, a heavy noise outside, a nice smell that fills the air, everything may be relevant in the process of interaction and communication.

communication takes plays by different ways, not only verbal and non-verbal, but also in more modality's and on more than one level. There will always be the level of content (the 'what') and the level of relationship (the 'how').

About the way of experiencing

After delivering the morning prayer we looked back on what was happening during that prayer, as well with the 'minister' as with his or her audience. And on turn we are focussing on that results and working them out.

² Lambrechts, G., *De gestalttherapie tussen toen en straks*, Berchem 2001.

³ See appendix 2, a process-model of communication, in: Oomkes, F.R., *Communicatieleer*, Leusden 1996.

The purpose of looking back on what was happening is in the first place to bring into focus feelings, emotions and images they got while listening or praying. Only in the second place the audience as well as the minister will be asked which theological or other questions did occur. Also, by the way of what we can call our second language, we started the reflection.⁴

The first language is the language of the intellect. It is objective, defining, logical and analytical. That's what we used in our discussions these days and in our academic teaching.

The second language on the other hand is more difficult to describe, exactly because it doesn't define. We can call it metaphorical language, or picture language. Certainly it is the language of synthesis and wholeness.

Eugene Peterson and Marva Dawn pointed out that we do use words to make things precise and clean. But to evoke the mystery of God the use of metaphor is much more appropriate⁵. A metaphor is not a precise use of language; in fact it is the opposite and instead of pinning down meaning, it will set it free. The metaphor does not so much define or label as it does expand. It forces the mind into action to find a meaning at another level, "engaging the imagination in a cognitive and affective exploration of the subject". Metaphors keeps us from being spectators of language by forcing us to be participants in it.

That's why I asked for metaphors as well as awareness.

A comparable distinction you can find in linguistics and communication research, namely that between digital and analogous modality. Like two manners to express an intention. Digital communication means we use previously agreed signs. The most simple example is our alphabet, our words. Their meaning is constructed.

The other possibility in communication is the analogous modality; the word analogous already is explicating, that there will be a direct and visual similarity, which has a straight and immediate connection with the "significatum", that what is indicated. An example is the map, which on scale represents the streets in the town, but also the imaginative powers we see in our dreams.

The most direct analogous modality of communication is our body-language, although we are not always aware of what our body-language does communicate. My body is not only expressing something to others, but it also tells me what I'm feeling, what is happening with me. If I'll get frightened my breathe will be heavy and fastening and when I am boring, my body is getting flabby. So if I am aware of my body, I also know more about what is happening to me and in the environment and I will be better able to find the right interpretation for what is happening.

Just as these two modality's there are also two languages, and their existence presume that they represent two different worldviews (*Weltanschauungen*). For it is known as well that language doesn't as much reproduce a reality, but does create a reality. And you ought to know what you create as a minister.

Also, the intention of this way of looking back (that will be a better word here than reflection) is not analysing the message or the theological choices one made, - that will be valuable and important, but not at this moment. Now it is important that students experience which stir they may create when delivering a morning prayer. That's a step on the way to conscious behaviour in which cognitive and affective aspects are connected.

I think this is on a certain way corresponding with the distinction between the two orders, Ruard Ganzevoort spoke about Thursday morning (in the opening lecture of the conference). As academic theologians we are used to be and to find ourselves on the second level (in the second order). But becoming a minister you have to be able to switch each moment from the one order into the other, from the language of faith (which uses most often the second, metaphorical) language to the language of theological doctrine and reflection (the first, objective and defining) language.

To summarize

The purpose of this method and the training which it is part of, is:

⁴ Watzlawick, Paul, *Wie meet is het ook anders. Over de techniek van de therapeutische communicatie*, Deventer 1981.

⁵ Dawn, Marva J. and Peterson, Eugene H., *The unnecessary pastor, Rediscovering the Call*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge 2000.

- 1e. to make students more sensitive to the second language
- 2e. to make them aware of the difference between the two levels in communication
- 3e. to get students known with what can be the effect of their prayer

In that framework you can place this presentation.

APPENDIX 1: INSTRUCTIONS AND QUESTIONS

For the inner circle audience

1. Please, write down all the senses and feelings you were aware off during the morning prayer.
2. Please notice what kind of image the morning prayer did generate to you.
3. Is there any question or topic you want to postulate for discussion?
4. If you were asked to put into words some feedback or support, what did you want to say to the ‘minister’?

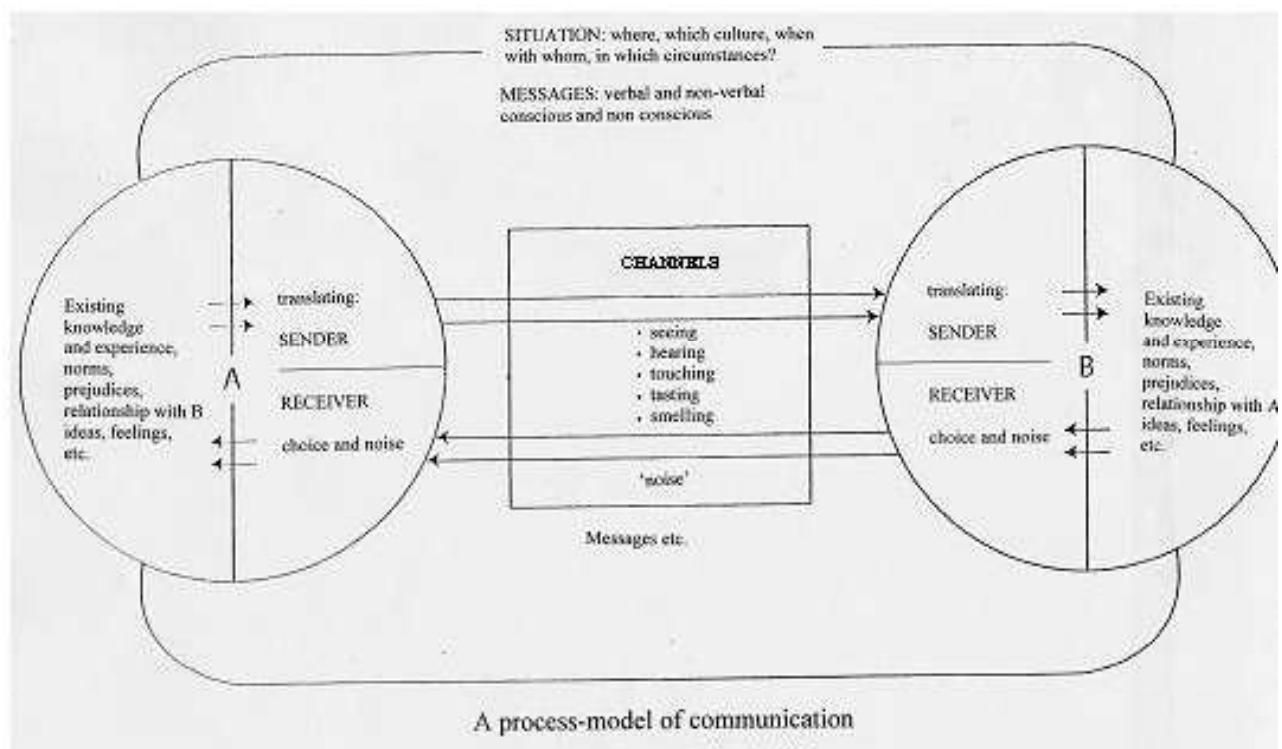
For the ‘minister’

1. What did you want to take over? Please say it in a metaphor.
2. Please, take notice of and write down your own senses and feelings (emotions) you were aware off during the morning prayer
3. What do you want to learn from the audience? (may be about your performance, may be about content or something else)
4. Is there any question or topic you want to postulate for discussion?

For the outer circle audience

1. What did you notice observing the ‘minister’ as well as the inner circle audience. Is there something that struck you about the communication process?
2. Can you generate a metaphor for what was happening in the inner circle? Or can you notice what kind of image the totally of minister and audience, respectively delivering and listening, did generate to you?
3. What did you notice about your own feelings and senses during the morining prayer and afterwards?

APPENDIX 2: A MODEL OF COMMUNICATION



THEOLOGENAUSBILDUNG UND FÖRDERUNG DER SPIRITUALITÄT – BEST PRACTICES

Gábor Hézszer

WORUM GEHT ES, WENN ES UM SPIRITUALITÄT GEHT?

So genau wissen wir es nicht: ‘Der Begriff ‘Spiritualität’ (leidet) an inhaltlicher Präzisionsschwäche¹...’ – mit diesem Satz beginnt Zimmerling sein neuestes Buch über Spiritualität. Und: ‘Es mangelt an einer eindeutigen Definition². In dem vielfältigen Sprachgebrauch bleiben der Begriff Spiritualität wie auch die jeweils gemeinte Sache äußerst unscharf. Allgemein als «praktische oder existentielle Grundhaltung des Menschen» (H. U. v. Balthasar) verstanden, kann das Wort ein breites Spektrum von Lebensvollzügen und -gestalten abdecken, sich auf das Verhältnis des Menschen zu Gott, Göttern oder einer transzendenten Wirklichkeit in den verschiedenen Religionen beziehen und gelegentlich auch das Wort Religiosität ersetzen’ - so im Evangelischen Kirchenlexikon.

Also: Eine Definition zu finden und eine *Distinctio* gegenüber der Frömmigkeit auszumachen ist ein schwieriges Unternehmen. Und: Es wird dabei letztlich eher auf fachlich-subjektive Entscheidungen hinauslaufen.

Ist Frömmigkeit Spiritualität? – und wenn ja, warum nicht?

An Stelle des spezifisch deutschen Wortes - Frömmigkeit³, dessen positiver Sinngehalt umgangssprachlich weithin verkommen ist, wird als wissenschaftlicher Fachausdruck der Begriff Spiritualität (franz. *spiritualité*, engl. *spirituality*) bevorzugt, der in der französisch-katholischen und internationalen ökumenischen Literatur seit langem geläufig ist⁴. Es handelt sich aber nicht um eine neue Sprachregelung: Der Begriff Spiritualität ist unmittelbar nicht dem NT zu entnehmen⁵. Dort erscheint er: Im Zusammenhang mit dem Wirken des Heiligen Geistes (Gal. 5,25, Rm 12,11)⁶, und zielt auf ein Leben ‘aus dem Geist’ und ‘im Geist’. Spiritualität ist also eine vielgestaltige und spannungsvolle Größe.

Von der Frömmigkeit zur Spiritualität – ein Paradigmenwechsel: Beide Termini betreffen die Existenz der Glaubenden in der Welt, setzen aber inhaltlich verschiedene Akzente: Der Ausdruck Frömmigkeit betont ein einziges, bestimmtes erlösendes Handeln Gottes, - die in Christus manifeste gnädige Zuwendung Gottes. Sie geht das Sein des Menschen *coram deo* an (die Individualität, die vor Gott Sinn hat und in der persönlichen ‘Lebensgestalt des Glaubens aus und vor Gott’ einzuüben ist. - ‘Frömmigkeit bezeichnet (also) die subjektive Seite der Religion⁷.’

Spiritualität hingegen hat vornehmlich das pluriforme Geistwirken Gottes in Schöpfung und Geschichte im Blick; sie rekurriert auf die Gotteszuwendung im Empfang des Geistes und meint das spirituelle Geschehen, das in der ‘Selbstorganisation christlicher. Existenz’ (W. Nethöfel) unterschiedliche Profile gewinnen kann.

¹ Zimmerling, P., *Die charismatischen Bewegungen*, Göttingen 2001, 15.

² So die lapidare Feststellung im Evangelischem Kirchenlexikon, V&R, Göttingen 1969 p402 ff. Im weiteren abgekürzt mit EKL.

³ Schleiermacher ‘macht die F. zu einem Schlüsselbegriff der Dogmatik, verwendet aber den Begriff F. nur in der ‘Glaubenslehre’ In: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bd. 2, 1159 © Darmstadt (Digitale Bibliothek Band 12).

⁴ EKL p402

⁵ griech. ‘pneumatikös’ wird mit lat. ‘Spiritualis; dt. ‘geistlich’ übersetzt.

⁶ Grom, B., *Macht der Glaube gesund?* www.ekd.de/ezw.

⁷ RGG, aaO.

So hat die verschiedene Akzentuierung zur Folge, daß die mit Frömmigkeit intendierte ‘subjektive Relation’ in den Konzeptionen von Spiritualität eine breitere Basis und mehr Handlungs- und Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten erhält⁸.

Durch Spiritualität verändern sich Intention und Richtung des Glaubensvollzuges: Spiritualität wird mitkonstituiert von kontextuellen lebensweltlichen Erfahrungen ermöglicht damit nicht nur eine ‘Symbiose von Glauben und Kultur’, sondern auch solche Verhaltensweisen und Aktivitäten, die über eine ekklesial-gemeinschaftliche Verwirklichung hinausgehen⁹. In diesem Deutungszusammenhang hat bekommt die Spiritualität u. a.: eine politische Dimension¹⁰, eine ökonomische Dimension¹¹, und eine ökologische Dimension.

Spiritualität ist geokulturell bedingt

Was Spiritualität ist, ist noch offen. Es gibt mehrere Hinweise dafür, daß Spiritualität weder konfessionell noch ökumenisch¹², sondern eher kontextuell¹³ und geokulturell begreifbar wird¹⁴. Einige kurze Hinweise seien hier nur angedeutet:

1. Grundsätzlich geht es in der christlichen Spiritualität im mediterranen und europäischen Raum um Vorhaben wie eine gläubige Existenz im Hl. Geist – was das auch immer bedeutet –, das Sterben gegenüber der Sünde – wie das auch immer geschieht –, das Leben für Gott (Rm 6) – wie das auch relevant wird. Im ethischen Vollzug werden das Ausrotten der Werke des Fleisches und die Kultivierung der Früchte des Geistes (Gal 5,13,25;) anvisiert. Die Geschichte der Theologie kennt hier z.B. die Askese (Disziplin) und die Mystik (Communio).
2. Griechische Prägung - Spiritualität durch Kontemplation. Die - Kontemplation der kirchlichen Ikonen bringt Einsicht in die göttlichen Figuren, die sich dadurch vergegenwärtigen und verehren lassen.
3. Römische Prägung - Spiritualität als lex Christi. Die lateinische Soteriologie rechnet mit der strikten und großzügigen Gerechtigkeit Gottes. Das moralische Leben - mit Vorschriften ausgestattet - wird nach der lex Christi geführt (Gal 6, 2)
4. Keltische Prägung - Spiritualität als Verbundenheit mit und Beherrschung der Natur. Die irische Frömmigkeit verlangt oft herbe Glaubensproben wie längeres Eintauchen des Körpers in kalte Ströme, schwierige Pilgerschaften usw.
5. Germanische Prägung - Spiritualität als Kampf. Christus wurde hier von einer kriegerischen Gesellschaft aufgenommen, die Spiritualität bekommt Kampf-Charakter. Die Gläubigen haben gegen die bösen Geister der finsternen Welt zu kämpfen. Dafür haben sie die Rüstung Gottes, den Panzer der Gerechtigkeit, das Schild des Glaubens, den Helm des Heils, das Schwert des Geistes, (Eph 6,10-20). Luther greift diese Symbolik auf, wenn er vom Gott als einer festen Burg singt...
6. Neuzeitlich-westliche Prägung - Spiritualität als Abbild der Liebe Gottes/Christi. Mit der Renaissance wird die westliche Kultur durch einen neuen Humanismus gekennzeichnet: Die Menschlichkeit Christi wird unterstrichen, und sein religiöses Leben und moralisches Verhalten werden als Vorbild genommen. In England kündigt sich das Thema des moralischen Ernstes an. In der Schweiz und in den Niederlanden traf sich die calvinistische Reform mit Kulturen, die für den Aufschwung des Bürgertums und des Merkantilismus reif waren: Weltlicher Erfolg ist als Bestätigung der Erwählung anzustreben. Im 18. Jh. brachte die Aufklärung eine rationalistische, z. T. religionskritische Anthropozentrik. Dem Rationalismus begegnete in Deutschland die pietistische und in England die methodistische Spiritualität.

⁸ Fahlbusch, E., ‘Spiritualität.’ In: *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon [EKL]*, Göttingen 1969, p402 ff.

⁹ aaO

¹⁰ neben den ‘Wachsen am inneren Menschen’ steht Spiritualität für die ‘Suche nach einer neuen Zukunft’, die mit dem ‘Kampf für Befreiung und Menschlichkeit’ einhergeht und eine ‘*spirituality for combat*’ (verlangt Befreiungstheologie).das Engagement für Frieden und Befreiung.

¹¹ ‘Ökonomie und Spiritualität’ verknüpft die ‚Weltkonferenz der Religionen für den Frieden (D,1997): ‘Spiritualität bedeutet, auf die Klopfeisen des Humanen zu hören’, Brendle, F., Lefringhausen, K., *Ökonomie und Spiritualität*, Hamburg 1997.

¹² H.-M. Barth, in EKL.

¹³ G. Wairwrght, In: EKL, Göttingen 1969, 402 ff.

¹⁴ nach

7. Heute – ‘nichtreligiöses Christentum?’ - und/oder ‘neue Religiosität?’ In den 60er Jahren sprachen viele westlich Theologen gerne von einem Prozeß der Säkularisierung, der in ein ‘nicht-religiöses Christentum’ einmünden sollte¹⁵. Dafür wurde ein paradoxer Spruch des späten Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Religionsloses Christentum) in Anspruch genommen: In einer mündigen Welt sollte man so vor Gott leben, als ob es Gott nicht gäbe (etsi deus non daretur). Ab den 80er Jahren sprach man lieber von einer neuen Religiosität, wobei ‘Neue Religionen’ (New Age, Neugeist-Bewegung) sowie verhärtete Formen des Fundamentalismus dem traditionellen Christentum den Platz streitig machen. Innerhalb der Großkirchen finden sich feministische und befreiungstheologische Ansätze zur Spiritualität.

Multidisziplinäre Deutungen von Spiritualität

Spiritualität ist Vorschungsgegenstand verschiedener Wissenschaften. Die theologische Meinungsbildung kann die Erkenntnisse dieser Disziplinen nicht außer acht lassen.

1. Religionspsychologie: Die Religionspsychologie¹⁶ betrachtet die Religion bzw. Spiritualität als eine menschliche Grundkonstante. Was fromm ist, woran Frömmigkeit zu erkennen ist bleiben jedoch unbeantwortete Fragen. Beschrieben werden die äußeren Erscheinungsformen von Spiritualität die jede Religion reichlich anbietet. Eine zuverlässige religionspsychologische Unterscheidung von kultureller (u.a. folkloristischer) Ausprägung von Religion und Spiritualität und deren Wesenskern fehlen noch.

2. Soziologische Religionstheorien gehen mit den sozialpsychologischen Kategorien¹⁷ von Rolle und Bezugsgruppe der Frage nach, welche ‘Funktion und Bedeutung außertäglichen Pneumaerlebnisse für den Aufbau religiöser Identität’ haben. Die Bewertung erfolgt ‘unter den Gesichtspunkten der Erlebnisintensität und der biographischen Relevanz’. Was entsteht, ist eine ‘bi-personale’ Identität, weil der Mensch sich, leibhaftig, sich selbst und Gott zugehörig empfindet. Alle theologischen Kategorien, die an die Spiritualität angewendet werden, können, nach soziologischer Auffassung auch in sozialpsychologischen Rahmen erfasst werden. Mehr vermag die sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung nicht zu leisten.

3. Verhaltenstheoretische Orientierung: Das Interesse der verhaltenstheoretischen Forschung ist dadurch gegeben¹⁸, daß die spirituelle Praxis sich aus wiederholbaren Handlungen konstituiert. Die Grundfrage ist, in welcher Beziehung stehen ‘ontogenetische Ritualisierung’ und kulturelle Ritenbildung’. Weil Riten Funktionen erfüllen, muss das spezifisch religiöse Element dieser Handlungen ins Bewusstsein der Handelnden verlegt werden. Wenn die Handelnde ihr Verhalten religiös deuten, denn sind sie der Ansicht, daß sie ein Urmodell göttlicher Handlung wiederholen.

4. Die theologisch-systematische Orientierung bemüht sich z.Zt., wie P. Zimmerling¹⁹ es im seinem neuen Werk über Spiritualität nachweist, um die Abgrenzung gegenüber den ‘Charismatischen Bewegungen’. Sie zeigt auch auf, welche kirchlichen Defizite die Attraktivität der pentekostalen Gruppen fördern. Dem einseitigen pneumatologischen Ansatz der Charismatiker wird ein trinitarisches Basismodell entgegengestellt.

Die Frage bleibt jedoch unbeantwortet, warum Rechtgläubigkeit die spirituelle Lebendigkeit jener Gruppe fehlt²⁰. Schaut man bei P. Tillich und D. Savramis nach, erscheint bei ihnen das Religiöse bekanntlich als die ‘Substanz der Kultur’, bedarf letztlich keiner eigenen Ausdrucksformen mehr. Das wäre säkularisierte Frömmigkeit in einem positiv verstandenen Sinne. So fehlen aber die zuverlässigen

¹⁵ nach Geoffrey Wairwright. In: EKL, aaO.

¹⁶ Ich folge hier die Ausführungen zur S. von Heinrichs, J. Im: *Wörterbuch der Religionspsychologie*, Gütersloh 1993, 11ff. ‘Dem jungen Forschungszweig Religionspsychologie geht um die psychologische Beschreibung und Zuordnung der subjektiven Religiosität und Spiritualität’. Sie untersucht die *Auswirkungen* auf andere psychologisch relevanten Faktoren wie Streßbewältigungsfähigkeit, seelisches Wohlbefinden, soziale Kompetenz etc.

¹⁷ Nestler, E., ‘Pneuma.’ In: *Passagen & Transzendenz* 3, p418ff zit. bei: Josuttis, M., ‘Spiritualität in wissenschaftlicher Sicht.’ In: *Verkündigung und Forschung*, 47.Jg.,Heft 1, 71.

¹⁸ Baudy, D., *Römische Umgangsriten. Eine ethologische Untersuchung der Funktion von Wiederholung für religiöses Verhalten*, Berlin-New York 1998. zit. bei: Josuttis, M., ‘Spiritualität in wissenschaftlicher Sicht.’ In: *Verkündigung und Forschung*, 47.Jg.,Heft 1, p70-89.

¹⁹ Zimmerling, P., *Die charismatischen Bewegungen*, Göttingen 2001, 55ff. zit. bei Josuttis, M., ‘Spiritualität in wissenschaftlicher Sicht.’ In: *Verkündigung und Forschung*, 47.Jg.,Heft 1, p71

²⁰ Josuttis, M., aaO

Unterscheidungskriterien für eine vorhandene und nicht-vorhandene Frömmigkeit. Diese Unbedingtheitskomponente des menschlichen Bewußtseins ist für Tillich identisch mit Spiritualität im innerlichen Sinne und kann erweckt sein - oder verborgen (unerweckt) bleiben. Daraus ergeben sich zwingenderweise weitere Fragen: Gibt es auf Dauer eine rein private Existenz des Religiösen ohne öffentlicher Existenz? Kann eine 'private Frömmigkeit' bei der reinen Innerlichkeit bleiben oder bedarf sie zusätzliche Ausdrucksformen? Kann eine entwickelte Frömmigkeit ohne irgendwelche quasi-rituelle Ausdrucksformen Bestand haben?

5. Pastoralpsychologische Deutungsbeispiele:

- Psychoanalytischer Ansatz: Spiritualität erscheint hier²¹ als die menschliche Antwort auf den gottgewirkten Glauben. Die Angefochtenheit bleibt ihr Zentrum. Sie fördert die personale Autonomie, weil sie die Differenz zum religiösen und sozial anderen respektieren hilft. Im Spiel mit der Frömmigkeitstradition kann sich durch die Spannung von Vorfinden und Erfinden das persönlichkeitspezifische Credo²² artikulieren. Daß spirituelle Handlungen in der Regel leibbezogen ablaufen, kommt auf der tiefenpsychologischen Ebene nicht im Blick. Daß der Mensch auch ein leibliches Wesen ist entdecken erst spätere pastoralpsychologische Richtungen (vgl. G.Rappe, Hartmann).

- Spiritualität unter dem Aspekt der Ganzheitsfrage und der Leiblichkeit: Spiritualität zeigt ein Bedürfnis an²³. ... die Chance einer christlichen Spiritualität läge darin, die Daten der geistlichen Tradition bewußt mit den Forderungen der heutigen Anthropologie zu konfrontieren, um den Auftrag der Schrift neu zu verstehen. Leibfremde Frömmigkeit ist 'die' Versuchung jeder christlichen Frömmigkeit²⁴. H.-J. Thilo²⁵ bringt das 'mit dessen Machtstreben und Triebfeindlichkeit' in Verbindung. Der leibliche Aspekt der Spiritualität wird bei G. Hartmann noch deutlicher wenn er 'Sexualität als geschöpfliche Lust und Kreativität'²⁶ auffasst: 'Vielleicht erschiene Sexualität leichter als etwas menschliches und wäre leichter menschengemäß zu gestalten, wenn es gelingen würde, sie in die Spiritualität zu integrieren.'

SPIRITUALITÄT UND DAS PROBLEM DES AUSDRUCKS

Die Kernfragen lauten: Kann das Innere (=Spiritualität) weiterbestehen, wenn es nicht zu einem eigenständigen Ausdruck kommt? Oder kommt die Frömmigkeit informell doch zum Ausdruck, unter Haltungen, Handlungen und Äußerungen, die für sich allein nichts Frommes verraten? Wie können entscheidende Differenzierungen getroffen werden: Wer hält sich an Ausdrucksformen fest, um fromm zu werden? Wer tut nur so, aus sozialen Gründen oder gar, um sich selbst etwas vorzumachen? Die Antwort des 'spirituellen Menschen' ist hier: Man kann das nur von innen, vom 'Herzen aus' erkennen. - Aber läßt sich das 'fromme Herz' begrifflich verstehen?

Frömmigkeit und das Verhältnis zur Welt' - der Dualismus von Gottesbeziehung und Weltbeziehung

Wenn Frömmigkeit im Wesenskern Gottesliebe ist, wie steht sie dann zum weltlichen Wollen und Wirken? – Dieses Problem, in seiner ganzen Tragweite, ist auch Theologen und Religionspädagogen nicht unbedingt bewußt. Die Verbindung von Spiritualität und Weltbezug in ihrer Schwierigkeit wurde weder theologisch zureichend durchdacht noch gar religionspsychologisch aufgearbeitet.²⁷

Die klassische, abendländisch-theologische Antwort lautete: Gottesliebe und Weltliebe bilden eine 'Einheit'. Sie ist psychologisch wenig glaubwürdig. Bis weit ins Mittelalter hinein war der weltabgekehrte

²¹ Bobert-Stütze, S., *Frömmigkeit und Symbolspiel. Ein pastoralpsychologischer Beitrag zu einer evangelischen Frömmigkeitstheorie*, Göttingen, 2000. Zit. bei: Josuttis, M., 'Spiritualität in wissenschaftlicher Sicht.' In: *Verkündigung und Forschung*, 47.Jg., Heft 1, p70-89. Eine Grundlage der Orientierung hier ist z.B. objektsbeziehungs- und selbstpsychologisches Konzept der neueren Psychoanalyse, besonders Winnicott's²¹ Spielt- und Übergangsobjekttheorie zu sein.

²² So Winkler, K., 'Pastoralpsychologische Aspekte der Rede von Gott.' In: *ThLZ* 107 (1982), 865kkk.

²³ Sudbrack, J. In: *Wörterbuch der Pastoralanthropologie*, Göttingen 1975, 1017.

²⁴ Vgl. Klessmann, M., Liebau, I., (Hg.), *Die Leiblichkeit ist das Ende der Werke Gottes*, Göttingen 1977.

²⁵ Vgl. Thilo, H.-J., 'Stachel.' Zit. bei Winkler, K., *Seelsorge*, Berlin, 1997 392.

²⁶ Hartmann, G., 'Lebensdeutung.' s. 81ff. Zit. bei Winkler, K., *Seelsorge*, Berlin, 1997 392.

²⁷ So Zimmerlings Fazit, op.cit.

Mönch das Idealbild des Christen. Erst in der Neuzeit erscheint eine ‘Mystik der Weltfreudigkeit’²⁸, gab es eine Spiritualität, die kontemplativ im weltlichen Handeln sein wollte (*contemplativus in actione*). Erst im Calvinismus wurde der weltliche Erfolg als Zeichen für göttliche Erwähltheit bzw. Nicht-Verworfenheit genommen²⁹. Aber durch die ‘Weltfreudigkeit’ hat es viel an spiritueller Kraft verloren.

Hier liegt das Grundproblem der Spiritualität: Es bedarf offenbar einer mystischen Höhe, um beide Bezüge wirklich miteinander vereinbaren zu können.

Wahrscheinlich liegt ein wesentliches Kriterium für gelingende ‘Synthese’ tatsächlich in der Einheit von Gottes- und Nächstenliebe, weil der sog. Nächste das wesentlichste und zugleich göttlichste Stück ‘Welt’ darstellt. Doch dies ist nur der Hauptzugang zum generellen Problem und ein Kriterium, das schwierig genug zu handhaben ist. Die Lösung gelingt in der Praxis nur einigen Mystikern oder Heiligen, indem das weltliche Leben sich als Außenseite der spirituellen Innenseite enthüllt. Der Zusammenhang bleibt den Außenstehenden praktisch und theoretisch rätselhaft.

THEOLOGENAUSBILDUNG UND FÖRDERUNG DER SPIRITUALITÄT

Worum könnte es bei der Theologenausbildung und Förderung der Spiritualität gehen, wenn der bisherige Befund berücksichtigt wird? Das Theologiestudium, im Gegensatz zu anderen Studien, fordert ein persönliches Engagement gegenüber dem Studiengegenstand, - einen persönlichen Glauben, eine eigene Spiritualität, führt Klessmann³⁰ überzeugend aus.

Die Spiritualität, ist ungemein vielschichtig und komplex, deshalb müssen die Studierende einen eigenen Raum finden in den Ausbildungsrahmen für die Vergewisserung, zu der Klärung ihres Glaubens, vor allem zum Umgang mit ihren immer wiederkehrenden Zweifeln. Das Thema ‘Berufung zum Pfarramt’³¹ spielt in der deutschen kirchlichen Tradition eine erstaunlich geringe Rolle³¹, - anders als in den USA³². – In Ungarn, wo die Berufung eine bedeutende Rolle spielt, kommt bei mir oft das unguete Gefühl auf, dahinter könnten Fluchtendenzen vor individueller Entscheidung, Verantwortung und offener Auseinandersetzung mit konstitutiven und konstruktiven Zweifel stecken.

Ohne diese, operationalisierbare persönlichkeitspezifische Spiritualität sind die TheologInnen dem professionell bedingten Grundproblem der Koordinierung von kultureller (u.a. folkloristischer) Ausprägung einer (Volks)frömmigkeit und dem Wesenskern der Religion hilflos ausgeliefert. Der Berufstheologe muß diese Diskrepanz aushalten, wertschätzen und damit kongruent und konstruktiv umgehen können. – Sonst lebt er in einer manifestierten und chronifizierten Berufskrise, - mit all den psychischen Folgeerscheinungen.

Wir haben gesehen, daß heute keiner der Wissenschaften allgemeingültigen, in der Theorie und Praxis konsequent differenzierten Maßstäbe hierfür setzen kann. Das besagt aber nicht, daß irgendeine Ausbildung ‘Spiritualitätsneutral’ sein könnte, d.h. in der Lage wäre, Spiritualität nicht zu prägen! Was heißt das für die Ausbildungsziele?

Eine zuletzt erschienene Zusammenfassung³³ empfiehlt folgende individuellen, historisch-traditionellen und aktuellen Faktoren zu berücksichtigen, wenn es um Spiritualität geht: die Bedeutung von Emotionalität und Sinnlichkeit, die Bedeutung eines Formenvielfaltes für die zukünftige evangelische

²⁸ so ein Aufsatz K. Rahners über den heiligen Ignatius, den Gründer des Jesuitenordens.

²⁹ was zur Dynamik des westlichen Kapitalismus führte (M. Webers berühmte, nicht aber ohne Widerspruch gebliebene, Kapitalismus-These). Wer spirituell in Ordnung ist, hat auch auf der leiblich-materiellen Ebene den entsprechenden Erfolg. Eine solche Sicht widerspricht jeder Frömmigkeitstradition. - Aus der hebräischen und christlichen Bibel kann man allerdings ebenso wenig ableiten, daß spiritueller Hochstand mit weltlichem Scheitern ein Indiz für Frömmigkeit sein könnte.

³⁰ Klessmann, M., *Pfarrbilder im Wechsel*, Neukirchen 2001, 91.

³¹ Wenn eine Berufungsgewissheit fehlt, ist die noch wichtiger, wie die Studierenden eine theologische Existenz entwickeln können, die in der theologische Rationalität und religiöse Emotionalität, Wissen und Erfahrung, Denken und Vollziehen, Glauben und Zweifel zu einer Synthese finden.

³¹ Daur, R., *Psychotherapie und religiöse Erfahrung*, Stuttgart 1965.

³² Zimmerling, op.cit., p 287.

³³ Stollberg, D., *Mein Auftrag – Deine Freiheit*, München 1972.

Spiritualität im Rückgriff auf die biblischen Quellen und im Gespräch mit den Sehnsüchten der Gegenwart zu bedenken.

Bereits Anfang der 70-er Jahre formulierte der praktische Theologe und Psychoanalytiker D. Stollberg³⁴ eine verblüffende und provozierende Zielvision: Wie wäre es mit einer Berufsdefinition für PfarrerInnen die lautet: Einer, der vom Beruf Mensch ist. - Dann würde die Ausbildung, - wie bei Stollberg die Seelsorge, nicht dem Christsein (wo ja nur sehr vage und theoretisch eine differenzierte Definition mit Trennschärfe möglich ist), sondern dem Menschsein dienen. Christsein verleiht ja³⁵ keine besonderen Qualitäten gegenüber dem Menschsein, - sondern ein Menschsein - in vollem Bewußtsein dessen, daß ich Mensch bin, kann theologisch als Christsein bezeichnet werden.

Ich empfehle eine Suchrichtung zum Thema ‘Theologenausbildung und Förderung der Spiritualität’, deren Motto – im umfassenden und interdisziplinären Sinne -lauten könnte: Förderung der Menschwerdung der Studierenden.

Konstitutionelle Elemente einer solcher Ausbildung sollten sein:

- Theologische Theorie lernen und erleben.
- Formenvielfalt der Spiritualität sowohl durch Rückgriff auf biblische und vorreformatorischen als auch auf die reformatorische Tradition in Theorie und Praxis entdecken;
- Balance zwischen Emotion, Kognition und Action, d.h. mehr Emotionalität, Sinnlichkeit, Spüren und weniger ‚denken‘;
- Unterstützung einer ‘persönlichkeitsspezifischen Spiritualitätsentwicklung’³⁶.

Die Realisierung dieser Elemente in der Ausbildungspraxis bedarf folgendes:

1. Berufsbezogene Selbsterfahrung: Selbsterkenntnis ist die Voraussetzung der Spiritualität und der individuellen und professionellen Identität. Deshalb sollten fraktionierte Selbsterfahrungsgruppen -verteilt auf die ganze Studienzeit, die Ausbildung begleiten. Inhaltliche Schwerpunkte sollten sein:
 - a. Berufsspezifische Familienrekonstruktion (Religiöse Delegationen, ‘Zeichen Gottes’ in der Biographie entdecken, etc.)
 - b. Auseinandersetzung mit dem Persönlichkeits- und Familienspezifisches Credo
 - c. Alltag und Fest (Sabbatlich leben lernen für sich, Persönliche Psycho- und Mentalhygiene, Entspannungstechniken)
 - d. Arbeits- und Lern-verhalten (Arbeits- und Alltagsorganisation)
 - e. Fortlaufende Einzelbegleitung durch eine Vertrauensperson
2. Geleitete Gruppenerfahrung – zur Erlangung von sozialen Kompetenzen. Dies könnte durch die gruppensupervisorische Begleitung von Lerngruppen, Jahrgangsgemeinschaften, Studentenwohnheim-Gruppen, etc. geschehen, deren Schwerpunkte wären:
 - a. Gruppe als Lernfeld für die Würde des anderen,
 - b. Alltag und Fest (Sabbatlich leben lernen in der Gemeinschaft)
 - c. Leitungskompetenz
3. Theologische Theorie zum Erleben – damit das angeeignete theoretische Wissen nicht lebensfremd bleibt sollte es, je nach Fach mit Hilfe von unterschiedlichen Methoden, mit

³⁴ op.cit. p31.

³⁵ nach Zimmerling.

³⁶ Klessmann, M., *Pfarrbilder im Wechsel*, Neukirchen 2001, 91.

adäquaten Erfahrungen aus dem Leben der Studierenden in Beziehung gesetzt werden. Folgende Kombinationen bieten sich an:

- a. Exegese und/mit Bibliodrama - mit den wissenschaftlichen Techniken der Exegese aufgearbeitete Texte, oder einige Teile dessen, könnten anschließend bibliodramatisch und erlebbar gemacht werden.
- b. Dogmatik - das Ziel sollte hier sein, die Studierende bei der Entstehung einer sog. persönlich operationalisierte Theorie³⁷ zu unterstützen. Dazu sollten dogmatische Themen anschließend mit Selbsterfahrung verbunden werden, - wie habe ich das erlebt?, bzw. wo begegnete ich das im Leben?
- c. Kirchengeschichte – hier bietet sich an z.B. kirchengeschichtliche Schlüsselereignisse psychodramatisch nachzuspielen (z.B. Luther in Worms, Bonhoeffer im KZ, Calvin und Servet)
- d. Homiletik - Gottesdienste feiern - spontan-aktualitätsbezogen (z.B. Friedensgebet beim Ausbruch der Irak-Krise, etc.)
- e. Praktische Theologie - unterschiedliche Frömmigkeitsformen, biblisch-rituelle Handlungen (z.B. Salbungen, aber auch Fluch) in der Praxis auch ausprobieren.

Eine solche Theorie- und Erfahrungsorientierte Ausbildung würde, außer der lebendigeren Aufarbeitung bei den Studierenden, weitere wertvolle ‘Nebeneffekte‘ mit sich bringen: Die Studierende können unterschiedliche, auch handlungsorientierte Methoden für ihre spätere pastorale Praxis bei der Behandlung biblischer und theologischer Inhalte aneignen und später praktizieren. Sie könnten auch Erfahrungen mit interdisziplinärer Kooperation sammeln.

Curriculum eines studienbegleitenden Projektes aus Ungarn

Zum Schluß möchte ich Sie mit einem Projekt an der Lutherischen Theologischen Universität vertraut machen. Es geht auf eine Initiative der Studierenden des Abschlußsemesters vor 6 Jahren zurück. Sie haben, rückblickend auf ihre Universitätszeit, die sog. natürliche Krisen beschrieben, die sie durchlebt hatten. Die Idee einer studienbegleitenden pastoralpsychologischen Ausbildung stammt von ihnen, die Ausarbeitung von mir und dem Team unseres Seelsorgeinstituts an der Theologischen Hochschule Bethel. Die fünfjährige Erfahrung ist eindeutig positiv. Die vier und halb tägige Blöcke, geleitet von mir, einem Co-Leiter und zwei Co-leiterinnen, finden in der Regel unmittelbar vor Semesterbeginn oder nach Semesterschluß statt. Die Teilnahme an dem ersten Block ist Pflicht, an den weiteren freiwillig. Bis jetzt hatten wir keine Abbrüche.

Der Aufbau des Projektes ist folgendes. An der Lutherischen Theologischen Universität in Budapest wird seit 5 Jahren folgende pastoralpsychologische Begleitung der Studierenden durchgeführt:

Ziel:

- Unterstützung der professionellen Identitätsentwicklung von Theologiestudierenden und ReligionslehrerInnen
- Erfahrung mit Theorie und Praxis der systemischen Seelsorge

Organisationsform:

- Blockseminaren, jeweils 1 Woche
- außerhalb der Fakultät
- mit 2 Leitern (Pastoralpsychologe, Psychologin), Co-Leitern (Theologe, Theologin)
- Die Teilnahme am ersten Seminar ist Pflicht, an den anderen frei

Verlauf:

³⁷ Im Sinne des Psychologen C. Rogers

1. Seminar - vor dem 1. Semester - Thema: Hinter mir und vor mir...

Ziel: Unterstützung der Ablösung aus der Herkunftsfamilie

Themen:

- Die bisherigen Erfahrungen mit Ablösungskrisen - und die Möglichkeiten, welche die Familie gefunden hat, sie zu bewältigen
- Familienspezifische 'rites de passage'
- Die Vorstellungen über Studium und Beruf,
- meine Berufsvorstellungen heute für morgen,
- Zweifel und Unsicherheit – Glaubenszeichen?

Methode:

- Suche nach familienspezifischen Übergangsriten, Abschiedsrituale (Arbeit an der Grenze)
- Die eigenen Möglichkeiten zu Kontaktaufnahme
- Der neue Platz in der Gemeinschaft - und der alte Platz in der Familie (Geburtsposition, etc.)

2. Seminar - nach dem 4. Semester, nach Abschluß des Grundstudiums.

Thema: Ich und mein Glauben und wir beide unterwegs..

Ziel: Begleitung der Konflikte zwischen Familien- und Kinderglauben und Theologiestudium

Themen:

- Die Rolle, Funktion und Form der Religiosität in der Herkunftsfamilie, das (Familien)gottesbild und das Familiencredo
- Außerfamiliäre, frühere Einflüsse auf die eigene Religiöse Entwicklung und welche Loyalitätskonflikte ergaben sich
- Mein Glaubens/Gottesbild und das der anderen, - wie viel Konsens, wie viel Dissens darf sein...

Methode: Arbeit mit Genogrammen und Strukturbilder

3. Seminar - nach dem 7. Semester -

Thema: Wer (alles) bin ich?

Ziel: Die (verschiedenen) Identität(en), Rollen und Funktionen

Themen:

- Wer bin ich alles z.Zt.?
- für meine Herkunftsfamilie,
- für meine/n PartnerIn,
- als TheologIn
- und wie paßt es alles zusammen,
- Herkunftsfamiliäre Erfahrungen mit Wahrnehmung von Rollen, Funktionen und
- welche, diesbezügliche tradierten Normen gibt es in meiner Familie
- wie gedenke ich heute später Beruf und Familie in Einklang zu bringen?
- Ich – meine Art zu glauben - meine Art zu leben

Methode

- zirkuläres Vorgehen

- 'Stockwerkarbeit'
- Elemente aus der Paarberatung

4. Seminar - nach dem 9. Semester, nach den Gemeindepraktika -

Thema: Wessen PastorIn bin? Pastorale Identität und Kompetenz

Ziel: Hier geht es um die professionelle Identität und um die diesbezüglichen herkunftsfamiliären Delegationen

Themen:

- Das Material aus dem 2. Seminar, - was soll heute geändert werden?
- Normen, Delegationen, Vermächtnisse im Bezug auf 'Beruf/ausübung' aus der Herkunftsfamilie
- Individuelle Kompetenzen und Grenzen

Methode: Bezugsrahmenwechsel (Reframing)

5. Seminar - nach dem Vikariatsjahr -

Thema: Der Anfang wird fortgesetzt...

Ziel: Nach dem Vikariatsjahr und vor der selbständigen Gemeindeleitung eine Zwischenbilanz ziehen zu können

Themen: werden von den Teilnehmenden bestimmt

RELIGIONSUNTERRICHT – THEOLOGIESTUDIUM – SPIRITUALITÄT. BEOBACHTUNGEN AUS DER PRAXIS IN UNGARISCH-REFORMIERTEN RAUM. – BEST PRACTICES

Ede Horsai

Westeuropäische kirchensoziologische Untersuchungen beschäftigen sich in den letzten Jahrzehnten mit der politischen, öko-kultur- und theologischen Einstellung der Kirchenmitglieder oft. „Aber die Frage der Spiritualität wurde konsequent ausgeklammert“, – so eine Feststellung aus Deutschland. Der Unterschied zu Ungarn ist, dass es solche Ergebnisse gar nicht gibt. In den 80-er Jahren wurden in Deutschland 144 ev.-reformierte Studierende auf ihrem körperlich-psychischen und seelischen Befinden untersucht, mit dem Ergebnis: In einem Jahr meldeten die Studierenden 238-mal depressive Symptome, 268-mal Angst Symptome, und 425-mal (!) Erschöpfungs- und burn-out Phänomene. Nach Einschätzung der Studierende „verursacht das Theologische Studium spirituelle Defizite!“ (In: M. Jossutis *Der Pfarrer ist anders*)

Wir haben keine ähnlichen Erhebungen in Ungarn, vermuten aber, dass die zu vergleichbaren Ergebnisse führen würden. Warum? Wo liegt das Problem? Was hindert die Studierenden zu einer gesunden, eigene Spiritualität finden können? Nach meiner kleinen Umfrage nenne ich jetzt willkürlich nur sechs Schwerpunkte:

- 1 Das Problem mit eigener Spiritualität umzugehen fängt mit der Schule an, weil in den Familien sich konträre Erziehungsansätze, z.B. autoritäre Absichten der Grosseltern, und ein Desinteresse seitens der Eltern verunmöglichen. Die Ausdruck „Doppelerziehung“ hat sich verändert: früher in der Schule hat man die Religion nicht ernst genommen, jetzt viele Eltern heruntermachen, was die Schüler dort lernen, wohin gerade sie hingeschickt haben.
- 2 Das Spirituelle Beeinflussung bliebe der Gemeinde über, - die aber will Wohlverhalten von den Kindern, und oft bietet nicht mehr als wie z.B. teilnehmen und stillsitzen im Gottesdienst. Aber es gibt immer mehr positive Ausnahmen, besonders in Großstädten.
- 3 Wie sieht es beim Religionsunterricht aus? Was es bringt: keine Problemorientierung sondern eine Lehrstofforientierung, - wozu Glaube im Leben wichtig wäre, wie zur Einschätzung von Lebenslagen beitragen könnte, kann nicht so gesichert werden. Stattdessen ist es eher eine Zurückstarren auf die Vergangenheit. (Die Vergangenheit zu kennen, ist eine Sache, eine andere ist in ihr untergehen!)

Ziel wäre nicht nur die biblischen Geschichten bzw. dogmatischen Kenntnisse einzuverleiben, sondern den Sinn deren Inhalt und Botschaft so zu beleuchten, dass der Schüler die verstehen und in seinem Alltag gebrauchen könne.

In ungarischen Lehrraum die Versuchung der Lehrende ist: alles ausschließlich von der Theologie her zu erläutern und zu Glauben, er könne auf alle Fragen eine Antwort geben. Lernziel wäre für beide: dazu zu stehen und damit leben lernen, dass wir vieles nicht wissen. Allerdings ist der Schüler dahingehend erzogen werden, dass er immer und auf alles eine wie auch immer Antwort bekommt.

- 4 Mit diesen Voraussetzungen kommen die jungen Leute ins Theologiestudium. Hier treffen sie auf eine Art des theologisieren, welche Jossutis so beschreibt: „eine der größten Mängel besteht darin, dass sie durch ihre rationalistische Objektivisierung den theologisierenden Menschen die subjektive Betroffenheit beraubt. Alles dem Kopf, nichts dem Herzen.

Spiritualität ist eine Privatsache geworden und rutscht damit ins Freizeitbereich runter. Der Theologiestudierende in Ungarn lebt in einer permanenten Spannung: mit einer mitgebrachter

kindliche Glaube erwartet er – wie früher der Fall war, und heute oft gepredigt wird – dass jedes Wort der Bibel Lebensformende Losung ist.

In den textkritischen Auslegungen, in den religionskritischen Ausführungen und durch die Freudsche Psychoanalysen lernt er, dass das so nicht der Fall ist.

Selbst die Lehrende sind dessen nicht bewusst, was genau die strukturgenetische Theorie von Fowler in diesem Zusammenhang zu bedeuten hat.

- 5 Was wird daraus in den „einzelnen Seelen“ und Theologenleben? Sie identifizieren sich als Christ, aber sie können schwer die Glaubenssachen und die Ereignisse ihres Alltagslebens nicht Einklang bringen. Sie leben oft in zwei getrennten Welten.
- 6 Besonders Auffällig ist dieser Diskrepanz bei dem Umgang mit Sexualität. Religion ist dermaßen transzendent und Abstrakt geworden, dass sie die Leiblichkeit als „irdisch Ding“ nur mit Schuldbewusstsein begegnen können.

Was zu einer gesunden Spiritualität gehört, bleibt ihnen fraglich... Aber nicht so Ignatius von Loyola, der gesagt hat: zu einer gesunden Spiritualität gehört u.a. die tag-tägliche Gewissenprüfung und bestimmte dafür 5 punkte:

- 1 Gott für all das Gute danken, was für uns gegeben ist.
- 2 Um Gottes Gnade wissen, dass wir unsere Fehler erkennen und von uns weisen können.
- 3 Uns jeden Tag Rechenschaft geben von all unseren Gedanken, Wörtern und Taten.
- 4 Gott um Verzeihung bitten.
- 5 Auf seine Gnade hoffend Besserung geloben und einen besseren Weg einschlagen.

Das Ganze soll nicht mehr als 15 Minuten in Anspruch nehmen, aber es soll vermieden werden: Das wecken von Übertriebenen Schuldgefühlen, Übertriebenes Pflichtgefühl, Unerreichbare Zielsetzungen. „Lass dir Raten!“ – sagte Ignatius von Loyola. Lassen wir...

GRÜßWORT UND BERICHT AUS DEBRECEN

Károly Fekete

Eine alte, aber lebendige Tradition, die in die Zeit der Gegenreformation zurückgreift, die Kontakte zwischen den reformierten Kirchen der Niederlanden und Ungarn, haben vor zwei Jahren eine neue Form gefunden. Die erste Arbeitskonferenz unserer Universitäten knüpfte an etwas lang Gewachsenes an und war doch etwas neues. Der Austausch zwischen unseren Universitäten, das einander 'Näherrücken', wie man es heute sagt, ist in einer vereinigten Europa kein Luxus, sondern eine Notwendigkeit.

Für Sie, in Kampen, ist die zeitgemäße Theologenausbildung ein vertrautes und nicht ganz neues Thema. In Debrecen können wir uns damit erst seit der Wende realistisch befassen. So haben wir viele Fragen. – Ich glaube, das paßt gut zusammen. Ihr Gewinn könnte sein, daß wir vielleicht manches hinterfragen, was für sie zur Selbstverständlichkeit geworden ist. Unser Gewinn wird sein, die Gewichtung Ihres Ausbildungsmodells näher kennen zu lernen. Ein gemeinsamer Gewinn könnte sein: unter unterschiedlichen Bedingungen und Entwicklungshintergründen gemeinsam danach zu suchen, wie die theologischen Ausbildungsstätten auf die neuen Herausforderungen von Postmoderne und europäische 'Unionisierung' reagieren können. Damit habe ich meine Erwartung umrissen.

Um in diesen Tagen über diese Themen leichter ins Gespräch zu kommen, möchte ich kurz unsere Situation in Debrecen aufzeichnen.

Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis. Auf unsere gegenwärtige Lage in Ungarn trifft das noch mehr zu als auf die Situation in die Niederlande. In Ungarn befindet sich das gesamte Bildungswesen in einem radikalen Prozeß: Staatlicherseits wird eine generelle Reform der Hochschulausbildung angestrebt. Kernpunkt dabei ist die stärkere Differenzierung zwischen praxisorientiertem Hochschulwesen einerseits und wissenschaftlich-universitärer Ausbildung andererseits. Da wir seit '98 Teil des Universitätsverbandes unserer Stadt geworden sind, sind wir in diesem Prozeß keine Zuschauer, sondern Mitspieler.

Die Konsequenzen melden sich am deutlichsten in der Unterrichtsorganisation. Sie müssen wissen, daß wir, wie alle ungarische Universitäten bis jetzt eine Ausbildungspraxis verfolgten, die als ausgesprochen 'verschult' zu bezeichnen ist: Fest vorgegebene Regelstudienzeit, fest vorgegebene, verbindliche Lehrpläne, Vorlesungsbesuch ist Pflicht und nach jedem Semester Prüfungen für alle Studierende aus allen Fächern.

Ob dieses System für Universitätsstudentinnen und Studenten hilfreich und angemessen ist, darüber kann man streiten. Es hat klare Vorteile: - Der Lehrstoff wird in kleineren Einheiten angeboten, - die fortlaufenden Prüfungen sichern, daß jeder 'Schritt halten kann', - und es ist gesichert, daß die Ausbildung das gesamte theologische Spektrum abdeckt.

Als Nachteil erweist sich, daß dadurch die Eigenverantwortung und die Eigeninitiative der Studierenden niedriger gehalten werden. Hier kommen wir freilich mit den Erkenntnissen moderner Lerntheorien in Konflikt, die - nicht nur für die Erwachsenenbildung - die große Bedeutung gerade dieser Komponente nachweisen. Wie ein Kompromiss zu finden wäre, ist noch offen.

Neu ist an unserer Universität daß wir im Rahmen der allgemeinen Hochschulreform die Studiendauer von 10 auf 12 Semester erhöht haben. Das letzte Studienjahr ist das sogenannte 'Praktisches Jahr'. Diese Zeit umfaßt ausschließlich die Gemeindepraktika. Die werden mit regelmäßigen, fachbezogenen Konsultationen an der Universität begleitet.

Neu ist, daß auch die Praxisanleitern, die Gemeindepfarrer, in Form von Fortbildungen auf ihre Aufgabe vorbereitet werden.

Neu ist, daß – wie im ganzen Hochschulwesen – auch wir ein sogenanntes Kredit-System eingeführt haben: Die Studierende erhalten Kreditpunkte für die Vorlesungs- und Seminarbesuche und für die Zeit der damit verbundenen persönlichen Vor- und Nachbereitung. Ein Studienabschluss ist nur möglich, wenn jemand dreihundertsechzig Punkten gesammelt hat.

Neu ist, daß wir weitere Studienrichtungen akkreditiert haben: so die Ausbildung von Religionspädagogen, und die postgraduierte Ausbildung in Pastoralpsychologie. Unser Wissenschaftlicher Konsultationspartner dabei ist das Seelsorgeinstitut an der Kirchlichen Hochschule Bethel in Deutschland. Die Ausbildung führen wir in Kooperation mit der Psychologischen Fakultät in Debrecen durch.

Erfolgreich gestartet ist eine, ebenfalls postgraduierte Ausbildung für Leitung- und Management in der Kirche und Diakonie. Auch dies ist ein interdisziplinäres Unterfangen mit Ökonomen- und Managementfachleute. Beide postgraduierte Ausbildungen bieten wir im ökumenischen Bereich an, - aber auch für ungarischsprachige Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus den Nachbarländern. Wir haben des weiteren auch ein postgraduiertes Angebot für Religionslehrerinnen und -lehrern für das pädagogisch-dramatische Puppenspiel im Religionsunterricht.

Neu ist, daß die meisten Lehrstühle eigene Forschungsinstitute ins Leben gerufen haben. Davon erhoffen wir neue Impulse für die wissenschaftliche Arbeit insgesamt.

Neu ist, daß wir mit einem Lehrkrankenhaus der Medizinischen Fakultät einen Kooperationsvertrag geschlossen haben, wodurch unsere Studierende dort Seelsorgepraktika durchführen können.

Ein umorganisiertes, den allgemeinen staatlichen Vorgaben angepasstes Promotionsverfahren soll die wissenschaftliche Qualität steigern. Es gibt einen postgraduierten Promotions-Studiengang und besteht auch die Möglichkeit sich selbstständig vorzubereiten. Zur Zeit haben wir insgesamt 35 Promoventen. In der letzten Zeit haben sich 4 Kolleginnen und Kollegen bei uns habilitiert.

Neu ist, daß unsere Studierende Veranstaltungen anderer Fakultäten belegen können und Doppelstudien gefördert und oft in Anspruch genommen werden.

Wenn ich - nicht ohne Freude - jetzt das alles aufzähle, komme ich zum folgenden Ergebnis: Es scheint mir, die Rahmenbedingungen zu einem Theologiestudium, die über den eigenen Gartenzaun hinaus orientiert ist, sind gegeben. Das ist, gemessen an dem, wo wir vor 10 Jahren angefangen haben, viel, - sehr viel. Wie diese Rahmen allerdings mit zeitgemäßen und gleichzeitig traditionsgebundenen Inhalten gefüllt werden können, bedarf noch intensive, kritische Orientierung: Was muß das Studium heute anbieten, daß wir unsere Studierende mit gutem Gewissen in die Gemeinden und sonstigen Arbeitsfelder schicken können? Ich vermute, mit dieser Frage stehen wir nicht allein, sondern befinden uns in vertrauter Gesellschaft vieler Hochschulen in den Niederlanden und in der Union.

Offen ist für mich auch, was die Abschaffung der Grenzen für die Theologenausbildung bedeuten könnte. Es eröffnen sich neue Dimensionen und Möglichkeiten, dessen bin ich sicher. Aber was genau könnten die bedeuten? Was kann – faktisch - die europäische Vereinigung für die internationale Kooperation der Universitäten bringen, für Studierende und Lehrende? – Wie lässt sich ein konstruktiver Modus zum Beispiel für die Stipendiaten-Praxis finden, kann da um mehr Gegenseitigkeit gesorgt werden?

Sie sehen, große Schritte liegen hinter uns und brennende Fragen vor uns. Ich wünsche uns nicht so sehr, daß wir bei unseren Beratungen Antworten finden, sondern, daß es gelingt, Fragen so zu differenzieren, daß sie Anstoß, Mut und Lust zum Weitersuchen bieten können.

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