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Seekers or Dwellers? Social Character of Religion in Hungary

Edited by
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Introduction

ZSUZSANNA BÖGRE

At the first meeting of the Hungarian research group at Loyola Café in Budapest at 6 p.m. on 13th March 2013 it was not even suspected that at the Vatican and within the hour a South-American Jesuit would be elected Pope. All were extremely enthusiastic after the meeting and our project would gain a new perspective from the new direction of Pope Francis. We thought our efforts would help produce real engagement from the Church as a whole.

First of all we were thinking about what could be the most suitable topic for Hungary. The group members came from different fields of the social sciences and different universities from all over Hungary. Before this joint project we had known each other virtually but not personally or deeply. In the very beginning we had difficulty in making any decision about which side of the disjunction project would be suitable for us. In the end it was clear the most relevant issue for our group was “Seekers and Dwellers.”

We have had fruitful, profitable and heated debates almost every second month over two years. Our discussions were really beneficial for all. However, the aim was not to reach a common understanding, but to gather scholars from different disciplines using different points of views to share outlooks with each other for a better understanding. Readers will find broad variety in the tone of the essays and studies that range from a neutral scientific tone to a more engaged style because of the Church persecution of the communist era. Twenty five years is a very short time for the social life so we are still in the process of interpreting the consequences of the communist era.

Part I. Contextualization of theoretical frameworks

Zoltán Hidas puts the seekers – dwellers problem in a historical and philosophical perspective, recapitulating the most crucial characteristics as: (a) extended organizations offering general salvation for everyone that can be defined as churches. Their members dwell from birth in well-organized hierarchies of clerics in holy orders; and rather lax moral requirements adapted to the everyday receptivity of the masses, (b) exclusive communities

bestowing redemption upon religiously qualified adherents that can be counted as sects: characterized as a common moral rigour, resting upon an experienced inner rebirth. This sectarian enthusiasm often brings about a detachment from the world as a place full of dangers and temptations. (c) A third form of social Christian conduct is mysticism which is the most unformed because of its private basis. The incessant possibility and hope of inner illumination as a possession of special dispositions makes and keeps this formation permanently fluid. Being filled with the "spirit" in our entire being can estrange one from dogmas and institutions even from the dogma of hostility to everything that is officially fixed. Withdrawal from the outer orders is a result of such renunciation of every institutional mediation in the name of authenticity.

András Máté-Tóth analyses the distinction between seekers and dwellers in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). After some clarifications regarding the terms he turns to the contextual understanding of the mutual interaction between church behaviour and people's attitudes in Hungary which he calls the People's Church. Rather than a homogeneous and monochrome image of the church, he differentiates between three dimensions: hierarchical church, which he calls "church leadership," the initiative, which he refers to as church project, and finally, the individual, which means for him church related private attitudes of individual people. After investigating he found that in Hungary the time is ready to make the paradigmatic turn towards modern church teaching and practice for Christians and for the Catholic Church, which means a hermeneutic turn for the reader of the Gospel and those who consumer church provided spiritual goods. To be a dweller in Church and in Christian tradition means to be a seeker of truth and the life of Jesus.

Ákos Kovács examines the presence of the secularization thesis in post-communist countries. Recently the relevance of the so-called secularization thesis, which states that secularization proceeds from an inner necessity of modernization, has lost ground. Modernization in the USA developed together with a strengthening of religion. Furthermore, since the speech of Habermas in 2001, the concept of post-secular society has been widely used. For many, it indicates the beginning of a new era, especially because sociologists who forecast the total disappearance of religion in the 1970s now tend to talk about the re-sacralization of the social world. This new era might

provide a public floor for religious beliefs, e.g. in the form of public debates. The second part of the study tries to prepare an anti-communist secularization thesis in the hope that the eastern European experience can be integrated into the current discourses on the secularization thesis. Further he discusses the questions of church publicity, the legitimate bias of existence and the problems of political martyrdom, apocalyptic and eschatological historical perspective and anamnestic culture. The study is built on the assumption that there can be no progress in the genesis of the secularization thesis without any integration of the experience of communism in people's culture.

Part II. Historical Context of the Hungarian Church – State Relationship

This part introduces the Church – State relationship after the Second World War. The Communist regime affected religious life in our country in very complex ways, especially for the Catholic Church. A specific picture of the historically established churches and the new Protestant entities in Hungary will help us to understand the Catholic Church's position through history.

Csaba Szabó gives an overview about the history of the Hungarian Catholic church between 1945 and 1990. Regarding the 'world's political situation the study focuses on the relationship between the church and the one-party state. The 45 years of socialism are thus divided into two longer eras, and both of them into shorter periods. I. The first, active time of the church lasted from 1945-1956 and contains as smaller periods: 1. The elimination of the democracy (1945-1948). 2. The stabilization of the communist power (1948-1951) and 3. A totalitarianism (1951-1953-1956). II. The second, the passive era of the church lasted from 1956-1990 with the change of the political system. The downfall of the revolution and freedom fighters in 1956, had significant influence on the thinking of the church, about a one-party state, for the entire Hungarian society. The sub-periods of the era are: 1. The continuation of the dictatorship (1956-1962) 2. The Ostpolitik and its influence (1962-1971) and 3. The period of the "small steps" (1972-1989).

Zoltán Rajki examines the relationship between historical churches and "classical new protestant" entities not only historical aspects, but also some religious sociological approaches typical of

sect-church, seekers – dwellers and Berger’s theory of the religious market. He is going to study the Lutheran and Reformed churches besides the Catholic Church among historical churches which helps comparing their policies towards the “smaller entities.” He focuses also on the political changes (1989/1990) where except for state financial involvement an American “religious market” has emerged in Hungary with new smaller or larger participants. This has refined the relationship between the Historical churches and New Protestant entities which has been increasingly diversified.

Part III. Media System in Hungary, Representation of the Church in the Media

Mónika Andok provides an overview of the media system in Hungary focusing on the religious themes.

In her view media plays a significant role in the daily lives of seekers as where they receive information and impressions that could help in the process of seeking. Her primary question is: Can this mediatized experience be really used in the everyday world of the seekers and is it reinforced either from the individual or the community? The author develops her answers using different media theories and also the advanced typology of the seekers and dwellers by Hervieu-Leger along with the concept of the numinous.

Part IV. Empirical Researches ‘Seekers, and Dwellers’

This chapter is an experiment on how we can use the terms of the seekers and dwellers in empirical sociological research. We have three different empirical studies on this ratio for the Hungarian religious population.

Zsuzsanna Bögre analyses the transformation of religious typology over the last 30 years, focusing on seekers’ attitudes. She uses the term seekers for the existential aspect of their lives, noting the consequences of a new phenomenon among young people, namely that the “not religious” category has become the largest, taking over the “religious in his/her own way” group. Moreover she has found that we cannot be certain in interpreting the meaning of the “not religious” category. She suspects that the reason for the increase in this group is a stronger sense of seeking in life in recent years, especially among young people. Based on their descriptions of the seeker attitude we can state that young people continuously

adjust their relation to the world, looking for an authentic framework for interpretation. This means in relation to religious self-categorization that this attitude is typical, and present in each religious category.

Gergely Rosta and Rita Hegedűs deal with the scales of the Hungarian religious population using national and international quantitative research data. Their purpose was to try to make use of the approach of seekers and dwellers for the empirical research, in order to gain a fresh picture on the religious change in today's Hungary. Their conclusion was that the seekers versus dwellers model generally ignores those more or less distanced from the traditional churches but having some kind of supernatural orientation, yet without feeling a constant search for the meaning of life or an individual spirituality. This type seems to be much more widespread in Hungary than those suggested by Taylor.

Péter Török analyses a religious phenomenon in Hungary namely the 'Pálferi' phenomenon, and raises the question of whether his audience belongs to the 'camp of seekers or dwellers'. His findings contradict the stereotyping that Ferenc Pál's teachings do not correspond to Catholic doctrine. The truth is that the major part of the Catholic members' religious faith is in tune with the official teaching of the church. In that sense they are definitely 'dwellers'. But they are also 'dwellers' in the sense that they do not have much doubt about their faith as it is conveyed by the church. As the research finding shows the members of the Pálferi' group want to reform the church. They are also seekers in the sense that they search for meaning. So, they are both seekers and dwellers.

Part I
Contextualization of Theoretical
Frameworks

1.

Between Dogma and History: The Social Character of Religion in an Historistic Age

ZOLTÁN HIDAS

As suggested by Max Weber, one of the most significant initiators of the sociology of religion, the inner-worldly history of Christianity, like that of religious life in general, can be spelled out as a dialectics of embedding and disembedding of religion into and out from the world, given their principled opposition. The essential antagonism between religious and secular orders of the world can come to long-lasting “mediations,” as history abundantly shows, without being eliminated as concerns their underlying principles: the paths of religion, theoretically and practically more and more subtilized around the merits of salvation, tend to diverge from the ways that this-worldly improvements increasingly adopt in terms of richness, power, beauty or scientific truth each for its own sake. Economy is not politically, politics not scientifically, science not aesthetically organized, and all of these more and more lack religious perspectives in consequently following their peculiar rationalities. A plurality of rationalisms induces cleavages in the human formations of the pre-given material of the world.¹

One of the four great hints of Charles Taylor concerning the Church and the modern world implies the following proposal: “serious questions need to be raised about the relation of dogma to history.” Sociologically it is the biblical tension – literally culminating in the trial of Jesus – between “not from this world” and “within this world,” which constitutes the principal background of the Christian attitude to the increasingly differentiated secular spheres of the world. A specific aspect of this genuine “axial”

¹ See Max Weber, “Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions,” *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 323-362.

I am very grateful to Colin Swatridge PhD for his selfless help in proof-reading this essay.

moment, as it is elaborated by several authors from Karl Jaspers on,² is the mainly occidental and, more particularly, modern occidental problem of historicity and ahistoricity with consequences for the relation between “dogma” and “history” and, notably, for our religiously affected theoretical and practical relation to the world. In this conceptual pair the ideal realm of unshakeable and eternal truth confronts an empirically changing and transitory reality surrounding our everyday life. This single ideological feature in the physiognomy of modern religiosity, apart from other ideological and material factors, is at the core of this essay.

The axial moment of world-history, a breakthrough which can – and for the axial pretension itself also should – subsequently be carried out again and again, represents the programmatic possibility of striding out into a “transcendental” sphere from our immediate this-worldly orders: it is a turning point of radical duality. In each great civilization, there emerged external viewpoints from which to look at its own position and the cosmos as a whole including it. A new kind of humanity arose on the bases of these tensions, which are actually tensions within man himself. An “inner man” came into being through a shift to a second order reflexivity.³ The archaic world of magic had its undivided integrity concerning human actions, where with competent gestures man was able to manipulate all kinds of powers that influenced human life.⁴ The realms of “natural causality” of events and of “compensatory causality” of deeds coincided. A symbolic reduplication of the world, that is the birth of “meanings” inherent in phenomena and occurrences mostly as a consequence of apparently undeserved pains gives an impetus to speculation about the meaning and significance of the world as such. Merit and fortune apparently diverge, indeed, too often.

² Karl Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (München: Piper, 1949), Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (State University of New York Press, 1986), Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas, eds., *The Axial Age and its Consequences* (Cambridge et al: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012).

³ See Jan Assmann, ed., *Die Erfindung des inneren Menschen. Studien zur religiösen Anthropologie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1993).

⁴ For what follows see Max Weber, “Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions,” *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 323-359 and “The Social Psychology of the World Religions,” *ibid.*, pp. 267-301.

The unbroken unity of a magical enchanted view, grounded in a natural unity of experiences, splits; a world theretofore taken for granted loses its evident unquestionability, the formerly onefold becomes twofold. Axial man, or the "man of culture," finds himself in an ever more strange medium, integrally intertwined with it by his material body. Empirically "rational" knowledge since then excludes all "mystical" impressions which tend, accordingly, to remain the only possible "beyond" in a disenchanting mechanism of closed natural causation. The ongoing religious rationalization of the hereafter, rooted in a specific "metaphysical need," leads to an enrichment of the divine, up to the state of ultimate and "timeless" validity. From this point of view the image of the world suffers depreciation, down to being a bare and miserable "creature." In the course of this both outer and inner division, man finds himself at an increasingly unbridgeable distance from all that is "extraordinary."

Perceiving himself as captive in an increasingly worthless cosmos, he seeks escape in the name of "salvation." To dwell in the world implies in this sense always a certain degree of transcendental homelessness. The freedom to relate oneself to oneself and to the world as a whole is accompanied by a fear of being alone against all. The gap between infinity and finiteness, meaning and history is progressively established in religious institutions, borne by professional carriers of interpretations. Religious history proves to be a vivid inventory of heterogeneous articulations of humanity: relations between man, world and God are the main themes of every great metaphysics. By thinking of our own thinking we again and again seek to reconcile all the deep-seated antagonisms to achieving a conscious life conducted in continuity with coherent principles. This seems to be the range of humanness till our very day.

The modern temper, however, has been left without solid transcendental foundations. The intellectual and practical weight of God and the world, i.e. the challenge to handle all the charges they bore before, seems to be a burden solely on man. "The fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must know that we cannot learn the *meaning* of the world from the results of its analysis, be it ever so perfect; it must rather be in a position to create this meaning itself. It must recognize that general views of life and the universe can never be the products of increasing empirical knowledge, and that the highest ideals, which move us most

forcefully, are always formed only in the struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others as ours are to us.”⁵ The biblical pathos of the above formulations denotes a profound shift in our situation – brought about partly by prophetic and exclusively religious demands inducing a disenchantment of formerly holy contents. As we know from Weber, the manifold of dualisms constituting man as a cultural being achieved its radicality, in the wake of judaistic and gnostic precedents, in protestant inwardness, rooted in Christian patterns of world-denying tendencies. Even if becoming a genuine field of God’s appraisal by constant inner-worldly – even if economically profitable – activity, the world dominated in this way loses its immediate relation to any other-worldly rationality, up to the point of branding it as absolutely irrational.⁶ For religious considerations, on the other hand, earthly relations become highly suspicious. In a protestantly affected radicalism we read: the best one can do is “to get involved with others only cautiously, to converse essentially with God and oneself.”⁷

Ideological obstacles no longer hinder formal and functional objectivation; the logic of immanent causation rolls along in the human life-world, by scientific operations, without serious religious scruples. Economic, political, scientific rationalities take the upper hand in modern occidental everyday thinking. There emerges a new, positivistically enclosed, cosmos, placing all questions of significance on man alone. Although the rationalization of the world from earthly perspectives began its triumphal way in the seminal insights of the natural sciences, it has come to its fulfillment in history. As historical phenomena call for historical explanations, a consequent contextualization is scientifically regarded as unavoidable. To explain a historical constellation is to find genetic causes preceding it, though not in a transcendental sense. By inquiring after “foundations,” we do not seek after substantial factors inherent to

⁵ Max Weber, “Objectivity in Social Sciences and Social Policy,” *Methodology of Social Sciences* (New Brunswick et al: Transaction Publishers, 2011), p. 57.

⁶ To the pulsating dialectics of enchantment and disenchantment see recently Wolfgang Schluchter, “Die Entzauberung der Welt,” *Die Entzauberung der Welt. Sechs Studien zu Max Weber* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), pp. 1-17.

⁷ Søren Kierkegaard, “Synspunktet for min Forfatter-Virksomhed,” *Samlede værker*, Vol. 18 (København: Gyldendal, 1962), p. 152.

the very structure of things, persons and other objects of inquiry, but genetic causes in the past. The formation itself grounds the nature of both non-human and human components of the world, so that our interest in explanations is largely exhausted by revealing evolutionary historical sequences. Questions of essences give place to questions of origins and developments. We thus find ourselves in a thoroughly historical world, intellectually socialized in a historical fashion. Our concepts are richly filled with historical stuff, as highly elaborated in the logic of ideal types by Weber.⁸

The idea of individuality understood as singularity and uniqueness step by step undermined the belief in generality and unchangeable persistency. By examining historical facts in a modern manner we find, however careful our quest, an endless flow of "bare" events. The historicizing of history, that is the concept of history as an overall movement, finally hits the point of integration itself. Beyond the idealistic assumption of history as a totality that is humanly conceivable from an absolute perspective, there is a heterogeneous perspectivity in everything that happens. The historicistic view had been sublimated to a philosophical position under the label of "historicism."⁹ The previously supposed substantial entity of history, which was philosophically treated in large-scale visions as a meaningful unity, comes now into movement. Historical necessity, this most secular form of theodicy, turns into contingency: everything could have and can at any time happen in another way. The history of the world is not expected to be the judgement of the world anymore.¹⁰ Events are mostly

⁸ See Max Weber, "Objectivity in Social Sciences and Social Policy," p. 89ff.

⁹ Confusingly enough, the genuine term of historicism ("Historismus") had become popular in a fundamentally other meaning after having been used by Karl Popper in English, see Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1957). For Popper, "historicism" stands for "an approach to the social sciences which assumes that *historical prediction* is their primary aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the 'rhythms' or the 'patterns', the 'laws' or the 'trends' that underlie the evolution of history."

¹⁰ Cf. Friedrich Schiller, "Resignation." For the debate on a possible philosophy of history in a secular manner Karl Löwith, *Meaning and History. The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity* (New York: Harper, 1962), and Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

grounded in accidentally, or at least unintentionally, interwoven factors of change, far from advancing to a glorious end. Even conceiving history needs our own ordering activity, so as not to sink into the bulk of historical facts.

This sublime sense of “becoming” instead of “being,” of “evolving” instead of “persistence,” produced plenty of ingenious historiography. Many of the threads composing our past were explored with analytical sobriety to locate ourselves in the present. Historicism bestowed with philosophical dignity led, however, to resigning ourselves to dilemmas that can be condensed in a simple formula: does there exist anything stable if everything proves to be historically fluid? Ceaseless becoming and passing away, or in time-honoured Aristotelian terms, “generation and corruption,” threatens the very values founding human commitment and cognition: time seems to be for our worldly wisdom an untrustworthy repository of eternal lastingness. Scientific intellectuality cannot serve, in this view, as an authority for existential orientation. Far from being a true vehicle of worth, history flows more and more excessively into the field of world-views, beyond all scientific discourses.

With incomparable emphasis Ernst Troeltsch, a theological fellow of Weber, demonstrated the troubles a deeply historical religion faces in an age of a radical historization of all our intellectual and spiritual subjects.¹¹ It is as evoked by him a real “crisis” of human mind and spirit caused by the insight into the perishable nature of everything that is and occurs. As a semantic aspect of this process, temporality and historicity acquire the connotations of inconstancy and almost arbitrary changeability. The radical invalidating power of genuine individuality does not spare, finally, the highest convictions carrying our deliberate attitudes and conditioning our cultural knowledge. The cultural values in the background of our historical questions and observations which let us grasp history from humanly

¹¹ For an overview Friedrich W. Graf and Hartmut Ruddies, “Ernst Troeltsch: Geschichtsphilosophie in praktischer Absicht,” in Josef Speck, ed., *Grundprobleme der großen Philosophen: Philosophie der Neuzeit*, Vol. 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), p. 128ff and Otto-Gerhard Oexle, “Troeltschs Dilemma,” in Friedrich W. Graf, ed., *Ernst Troeltschs “Historismus”* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2000), pp. 23-64.

significant viewpoints lose their constancy.¹² Only one generation earlier, Nietzsche in his meditations “out of season” on the use and abuse of history memorably urged an alliance of the historical, the unhistorical and – as unfortunately undefined – the superhistorical. From superhistorical heights there should be drawn a “closed horizon” around the present to be able to resist the all-sweeping swirl of restless change. “Christianity has been denaturalised by historical treatment – which in its most complete form means ‘just’ treatment – until it has been resolved into pure knowledge and destroyed in the process. This can be studied in everything that has life. For it ceases to have life if it be perfectly dissected, and lives in pain and anguish as soon as the historical dissection begins.”¹³

In the diagnosis of Troeltsch, an experience and awareness of “all-flowing” disrupts the ties to superworldly verities and the eternal truth most philosophies and religions tend to claim for themselves. There, consequently, unfolds a crisis at the very foundation of normativity, evaporating all that had been unquestioned before in its evidently reasonable or divinely revealed character. The world confronting Christianity is today, in this way, a historical one. The pivot of Troeltsch’s thinking, on the way from Christian theology to cultural philosophy of Christianity, we find formulated as follows: the task of our stance is to find “a way from what is historically relative to cultural values in truth.”¹⁴ Historizing theology shakes all alleged absoluteness of a single religion, the naive pretension to be the only true one in a competing plurality of religions. The supranatural apology by asserting miracles as a kind of “Sunday-causality” proves to be untenable for a reflexive approach. Biblical criticism, that is historical method applied to religious traditions, dethrones even the Holy of Holies to contingency. The intensive inquiries into the historical Jesus let him appear as an exemplary person with purely human features, be these the most distinguished ones: from the Jewish revolutionary through the great moral teacher

¹² See Troeltsch, *Der Historismus und seine Probleme* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1922), pp. 4, 102, and *passim*.

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Use and Abuse of History,” *Thoughts Out of Season*, Part Two (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1909), p. 59.

¹⁴ Ernst Troeltsch, “Meine Bücher,” *Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte und Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1925), p. 14.

to the announcer of the forthcoming eschatology.¹⁵ The dogmatic is thrown into shade in the favour of the empirically verifiable. Religious development, for many amounting to the Christian realization of religion as such, is revealed as an intricate construction.¹⁶ Christianity as a complex formation fits into its highly complex individual context as much as does every other religion. Its ideal substance has to hold its ground in a “free struggle”¹⁷ – methodologically speaking: a wide-ranging comparison – with similar and yet different holy contents. World religions seem to converge, as Troeltsch for a long time tries to show, in Christian “personalism.”

To put the question, as Troeltsch pointedly does, as a matter of principle: is it within or beyond history that authentic clues to human orientation are to be found? Referring to the theological irrelevancy of historical processes, there emerges an antihistoricist position in the half a century old traces of Kierkegaard. In the “moment” where history and eternity meet each other can everyone be a “contemporary” of Christ – even if not of Jesus. The “process” itself, even if lasting thousands of years, has no weight in the personal relations of faith. Concerning the inner truth of Christianity, the assumed success and proof of history has always been invalid. The “single individual” has to do with an exclusively inner – or eminently hidden God. Salvation lifts him out of history, the anchorage of religiosity in the past is to be abandoned.¹⁸ Lessing’s “nasty ditch” between “verities of history” and “verities of reason,” that is the paradox of temporal change and eternal belief, opens again and again before modern intellectuality. The inexhaustible stream of events pushes every generation further from the axis of

¹⁵ See the great résumé of Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984).

¹⁶ See the programmatic study of the early Troeltsch, “Über historische und dogmatische Methode,” *Zur religiösen Lage, Religionsphilosophie und Ethik, Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1913), pp. 729-753.

¹⁷ Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte* (1902/12), Ernst-Troeltsch-Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 5 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), pp. 175, 195.

¹⁸ Cf. Friedrich W. Graf, “Die ‘antihistoristische Revolution’ in der protestantischen Theologie der zwanziger Jahre,” in Jan Wenz and Gunther Rohls, eds., *Vernunft des Glaubens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), p. 377ff.

genuine Christianity. The reliability of biblical accounts about miracles and prophecies do not exceed that of every other convincingly announced tradition.¹⁹ To take them as granted is to credit messages at second and further hand. Kierkegaard's repeated evoking of the same problem, shortly after Hegel's monumental attempt to demonstrate divine providence in the widely terrifying course of history, resounds even more drastically. Whether we can ascertain anything profound about Christ from the facts about Jesus, this very crucial question of faith is answered by him with a harsh "nowise." Christ is for him an object of faith: not to believe it amounts to taking offence at it. The doings of Jesus as much as their probable consequences are overshadowed by the fact of incarnation of the eternal in time.²⁰ Authentic existence in the face of radical contingency is to be found in an inward contemporaneity with God in a single human being.

Troeltsch votes, on the contrary, for a "cultural science" of Christianity, seeking to ground a "synthesis of values" on historical ways. "To want to have the absolute in an absolute way on a single point of history is a delusion."²¹ Instead, binding obligations are to be gained from a "sober" overview of the whole abundance of religious history by erudite minds. Concerning the highest values this earnest consideration must converge into a sound unanimity. To cut short the further path of his thinking: for the late Troeltsch beliefs cannot be saved from the relativizing power of history.²² Thus, the only conceivable supremacy of Christianity consists in the fact of our having become what we are now due to its innermost merits, evolved into an all-round civilization. The only religion we can live in harmony with is Christianity, "as it has evolved with us and is a

¹⁹ Gotthold E. Lessing, "Über den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft (1777)," *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts und andere Schriften* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1965), p. 31ff., p. 36.

²⁰ Søren Kierkegaard, *Indøvelse i Christendom, Samlede værker*, Vol. 16 (København: Gyldendal, 1962), p. 43.

²¹ Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums*, p. 204.

²² The thoroughly consequent shifts in Troeltsch's thinking towards a sceptical-resigned position are traced by Sarah Coakely, *Christ Without Absolutes. A Study of the Christology of Ernst Troeltsch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

part of our very identity." It is hoped that a kind of "evidence of inner experience" will justify our decisions in our personal life.²³

Of course, historical rationality, by becoming an all-embracing model of explanation, affects an eminently historical religion most strikingly. As evidence, at the heart of Christianity there is the incarnation of God as a human person, the entrance of eternity into the relativities of everyday history. How did it happen that the cosmos had become empty of its meaning and had lost its normative power as *historical*? Western consciousness tends to put historical questions, as has been shown by hard work in conceptual history, under the banner of biblical paradigms referring to a God who is acting on the political stage as do earthly sovereigns. The image of God as a transcendental actor intervening for the sake of his elected people can be opposed to an eternal order immanent in the cosmos itself. Hebrew monotheism with features of a personal ruler emerged in correlation with the highly threatening turbulence of international politics, in a peripheral situation: "At this point one can see clearly the distinctively and eminently *historical* character of the theorizing of the Hebrew prophets, which stands in sharp contrast to the speculations concerning nature characteristic of the priesthoods of India and Babylonia."²⁴ Ancient Israel settles its most significant points of reference not in a timeless prehistory, but as dated cataclysms in its earthly fate. God is, as a consequence of universalising tendencies, a "supra-mundane, personal, wrathful, forgiving, loving, demanding, punishing Lord of Creation,"²⁵ revealing himself in world history, who, later on, can send his only Son to bring overall salvation. A dogmatic rationalization of a comprehensive worldview around the focus of the incarnated divine Word can now be fulfilled.

It happened in this climate of religion that an increased awareness of the passing nature of cultures and societies unsettled the very foundations of a historically rooted faith. No "historical success of Christianity" can any longer be easily adduced as a testimony of suprahistorical claims. The range of intellectually possible positions

²³ Ernst Troeltsch, "Die Stellung des Christentums unter den Weltreligionen," *Der Historismus und seine Überwindung. Fünf Vorträge* (Berlin: Heise, 1924), p. 62ff.

²⁴ Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1978), p. 418.

²⁵ Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," p. 285.

concerning the relation of “Christ and culture”²⁶ seems to be sustainably marked out. Dogmatics for believing and stories for commemorating – this is the “either/or” scope where Christian thinking and Christian life is organized. Faith takes to a large extent the form of decisions, described in its radical character by Kierkegaard in his poetical *Fear and Trembling*; and even inherited traditions should for modern man be personally taken over. Joseph Ratzinger’s recent exegetical attempt to take seriously the “life story” of Jesus, without neglecting or ignoring biblical criticism, fits well into this framework, by synthesizing both options under the unerasable banner of “revelation.” The unfolding unity of the Christian message with “Jesus Christ” as its “key” presupposes a “decision of faith,” involving, however, historical reason.²⁷

It took to a long time for ancient Christianity to encounter this-worldly orders, waiting in an eschatological disposition for the Second Coming of Jesus. To engage in a medium with political and economic aspects – all of them delicate in respect to salvation – required Christians to turn from indifference to inner-worldly activity. From the beginnings this process was interpreted as installing oneself in God’s creation – or as acquiescing in compromises with irreligious or at least areligious elements. Be that as it may, Christian life as a praxis thus became social.

The same Troeltsch, as a classical sociologist of religion now, articulated typical forms of religious sociality in connection with personal conduct of life and identity. To recapitulate the most crucial characteristics: Extended organizations offering general salvation for everyone can be, firstly, defined as churches. Their members dwell from birth on in well-organized hierarchies with clerics in holy orders; moral requirements tend to be adapted to the rather lax everyday receptivity of the masses. All-inclusive ambitions to

²⁶ Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

²⁷ Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Jesus of Nazareth*, 3 volumes, Vol. 1: *From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (New York et al: Doubleday, 2007), Foreword. The “Glaubensentscheid” of the original is translated as “act of faith.” The philosopher Hans Albert, on the contrary, misses in his critique the effort to harmonizing faith and scientific insight as regards attaining founded knowledge of God’s reality, see his “Joseph Ratzingers Jesusdeutung,” in Karl Lehmann, ed., *“Jesus von Nazareth” kontrovers. Rückfragen an Joseph Ratzinger* (Berlin: LIT, 2007), pp. 129-142.

embrace each soul, monopolizing the resources of grace, conflict with a supposed exclusivity of truth. By controlling the world on a large scale churches become, at first glance paradoxically, controlled by the world itself: a possible price for keeping up with prevailing orders. Exclusive communities limitedly bestowing redemption upon religiously qualified adherents can, secondly, be counted as sects: mutually controlled devotion to moral rigour permits admission here. The sharpness of some formulations of the biblical Sermon on the Mount can stand for the extraordinarily committed charisma required of the sectarian, resting upon an experienced inner rebirth.²⁸ Sectarian enthusiasm often brings about a detachment from the world as a place full of dangers and temptations. As a third form of Christian conduct in sociality, mysticism is the most unformed one because of its private basis. The incessant possibility and hope of inner illumination as a special possession and disposition makes and keeps this formation permanently fluid. Being filled with the “spirit” in our entire being can estrange us from dogmas and institutions even to the degree of hostility against everything that is officially fixed. Withdrawal from the “outer” spheres of the world seems to be a self-consistent conclusion of renouncing every institutional mediation in the name of authenticity.²⁹ A widespread need for spirituality in the sense of finding sensually one’s inner “measure” is an aspiration succeeding classical mysticism, beyond amounting to nothing more than self-apotheosis, that is beyond anchoring oneself in oneself.³⁰

²⁸ Cf. Max Weber, “Politics as a vocation,” *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, p. 119ff.

²⁹ See Troeltsch, “Das stoisch-christliche Naturrecht und das moderne profane Naturrecht,” in Troeltsch, *Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte und Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1925), pp. 166-190; Troeltsch, *The Social teachings of the Christian Churches* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 993ff. Niebuhr offered a more differentiated typology, introducing the term of “denomination” as an intermediate category between the poles of church and sect, see his *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian, 1975).

³⁰ Cf. Charles Taylor, “The Church Speaks – to Whom?,” in Charles Taylor, José Casanova and George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), pp. 17-18; Hubert Knoblauch, *Populäre Religion* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus: 2009), pp. 128-129.

Troeltsch has omitted, however, to connect the two great fields of his own work: historicity of history and typology of religiosity.³¹ We find but one decisive reference to an elective affinity between them in treating the mystical attitude as resisting dogma and “the historical element.” What can the effects of a radically relativizing “all-flowing” be on binding oneself to inner and outer forms of religiosity? An historicist climate may facilitate “sectarian” or “mystical” resignation or absence from the hardly movable structures that churches often incline to be. Seeking an “authentic” inner self,³² this urging for inwardness and existential presence in the sense of the ‘Here and Now’, harmonizes well with an individual’s now and again enthusiastic breaking out from history. Beyond tending to dwell in fixed forms there emerges a disposition to an often endless quest with changing intensity and unsteady consciousness. Subjectivity and immediacy, however, after having been engulfed in spiritual or even in ecstatic experiences, can mostly have a need of finite support, be it institutional or communal, in order to get perpetuated. Substantial dogmatics, on the other side, has an obvious power to bind by definite messages amidst an unrepressible streaming of history. For many an engagement in the nearly timeless constancy of a long-standing order can be a suitable solution for their search for security.

We have here, as suggested by Weber, the dynamics from the charismatic, i.e. the extraordinary, to the regulated or traditional – and back again. To locate itself in this dialectics and find suitable proportions of institutional and personal forces under historicist conditions is an intellectual and practical challenge that the Church of our days obviously has to face. The combination of charisma and bureaucracy manifested in the “depersonalized” agency of a priest,³³ this genuine invention of Christianity, is a kind of mediation which is congenial to a conciliatory temper. Given the highly different religious qualification of men, it concerns sociological wondering to deliberate about historical possibilities. When history comes into

³¹ I am indebted to thank Professor Friedrich W. Graf, editor of Troeltsch’s *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, for confirming this statement.

³² Cf. Charles Taylor’s grandiose work on the sources of the self (especially Part four) and his monumental *A Secular Age* (Cambridge et al.: The Belknap Press, 2007), chapters 13-14.

³³ For the “charisma of office” see Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, p. 1139ff..

radical movement, as in the present decades of a collapsing world-order, experienced eminently in the Eastern regions of Europe, religiosity might change face.³⁴ Whether this situation is to be encountered by established doctrines and arrangements, by reliance upon anti-intellectual powers of spirituality in a broad sense, by some “lessons” of two thousand years, or rather by combining these options – can no longer be an exclusively sociological question.

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³⁴ For a typological analysis of religious life strategies after 1948 in Eastern Europe see Zsuzsanna Bögre, “Religion and Identity,” in Andrew Blasko, Taras Dobko, Pham Van Duc and George Pattery, eds., *Globalization and Identity* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), Series 7, Vol. 25, pp. 180-191.

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A People's Church toward a Seeker-Friendly Catholicism in Hungary

ANDRÁS MÁTÉ-TÓTH

From "Leutereligion" to Spirituality

"Leutereligion" (literally, "folk religion") was the term used by the famous practical theologian in Austria, Paul M. Zulehner, in his research about the simple and fundamental attitudes of Austrian people regarding religion. He observed in the second half of the 1970s that people have a basic need for religion as a holy canvas – in P. L. Berger's term, "a sacred canopy" – and this kind of religiosity is less influenced by regular churchgoing or church teaching. According to Zulehner's findings, religion provides people a helping dimension in case of contingency, an everyday tradition, and an unreflected hope over conflicts and at least over death. Religiosity – understood as folk religion – involves many people in Austria – although there is a decrease in churchgoing and sacrament consumption.¹ Parallel to Zulehner's study, surveys about religiosity conducted by Miklós Tomka in Hungary came to the conclusion that the biggest group of the sample (around 50%) belongs to a special category between church determined religiosity and atheism or agnosticism. He called this special kind of religiosity as "religious in one's own way."² Neither of the authors – Zulehner or Tomka – used the term "spirituality" in their writings. The term became popular and trendy in Europe long after its career started in the USA.

Among American sociologists of religion Robert Wuthnow was perhaps the first to systemize spirituality as a technical term of sociology. "Spirituality," he wrote, "is somehow more authentic, more personally compelling, an expression of their search for the sacred, while religion connotes a social arrangement that seems

¹ Paul M. Zulehner, "Leutereligion" *eine neue Gestalt des Christentums auf dem Weg durch die 80er Jahre?* (Wien et al.: Herder, 1982), pp. 54-56.

² Miklós Tomka, "Tendencies of Religious Change in Hungary," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 1988, Vol. 33, No. 65.1, pp. 67-79. About his findings and about the special term, see the other chapters of this volume.

arbitrary, limiting, or at best convenient.”³ In his recent definition the comparison or confrontation between religiosity and spirituality is important. The latter should indicate something similar to Zulehner’s and Tomka’s terms, and the most crucial dimension of that kind of world view is the private, the individual. Zulehner also remarked in his original research report that “Leutereligion” cannot defend itself from the arguments of the Christian critics, who ask for compassion and solidarity. The disjunction between religious dwellers and seekers – elaborated by Charles Taylor – persists on the same individual level asking which kind of church behavior could be more seeker-friendly. He asks: “How does the Church speak to our world?”⁴ This approach seems to be close to what has been called the supply-side approach, because he does not ask the religious consumers about their needs, but more about the provider of religious goods, the church, especially the Roman Catholic Church. I will follow his line of argumentation, but before describing the Hungarian situation, I want to summarize Taylor’s disjunction and make some comments.

Seekers and Dwellers

The main distinction between dwellers and seekers goes back to Wuthnow’s work already mentioned above. In his work, Wuthnow entitled his chapter regarding this distinction “From dwelling to seeking.” Spirituality is therefore closer to seekers’ needs and behavior, while religiosity (meaning church spirituality) is more characteristic of dwellers⁵. For Wuthnow, a seeker negotiates between the complex symbols and meanings. S/He is open to different spiritual authors and life guides – called “lights” by Wuthnow.⁶ For him/her, life is a journey, a challenge, and s/he is creative in finding his/her floating identity. The seeker’s is the

³ Robert Wuthnow, *Loose Connections: Joining together in America’s Fragmented Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 506.

⁴ Charles Taylor, “The Church Speaks – to Whom?,” in C. Taylor, J. Casanova and G. F. McLean, eds, *Church and People. Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), p. 17. See also Zoltán Hidas, *Im Bann der Identität. Zur Soziologie unseres Selbstverständnisses* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014)

⁵ Wuthnow, *Loose Connections: Joining together in America’s Fragmented Communities*, pp. 1-18.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Wuthnow, p. 2.

explorer of unknown spiritual territories, and tends to shy away from shared and comfortable sacred spaces. The seeker's is more the faith of the pilgrim, and not that of the established temple.

Taylor complements Wuthnow's definition by indirect reference to William James's distinction between the once and twice born persons, which he calls believers of "still" and "again."⁷ Taylor writes: "there is another way of understanding the tensions within all Christian churches today, the line between those who believe 'still,' and those who believe 'again'." Still-believers are the people of tradition and institution, while again-believers are people of credibility. For the first type, given and fixed ways are important, those which provide sustainability and coherence. The "again" type needs to retract the given core, the never given spiritual goods and try to find originalities appropriate to his/her own individuality and personal identity. Similar to Wuthnow, Taylor says: "we can predict that the number of seekers will probably increase with time over against the dwellers; so I believe that we can expect among believers a greater proportion of those in the 'again' category."⁸

To the disjunctions of Taylor's between the two characters of contemporary people and, first of all, to the preferred seeker attitude, it is not superfluous to give some brief attention to the Biblical tradition. In the Holy Scripture we can find two types of seeker. "The first are those who know the Lord and are seeking a closer relationship with him in worship, through word, sacraments, and prayer. The second are those who do not know the Lord but are seeking to understand who He is, how He fits into their lives, and if they desire a relationship with Him."⁹ Taylor mentions some hagiographic examples, which are all seekers in the first Biblical sense: Teresa of Avila and others. Taylor recalls the not well known fact that saints such as Teresa of Avila or of Lisieux or Madre Teresa were not simply believers without any questions, but, on the contrary, they still had struggles throughout their entire lives with faith and God. But it seems to me important to remember that seekers in the sense of contemporary sociology are different from

⁷ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Library of America, 2010).

⁸ Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," p. 17.

⁹ Kenneth Behnken, "Profiles of Seekers," *Missio Apostolica*, 2005, Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 118.

that kind of holy seekers. They are more like seekers in the second Biblical sense, who live in the fundamental openness for a meaningful life, although “etsi Deus non daretur” (as if God did not exist).

Young people – claims Taylor – “are seeking a kind of unity and wholeness of the self, a reclaiming of the place of feeling, against the one-sided pre-eminence of reason, and a reclaiming of the body and its pleasures from the inferior and often guilt-ridden place it has been allowed in the disciplined, instrumental identity. The stress is on unity, integrity, holism, individuality; their language often invokes ‘harmony, balance, flow, integrations, being at one, centered.’”¹⁰ Although representative surveys among Hungary’s youth have been conducted in the last decades in three waves (2000, 2008 and 2012), regarding religiosity and spirituality, we have only a few items, and therefore it is not possible to check Taylor’s presupposition. But, in general, decreasing traditional religiosity seems to be a permanent tendency and non-Christian religious contents and practices have a greater importance for the surveyed young people than the Christian ones.¹¹

To be more precise and describe the Church’s behavior more understandably, Taylor mentions some issues along which the Catholic Church remains insensitive to contemporary spiritual needs. The papal Encyclica *Humanae Vitae* was, for instance, unable to understand the problematic of sexuality and the modern culture of relationships. Without scrutinizing Taylor’s argumentation, it is important to remember that the impressions and experiences of the people in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are really different from those in Western Europe and North America. By maintaining the fine-tuned distinction between seekers and dwellers regarding CEE, we need to focus on the relevant regional experiences. After some clarifications concerning the terms seeker and dweller, we can turn to the contextual understanding of the mutual interaction between church behavior and peoples’ attitudes in Hungary called by me People’s Church.¹²

¹⁰ Charles Taylor, *A secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 507.

¹¹ Gergely Rosta, “Hit és vallásgyakorlat,” in L. Székely, ed., *Magyar Ifjúság 2012* (Budapest, 2013), pp. 316ff

¹² With German term “Leutekirche.”

Supply Side: the Institutional Dimension of Spirituality

In the social research tradition of religion and religiosity there are two main approaches: the demand-side and the supply-side approaches. The former focus on characteristics and expectations of people, the other latter on the institutionally offered religious services and other goods. As elaborated first by Finke and Iannaccone (1993), a supply-side approach emphasizes the opportunities and restrictions confronting religious organizations and their leaders.¹³ The main questions of this kind of approach mainly focus on institutional dimensions of religion and ask which institutional behavior motivates different answers people give. Although I share Olaf Müller's thesis, that the supply-side approach is not more appropriate to explain religious transformations in CEE as the approach of the theory of secularization, the correlation between the growth of the religious market and the level of religiosity seems to be relevant.¹⁴ Based on historical data and the data sets of World Value Studies regarding Hungary, Paul Froese argues that "according to the supply-side model of religious change, churches attract members through open and active recruitment. In the case of Hungary, the arrival of religious freedom enabled churches to openly and actively attract new members. In line with the supply-side prediction, more Hungarians who were religiously inclined responded to newly active churches by attending services."¹⁵ It is beyond the limitations of the present paper to reflect either on the theoretical debates of supply-side theory, or on the data change of religiosity in Hungary. Nevertheless, I want to attempt to argue that there is a significant correlation between the societal position of the church and the providing of religious goods by the church and the attitudes of the people.

¹³ Roger Finke and Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Supply-Side Explanations for Religious Change," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 1993, Vol. 527, No. 1, pp. 27-37.

¹⁴ See Olaf Müller, *Kirchlichkeit und Religiosität in Ostmittel und Osteuropa Entwicklungen, Muster, Bestimmungsgründe, Veröffentlichungen der Sektion Religionssoziologie der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013).

¹⁵ Paul Froese, "Hungary for Religion: A Supply-Side Interpretation of the Hungarian Religious Revival," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 2001, Vol. 40. No. 2, p. 258.

Three-Partite Church

The sociological research of the Church, the hierarchical one, attempts to explain one side of it as an institution. In theological texts, church usually means hierarchy, and in the more sophisticated works one can find differentiations between church as a hierarchy (the clerical side or dimension) and church as the people of God. For a more sensitive interpretation it is useful to break up the homogeneous and monochrome image of the church. In my elaboration, I differentiate between three dimensions of the church: the hierarchical, which I call “church leadership,” the initiative, which I refer to as church project, and, finally, the individual, which means church related private attitudes of individual people.

The first dimension of the church is the *leadership*, independent from the sacramental consecration. It is not only clerics that should be included in this category but lay people as well, if they are elected and delegated to leader positions.

Projects – the second dimension – are initiatives from below, which means initiated by the church leadership or from bottom-up, organized by the faithful without higher leadership functions. In case of church leadership, hierarchical communication channels are typical, but in the project dimension, horizontal ones prevail. Church leadership is territorially organized and has responsibility over particular territorial regions, e.g. in the case of bishops, one diocese. Projects are definitively functional and have special tasks and focus on special terms.

It is not only because sociological approaches important to see the church not only as a hierarchy but also from the broader theological perspective. The church as such is a theological (and sociological) abstraction, a term for orientation, and an expression for common tradition and liturgical practice. Projects, however, are concrete practical efforts and actions which make the abstract church tangible. Projects have more direct impact on the people connected to them. Therefore, they are perhaps more important regarding the issue of various spiritualities.

The last church dimension, the *churched individual*, has to do with the attitude of private persons for whom church teaching and church provided rituals are crucial. Although I am interested in the public dimensions of the church, churched private persons are an inherent part of it.

Seeker and Dweller Attitude

Spiritualities in Hungary as well as in several other societies of CEE are first of all formed by the post-WWII historical events. For contemporary interest, when discussing the topic in retrospect, it is important not to regard the entire 40 years after the communist takeover and the 25 years after it as two homogenous entities, but to divide them into sub-periods according to the main changes in the relationship of the church and state on the one hand, and the church and society on the other. Historians and sociologists debate how many sub-periods should be identified and where are the boundaries between them.

Although in the public discourse of the region it is close to being taken for granted, but in the years around 1990, the deep and important change, namely, the change of regime, occurred, from the structural point of view, in a relatively short time. The real meaning and success of the regime change, however, are subject to permanent very vivid political discussions in the region. For the scholars in various disciplines, the transformation in CEE as such is often more of a big web of questions than clear and distinctive results.¹⁶

But all scholars agree that there are different periods, and for a better and more appropriate understanding of the situation of religion and churches, today it is necessary to distinguish between different sub-periods. Based on my own research and works of other scholars from Hungary and abroad as well, I argue for four sub-periods, described below.

In attempting to distinguish four different periods after WWII, my aim is to explain the different impacts coming from the positions and behaviors of the church observed along the three dimensions of church mentioned above, even though there is clear diversity in CEE regarding church positions in the different historical periods as well as in recent years. Hungary seems to be quite peculiar among the societies of the region, due to the uniqueness of the Hungarian language, its different origin from other European languages and some data on religiosity. Even if I agree that the elaborated dimensions and impacts are relevant for Hungary, too.

¹⁶ Klaus Lichtblau, *Soziologie als Kulturwissenschaft? Zur Rolle des Kulturbegriffs in der Selbstreflexion der deutschsprachigen Soziologie* (Springer 2011), p. 327; Bremer 2008; Segert 2014

By discussing our findings separately going through each period and every church dimension, we should keep in mind that in contemporary society all mentioned impacts work in a parallel fashion, referred to usually as Koselleck simultaneous asynchrony: simultaneous existence of current interpretations of the past. My description is based on historical and sociological resources, making explicit reference only to the most important among them.

Church Leadership

At the time of the direct and hard persecution after the communist takeover, leaders of the Catholic Church were imprisoned or removed from office without having free communication with believers. An internationally well known example of such kind of communistic religious policy is Cardinal József Mindszenty's case, because he published his memoir in 1974 with many details of his suffering together with systematic characterizations of the ideology and praxis of the relentless pursuit against Catholic Church.¹⁷ He symbolizes, however, not only the persistence and faithfulness in the face of brutality, but also doggedness regarding Catholic doctrine.

Mindszenty was not the only imprisoned bishop after 1950 in Hungary, but one of many. Bishop Zoltan Meszlényi, for instance, beatified in 2009, died in 1951 in a labor camp in Kistarcsa. His life and martyrdom symbolize the period of direct persecution.¹⁸

Having studied at the Gregorian University in Rome, Meszlényi became fluent in Italian, French, English, German, Latin and Greek, in addition to his native Hungarian. His studies led him to a degree in canon law diplomas in philosophy and theology too. He was very humble, not even considering himself to be a candidate to replace Cardinal József Mindszenty, who had been arrested and sentenced to life in prison. He was also known for his strict but kind treatment of the priests in his diocese, encouraging them to always become better and more faithful servants of the Church. However, Blessed

¹⁷ József Mindszenty, *Memoirs* (New York: Macmillan, 1974).

¹⁸ Károly Hetényi-Varga, *Akiket üldöztek az igazságért* [Those Who Were Persecuted for Truth] (Budapest, 1985) and Károly Hetényi-Varga, *Papi sorsok a horogkereszt és a vörös csillag árnyékában* (Abaliget: Lámpás Kiadó, 1992-1996); Gyula Havasy, *A magyar katolikusok szenvedései, 1944-1989* (Székesfehérvár: Havasy Gyula, 1990).

Meszlényi would not back down when confronted by the Communists. The presence of the Communists, as well as Russia's invasion, which put the country behind the Iron Curtain, presented the Church with difficulties, as the Communists tried to seize Hungary's Catholic schools and influence the election of bishops. Blessed Meszlényi quickly became an enemy of the Communists when it became known that he was not afraid of the threat of force. Meszlényi was an appointed bishop, however, and only two weeks after his episcopal ordination, the communist authorities arrested the newly-appointed bishop and no one heard about him again.

The communists were very secretive about their persecution of the Church in order to avoid creating martyrs whose stories of standing up for their faith would inspire others. Thus, no one heard from the bishop after his arrest, and there are no documents where he was detained, how he was tortured, of what he was accused, or how he died. Nevertheless, based on accounts of other priests who also suffered under the Stalinist repression, it was concluded that his martyrdom was preceded by imprisonment and torture which included solitary confinement, beatings, psychological torture, unheated jail cells without windows, and no access to medical treatment.¹⁹

Direct persecution against the Catholic Church priests and nuns and as well lay people in leading positions employed by the church was widely practiced. Priests of the Hungarian Catholic movements *Regnum Marianum*²⁰ or *Bokor*²¹ were imprisoned or suffered other forms of persecution.

At this time, the church leaders representing the whole church as an institution demonstrated hard core loyalty to Rome and strong unity inside the church. They were diametrically opposed to the persecutors because of the latter's atheism and enmity of the church. At that time it was not possible to propose a dialog with people thinking differently, due to the black and white dichotomous societal and religious situation.

¹⁹ Summarized by Magyar Kurír.

²⁰ János Dobszay, *Így-vagy sehogy! fejezetek a Regnum Marianum életéből* (Budapest: Regnum Marianum, 1991).

²¹ András Máté-Tóth, *Bulányi und die Bokor-Bewegung: eine pastoraltheologische Würdigung* (Wien: Ungar. Kirchensoziolog. Inst., 1996).

In the second period of the communist time – the so called “Pax Kadariensis” (1956-1988) – the control mechanism changed. Church leadership received more autonomy and freedom, but the positions in the hierarchy needed loyalty to communist regime. To become bishop or parish priest in bigger towns, priest should give loyalty gestures to the regime or they should work together with secret services. Church leadership was characterized at this time by permanent calculation and tactics. Because the rules for the church were not exact by defined those responsible for the church were forced to test the borders of freedom and to keep a balance between the mission of the church and the tolerance of the regime.

The fall of the communist regime in Hungary happened not overnight, but through a yearlong transformation. Concerning catholic hierarchy, it meant no abrupt change at all. Only very slowly bishops with past communist collaborations retired and were replaced by new members of the Conference characterized with other experiences. But in the first wave of freedom, the behavior of church leadership was defined by the general enthusiasm for freedom and by jubilation for national autonomy. Although church leadership played no crucial role in the fall of the communist regime, it supported the main goals of the new democratic regime--partly from national responsibility, partly in order to ensure political and financial stability for pastoral care. The time prompted by the collapse of communist regime, was not appropriate for a critical evaluation of church leadership in the former periods, but more a time for repositioning.

In the second wave of freedom, church leadership collected some impressions regarding democratic politics and perhaps more regarding permanent fighting in public media. The new challenge was to find equidistance from political parties and save church interests against real and phantom enemies. In the public arena church leadership tried to demonstrate the central Christian values like life, social justice, family and so on. Two major pastoral letters were published: “Toward a More Just and Brotherly World” (1996) and “Toward happiness of families” (1999). Every diocese held pastoral synods and tried to formulate pastoral goals for contemporary society. By all these activities the church leadership

emphasized more clearly the "ecclesia docens" than the "ecclesia communicans."²²

Church Project

The communist takeover around 1950 was signified by a direct and consistent destruction of civil society including every church organization, beginning with the religious orders, through secular institutions and faith based NGO's called religious associations at that time. The main goal of the new state was really a totalitarian one, aiming to cover the entire society with total control and to ban every horizontal connection in it. First of all church organizations were targeted by this total mobilization. Priests and lay people who organized further particular projects despite the law were convicted and incarcerated for years for simple activities with church youth groups or excursions with altar boys. Socially active priests were moved from parish to parish every 1-3 years to temper any successful pastoral activities. Active members of outlawed religious orders and movements were imprisoned.

Projects of the church in the first and brutal time of persecution demonstrated toughness, with the aim to protect and provide stability in the bombarded church. They were Dweller-oriented and offered support and stability for church members. They were not open to discussion and new ways of mission targeted at nonbelievers and they were not able to discover new ways of pastoral care or new language for the new time.

The situation changed in the second sub-period of the communist era which I refer to as the period of "Babylonian captivity," which started in the mid-1970s. The state started to use different ways of church control and found in mainstream churches tools for demonstrating religious freedom to a West sensitive to human rights. Freedom in the society was one of the political criteria for providing financial loans to communist governments. Hungary was successful in choosing this path.

²² András Máté-Tóth, "Tanuló egyház. A szociális körlevél pasztorálteológiai olvasata," in András Máté-Tóth and M. Jahn, eds., *Studia religiosa. Tanulmányok András Imre 70. születésnapjára* (Szeged: Bába és tsa, 1998); András Máté-Tóth, "A Családkörlevél pasztorálteológiai olvasata," in G. Hamp and G. Kelemen, eds., *A család* (Budapest: Balassi, 2000).

Active priests and lay people made full use of this new and more liberal situation and initiated grassroots movements, formed youth groups in parishes, organized youth meetings and festivals with new religious music. Quite early in the process of rebuilding civil society in Hungary, religious activities started on the level of what has been called second publicity. We can speak about a church revival with limited freedom and about the beginning of church projects. The importance of their kind of activities is great for several reasons. Many church leaders of today had their basic experiences at that project level. They learnt what active religiosity and a vigorous church mostly independent from the political and religious praxis of the hierarchy could mean. For instance, Bishop Endre Gyulay included in the final document of the diocesan synod the passage “only those parishes will be still active which have small groups.”²³ Many lay people who today hold important political positions were at this time members of various church movements, learnt there about democracy, discourse culture and a Christianity ready for challenges after the period of state promoted Christianity and churches. The revival of a project church conveyed a very seeker-friendly spirituality with clear openness for people outside the church and a high level of motivation for experiences of faith and church life.

The political turn to democracy around 1990 had a great impact on the project side of the church. Many active people – both priests and lay people – found careers in the new public possibilities in church and in civil politics. One consequence was the temporary lack of church projects. In case of supported spiritualities, the difference between church leadership and former members of church projects was not so significant at the time of the first wave of freedom.

But as soon as new democratic structures were in place and the enthusiastic emotions cooled down, civil society in Hungary started to flourish. The new legal regulation of this field created frameworks for activities of this kind. The definitive question now was who can and will solve the financial question and how there were. Three were three possible solutions: political parties, support from abroad, and a limited amount of fundraising. In addition, church projects tried to

²³ András Máté-Tóth, “Egyházmegyei szinódus Szeged-Csanád,” *Távlatok*, 1992, Vol. 5, No. 2.

find serious funding, and they started to define their activities dependent on the possible funding and the demands of the spiritual market. Therefore, the level of creativity was very high, which supported and demonstrated a seeker-friendly atmosphere, and the content of the projects was more focused on spiritual and charity-like aims.

There is a considerable difference between church leadership and church projects in recent time regarding spirituality. The first seems to be more dweller-friendly and the second clearly definitely seeker-friendly. On the level of church projects, one can observe a very active and creative church with unbounded imagination and sensitivity to local needs. Parallel to this, the integrity of the church and the mutual understanding between levels of hierarchy and between projects are rather more a hope than a reality.

Churched Individuals

Under churched individuals I understand people to whom church teachings and the liturgy are important for their identity. According to sociological surveys, they are people who are religious according church teaching and who spend time at least weekly attending church liturgy, the holy mass. Research in Hungary shows that the proportion of churched individuals is around 10% of the whole population, or about 1 million people. Of course, the church through its public presence can play a role for people outside the mentioned churched individuals as well. The stronger is its publicity, the bigger its impact. It is interesting that even non-believers and atheists have interest in the church and they have a clear concept for the role of the church in modern society.²⁴

Churched individuals are, on the one hand, engaged consumers of church provided spiritual goods, and, on the other hand, represent and demonstrate for other people what the church, Christianity and religion mean. If we are interested in whether church presence can be attractive for seekers in contemporary

²⁴ Gergely Rosta, "Stellung der Katholischen Kirche in Ungarn," *Ost-West Europäische Perspektiven* 2007, Vol. 2.; Miklós Tomka, Paul M. Zulehner and Pastorales Forum, *Religion und Kirchen in Ost(Mittel) Europa Ungarn, Litauen, Slowenien / Miklós Tomka* (Ostfildern: Schwabenverl, 1999), pp. 49-76; Miklós Tomka, *Religiöser Wandel in Ungarn* (2010), p. 176.

Hungarian society, we have to analyze both aspects of churched individuals: both as consumers and as providers.

Regarding dweller and seeker religiosity, we find some other studies in this volume; therefore I want to call attention only to some general change in the different sub-periods since 1950.

For the churched generation socialized before WWII, the church belongs to the complex plausibility structure, which ensures people a simple and clear orientation in society. After the communist takeover, churched individuals have no trust in the public features of the church presented through the heavily censored media. To the contrary, the harder the persecution and the disavowal were, the more trust and compassion churched people felt towards the church. Although churched people did not have the possibility of public testimony, because it was very dangerous, in the families and among parish people, they expressed clear solidarity with the church, its priests, nuns, monks etc.

In the second period of Communism, that of the Babylonian captivity, a dramatic change regarding trust in the church and Christian testimony took place.²⁵ Traditional Catholicism lost more and more of its supportive power for the general population. The new generation which was surrounded by communist propaganda and unchurched public circumstances, did not find it attractive –they were used to the situation and took it for granted. First of all, churched people in the cities either participated in church projects or kept more and more loose contact with parishes. The burden on the individual conscience made people into schizophrenic spiritual beings. They experienced, on the one hand, a loyalty toward the communist system due to their careers, and on the other hand, less support from the official church. Fatigued pilgrims under a felled tree – to summarize with a metaphor.

The official church was not really able to work freely and take steps forward in the dialog with contemporary culture, and it was in itself divided and suffered from lack of trust. The church split into a

²⁵ Zsuzsanna Bögre, *Vallásosság és identitás, Élettörténetek a diktatúrában 1948-1964* [Religiosity and Identity. Life Histories in Dictatorship 1948-1964] (Budapest: Dialóg Campus Kiadó, 2004); also see Zsuzsanna Bögre, "Religion and Identity," in Andrew Blasko, Taras Dobko, Pham Van Duc and George Pattery, eds., *Globalization and Identity* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Series 7, Vol. 25, 2007), pp. 180-191.

corrupt regime-loyal part and a regime-disloyal unofficial part. The official side kept the sacramental and bureaucratic dimension in life, and the unofficial the tradition of witnessing. Between the two, there was a gray area and the subtle regime controlled both parts and played them against each other.

The very consequence of this confused and complicated period is the lost unity and integrity of the church and the dramatic lack of renewal. Miklós Tomka, a formerly leading scholar in sociology of religion in Hungary and in CEE, often compared this situation to a shipwreck in heavy fog and called Christianity in Hungary insular. In sum – tragically for the Church as well as for the Christian culture in Hungary – the church lost its capacity to support churched people in their search for a Christian identity under limited circumstances. However, at the project level, churched individuals experienced and practiced very open minded and creative spirituality, but had less influence on the church as a whole.

The political turning point found these deserted churched people, and the quickly opening public possibilities attracted many engaged churched individuals, and the actual standards regarding rebuilding the free society determined their orientation and targets. In the first stage of freedom, suddenly quite a lot people placed their trust in the church, and for a short time churched individuals hoped for a regeneration, renewal and reforms as well. But the official church was greatly upset by the new political agenda in its interest for rebuilding national and state autonomy. In this new situation, democratic political forces together with the main churches triumphed over the fall of the past undemocratic regime. Stability was more important than the search for new ways and new words for the evangelization.

After the more or less enthusiastic period, churched individuals now show a very colorful picture. At the parish level the traditional way of Catholic life proceeds without obstacles. Regular churchgoers constitute a very loyal population. Critique and dissatisfactions are rather rare. Simple churchgoers still have a dweller's spirituality and for the church they are a very important core congregation. Churched individuals, active in church projects are creative and open to new ways and new encounters. Their spirituality is more that of the seeker, and they perform a very important ministry in the new Evangelization.

Types of Catholic Experiences after 1950

The sketchy picture of church positions and behaviors in the different sub-periods after WWII in Hungary allows us try to express our findings in terms of the disjunction elaborated by Charles Taylor. As we will see, each period of the recent church history, defined through sociopolitical factors, has one seeker or dweller as the preferred impact. We can observe this in all three of the Church's dimensions namely, leadership, project and the individual. With some courage and simplification, I brand each period with a simple characterization, in Table 1 below. The terms should be taken only as central characteristics without disregarding the deep diversity of each period. But I find it necessary to elaborate a clear and somewhat abstract position in the interest of the discussion to follow.

Table 1. Different periods parallel with different spiritualities

Period	Central brand	Supported attitude
1948/50-1974	Direct persecution	dweller
1974-1989	Indirect persecution	seeker
1990-1995	Triumph of freedom	dweller
1995-	Initiative	seeker

My main conclusion is that in the period of direct persecution and in the triumphant period as well, at every level of church presence the dweller attitude is more supported, whereas in the other two periods – those of the indirect persecution and that of the initiatives – the seeker attitude is.

Challenges

The question regarding spirituality – as pointed out by Taylor and Casanova – focuses directly and exclusively on hierarchical church behavior. They offer different topics as calls for new church language and behavior. Beside this dimension – which is highly important and today under Pope Francis evokes hope for fundamental change – I also agree with their emphasis on the challenges regarding the other two church areas, the project and the church individuals. In Hungary and other societies of CEE, there is a deep tradition of state expectations. Partly coming from the feudal period, partly from the period of the totalitarian regime, people expect solutions given by the state, and basic initiatives are paralyzed. This means that church reforms should come from below.

And in the case of teaching directives of the magisterium, local church leaders and lay people associate these with former directives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and think there is only one correct behavior regarding them: blind obedience. But this kind of obedience is not rooted in the basic texts of Christianity and only embarrasses renewal.

In the last section, I attempt to reflect on some general changes needed for growing spiritual sensitivity, and on some others differentiated by the three church dimensions of leadership, project and individuals.

Seekers and dwellers manifest two spiritual attitudes, two precious phenotypes for understanding contemporary spiritual tendencies. In the literature, including the work of Wuthnow and Taylor as well, we can observe some kind of implicit preference for seekers. As seekers would be the more appropriate for the modern time and successful evangelization, if the church is to fulfill more effectively its divine vocation it should be more sensitive to seekers, also perhaps because dwellers are already at home and do not need special pastoral attentiveness.

But I agree that the church in Hungary and elsewhere should be open and sensitive to both dwellers and seekers, if for nothing else, a theological reason. As Jesus went in search of the one seeker-sheep, he did not neglect the 99 dweller-sheep, but he really wanted to keep the one that got lost in his flock. Although the balance between seekers and dwellers is very different from that of Jesus's flock, the temptation is still there to forget about the dwellers when focusing on seekers. In sociological terms, tradition oriented people are not less important than choice oriented people.

Dwellers are not people with a total acceptance of the traditional way of Christian teaching and the Christian way of life. They have claims and interest for *aggiornamento*, but they are very different from seekers regarding their trust in traditional religious institutions. They think and hope that the church is capable of discovering the signs of the time and will certainly find the appropriate answers.

Seekers are not totally against traditions and do not necessarily think that the traditional church with its new-baroque vein should be totally neglected. They do or do not yet trust big institutions, and for them arguments and evidence taken only from church traditions and

teachings are not persuasive enough. They need personal credibility and authenticity.

The Catholic Church in the interest of effective evangelization must accurately observe and analyze contemporary cultural and spiritual trends. That is not strategically obligatory for the church, but a duty to fulfill its own vocation concretized in the documents of the Vatican II and in many other papal encyclicals.

“To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions asked about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.” (GS 4)

This holy vocation means openness to the world as well as openness to God. To be able to enter into dialog with contemporary cultural reality and to be sensitive to the varied and multicolored needs of people, the church should be ready for self-reflection and a critical evaluation of its prejudices and false behaviors during its centuries' long history.

Three Dimensions

Leadership. Sensibility of the church leaders today means first of all an ability to support church initiatives with clear contemporary ambitions. Leading in the modern corporate culture means more trust in corporate culture and in the initiatives of the members. This trust and focus on the basic initiatives is also a relief for the hierarchy from its traditional role of responsibility for all. Leading through coordination means management by delegation. Vatican II and CIC 1983 open many ways for creating and using committees at the diocesan and parish levels. As nearly every formulation in these texts is in the conditional form and speaks about possibilities and not about obligations, local understanding of the importance of effective role the committee system is required. There are positive signs in Hungary of progress towards a modern management system in the local church. Some insights are in the final documents of synods held in the 1990s in almost every diocese. It is important to develop and

safeguard the competence of these committees and not hold them only formally, without giving them real tasks.

Another important dimension for growing sensibility for the culture today is the trust in social sciences and theology as well. The fundamental change in church thinking regarding the modern area is expressed in the documents of the last ecumenical council. We can find in them a lot of claims regarding the involvement of social sciences (GS 54), moreover recommendations to involve sociology and psychology in theological academic training and in priestly life as well. "Since human culture and also sacred science has progressed in our times, priests are urged to suitably and without interruption perfect their knowledge of divine things and human affairs and so prepare themselves to enter more opportunely into conversation with their contemporaries." (PO 19) It is difficult to understand why church leaders in Hungary do not trust the social sciences, and much more surprising is the growing disinterest in high level theological training. It is clear that without high level reflection on culture today it is impossible to communicate with it. The Council underlined the importance of social sciences for the understanding of modern life and for finding appropriate ways for pastoral care as well.

"Although the Church has contributed much to the development of culture, experience shows that, for circumstantial reasons, it is sometimes difficult to harmonize culture with Christian teaching. These difficulties do not necessarily harm the life of faith; rather they can stimulate the mind to a deeper and more accurate understanding of the faith. The recent studies and findings of science, history and philosophy raise new questions which effect life and demand new theological investigations. Furthermore, theologians, within the requirements and methods proper to theology, are invited to seek continually for more suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the people of the times; for the deposit of Faith or the truths are one thing and the manner in which they are enunciated, in the same meaning and understanding, is another. In pastoral care, sufficient use must be made not only of theological principles, but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology, so that the faithful may be brought to a more adequate and mature life of faith." (GS 62)

With the same logic as that which functions in the use of modern management techniques and social sciences in forming a public

presence it is necessary to use modern public relations techniques and specialists of the field. Working in this area requires not only faith and loyalty to the church hierarchy, but also professional competence. To represent Jesus Christ and church teaching, the media need people with high competence and even more with fundamental credibility.

Concerning credibility, the most serious stress concerns dealing with the communist past. During the communist period the church leadership was partly coerced and partly ready to collaborate with the security system of the regime. Research in this field has already shown a highly differentiated picture of collaboration, and some public outings by a few bishops also happened, but there is still a lack of profound clarification by the bishops' conference. The challenge today is no less than the matter of collaboration with communist forces, for which clarifications and credible statements are needed. But the questions of church visions and targets concerning its new social position in democracy and the dilemmas of this world also need to be addressed. Today people need not only full answers, but a more credible and trustworthy partner in searching and developing a stable identity and orientation.

Project. Project in the contemporary Catholic church of Hungary is the most vivid dimension. That is because in the entire society the level of civil society is in a process of revitalization following the political changes, revitalization includes the faith based communities and initiatives as well, which I call church projects. But projects of the church and projects based on church teaching and/or following Christian aims should be evaluated as well concerning their relation to the Christian teaching. As already mentioned above, faith based initiatives spring from some kind of mystical experience and also practical evaluation of the demands of contemporary society. Although church projects can be analyzed using methods of social sciences, they are for the church and for religious people most of all religious entities, and should be accepted as such.

Most church projects form an inherent part of the civil society and often offer social and spiritual goods for people independent from their religious affiliation and attitudes. Church projects are capable of holding a dialog with the people of today and conveying for them experiences about Christian life. Church projects are not in

concurrence with the territorial pastoral care and with parishes, because the latter focus on special aims and are limited in time. Representative projects should be confident in their project's position in the church and should stay so constantly.

Church projects generally have only a short lifespan, if any. They are not laden by historical burdens and even therefore they can take initiatives, and discover new ways and methods for providing social and spiritual goods. The basic dialog level of the church is the level of projects; therefore they have huge responsibility in facing the contemporary church. Projects need professional members and without them it is not really possible to fulfill their mission but even because there are projects and they have a dialogical existence, they should be always open for newcomers and new ideas and initiatives. For a long time during the 20th century, the church was either in triumph or in a strongly persecuted situation this did not promote openness and flexibility, but on the contrary fortitude and unity. On the way of permanent public discourse and new challenges, Christianity is like a journey and a creatively evolving religion. During long centuries for example in the turn from Semitic culture to Greek and Latin world, in struggle for the right faith in the patristic period or in times of reforms of 16th and 19th century, every moment of these challenges, church projects were pioneers testing the possibilities reform and searching for new ways and new manifestations of the sacred center of Christian religion. It is important today for our church projects to be sure in that kind of vocation and responsibility.

Individual. Churched individuals are people – as already mentioned above –, whose identity building and holding has strong relations to church teaching or presence in culture and society. They share the appreciated importance of various church activities, but they are very different in keeping in touch with the church. The core congregation is not one homogenous population regarding needs and expectation of church assistance. But theologically, the most fundamental common characteristics are that they are baptized and therefore members of the church with full rights and responsibility. In a sociological treatise on the church it is obvious to see church more as one society and bureaucracy, but from the theological point of view church is not only society, but living organism. Members of

the church are not only people with regular church attendance and participation in the everyday life of particular congregations, but all baptized people are full members. Not only church teaching and liturgical praxis are free for them, but they should be taken imaginatively as a big community with highly variagated “The joys and the hopes, the grieving and the anxieties of the men of this age” – pointed out by Gaudium et Spes (1) – that is the main matter of the church and is the very fundamental Christian paradigm about church individuals.

Of course, people in Hungary and in many other post-communist societies are moderately less literate in Christian teaching and in church history. Even core members of the church have often very low level of modern church teaching and therefore they very seldom love the theological basis for a better understanding of modern times and for communicating with the modern world with mutual understanding. The very important challenge for church individuals is renewing and changing knowledge and thinking with the holy word of New Testament: *metanoia* (Matt 4, 17). For church individuals the core problem is first of all not to be at home in the church or to be satisfied with church practice. More central is the question of what the church should be according to the Gospel and what would be appropriate for current times.

Traditions are always important in times of transformation. During the profound transformation period promptly after the collapse of communism, religious and church traditions were very important. But in the second wave of freedom it become more and more clear, that the so called holy tradition in general is no other than the neo-scholastic thinking and the church praxis of Vatican I and that of the neo-baroque sentimental spirituality. The expectations of the church are based mostly on that kind of tradition, which is better called traditionalism and not the very Christian tradition, full of dynamism and creativity, not strong bureaucrats but courageous saints. Julius Morel used to say in his time: tradition is the living faith of the deceased, but traditionalism on the contrary is the dead faith of living people.

In the basic text of the project Church and People, both Taylor and Casanova took examples from church teaching connected to sexual teachings, the Encyclica *Humanae vitae*. In Hungary there was never one public discussion about this topic so important for

churched people. The sexual doctrine happened without discussion and mostly without precise knowing of that discipline. "No sex outside of marriage" is not central in the vision of Christian sexuality and much more it is not a satisfying interpretation of the teaching about humanity and love.

Otherwise the focus on the question about sexuality used by Taylor and Casanova calls scholars of Hungary and in the whole region CEE to interpret the contemporary church situation and spiritual trends not based on political circumstances – as I did too –, but to focus on the content, quality, relevance and acceptance of the local church teaching. There is no research in Hungary concerning thinking and praxis of sexuality among Catholics. The survey conducted by Vatican's dicastery spring 2014 about this matter is not published and therefore it is not possible to speak about this topic accurately. Nevertheless in the public discourse the image of the Catholic Church is closest to the monk's spirituality and way of life than to that of lay people.

In CEE and especially in Hungary the church for the public is one big institution that is both in close fraternity with the right oriented political parties and with richness in its cultural heritage. Church teaching is for the public less known and even for the church herself it is not easy to find the Christian truth in the terms of Jesus: "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14, 6) Contemporary Kerygma for the whole Christianity is not only the tradition of discipleship and the teaching of the worldwide community about the sacraments, but also presents the deepest challenge to find God and to answer to Him as well with appropriate consciousness and life praxis.²⁶ Church teaching is not mathematical and scientific evidence, but is a reflected dialog and call in the atmosphere of Christian holiness. Taylor mentioned a similar thought as he wrote: "Whatever the level of religious belief and practice, on an uneven but many-sloped playing field, the debate between different forms of belief and

²⁶ In his famous work *A Secular Age* Taylor called the recent time as "time for quest." "The spirituality of quest that we see today could be understood as the form that this movement takes in an Age of Authenticity. The same long-term trend which produced the disciplined, conscious, committed individual believer, Calvinist, Jansenist, devout humanist, Methodist; which later gives us the "born-again" Christian, now has brought forth today's pilgrim seeker, attempting to discern and follow his/her own path" (Taylor, 2007, 532).

unbelief goes on. In this debate, modes of belief are disadvantaged by the memory of their previously dominant forms, which in many ways run athwart the ethos of the times, and which many people are still re-acting against."²⁷

For the Christians and the Catholic Church in Hungary the time is ready to make the paradigmatic turn towards modern church teaching and church praxis, which means to accept the hermeneutic turn to the reader of the Gospel and the consumers of church-provided spiritual goods. To be a dweller in the Church and the Christian tradition means to be a seeker of truth and life of Jesus.

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²⁷ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 533.

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Dweller on the Gallows Additives of a Central European Anti- Communist Desecularization Theory

ÁKOS LÁZÁR KOVÁCS

Several forward-looking actions have taken place in post socialist countries as well as in Hungary in the past 25 years with regards to their self-introspection about religion and religious phenomena. And yet, we notice a kind of self-restraint in formulating a broad generalization when describing our own situation.¹ Two aspects of self-restraint are apparent: Within Europe, the first emerges out of the secular salvation doctrines, one of the aberrations of the 19th-20th century, that we used to call communism and still do, or its more accessible variant socialism that endured the longest in Eastern Europe. This self-restraint or reservation will be important over the next few years, as the players of this absolutely brutal and ruthless dictatorship still play a crucial role in Europe and the world. Politicians acting in Brussels, who call themselves communists, representing a salvation² doctrine of this world that so far claimed over 100.000.000 innocent lives. For a person living in a post socialist country believing according to the Church's teaching (not considering spiritual or individual seeker-dweller religious experiences) this is the same as if a western citizen was seeing members of the Nazi Party in the European Parliament.

The religious intelligentsias when viewed from the outside are dwellers whose situation was clear and easy to see. Whereas the situation of those religious people who did not consider the Church a

¹ Further excellent analyses among others not discussed here: Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe. A Memory Mutates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Agincourt: The Book Society of Canada, 1978); David Martin, *On Secularization. Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005); David Martin, *The Future of Christianity. Reflections on Violence and Democracy, Religion and Secularization* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2011).

² J. B. Metz, *Zum Begriff der neuen Politischen Theologie* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1997), pp. 163-185.

desirable partner³ in the post socialist countries during the oppression was far from that simple for being openly religious was punished. (E.g.: for participating in liturgy) What is the situation of those religious people who do not consider the Church a desirable partner in the different public spheres of post Socialist countries? What message does this situation send to western European people? Can we talk about it? Do we have to talk about special post socialist, post secular phenomena? In my opinion, yes, we can and we have to. What's more without understanding this fact it is not worth listening to the experimental thoughts arriving from Central-Eastern Europe. It is difficult to make sense of the arrogance of the small post socialist countries towards the West: It seems that they had enough of boisterous movements or "consultative circles" constantly "enlightening" us. We hope that the lack of resources and money and being plundered in itself does not make us mentally and emotionally handicapped. It seems to us that the West demands that we get over these experiences and instead of self pity and complaining we keep up with Europe's progressive, developing half. (And at the same time there is a continuous external and internal need for integrating in our shared heritage the pain and suffering of the World War caused by the Nazis.)

The suffering that we had experienced requires us to work through them from which the West is constantly trying to protect us – as if it was their interest that the Eastern part of Europe does not recover too early from its current grievances causing its helplessness. We are made to feel ashamed when bringing up the crippling wounds of communism, while the pain caused by the Nazis is mandatory. We feel that Europe only wants to deal with the atrocity of one of its freaks and does not want to talk about the other freak. Is it possible that the experiences of the East of Europe are not important in the common work of memory and recollection. The unresolved past, or the constant belittling of our endeavors causes frustration and as a result we become emotionally overstrung, so that the political and scientific intelligentsia from the East sooner or later go too far if they want to voice their opinion in various white

³ K. Rahner, "Zur Situation des katholischen Intellektuellen," *Schriften zur Theologie VII* (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1966), pp. 368-385. See also Z. Hidas, *Im Bann der Identität. Zur Soziologie unseres Selbstverständnisses* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014).

collar circles in a manner that can be taken seriously. Europe is not interested in its communist demon that was born of her or that those crippled by it to remind her of this monster.

The other reason for avoiding expressing any of our religious experiences is the ignorance that can be described as the east-central-european, inorganic culture and reality. The self-reflection of democratic nations in relation to their own religiosity results in a democratic culture that economically, socially and culturally has achieved a very high standard. Religious experience will become incomplete⁴ without other areas of culture (art, science, politics, etc) the same way as the arts or politics is incomplete in the event of not being able to encounter anything within its religious circle that can be interpreted culturally as well.⁵

Communism was specifically striving to separate the fields and accomplishments of religion from that of culture, and so a modern synchronization of culture and religion could not develop. Thus our handicapped culture and religion cannot use the appropriate register in its exchange with the West. It is seemingly an antiquated way of thinking to split Europe into East and West – even the life and deeds of John Paul II was the symbol of this great schism. Currently Eastern and Central Europe is only capable of reading and studying the conclusions of Western European intelligentsia and thinkers and to try to reflect candidly in the light of it all. The scientific approach of modernity in its own positivist and pragmatic way has penetrated the Western European way of thinking, this is one of the reasons for its impartial success. So we have to reflect with this way of thinking here in Eastern Central Europe too, even if it is not entirely ours. It's important to understand the Western religious-cultural tradition, but at the same time it is important that we do not give up in the name of this "understanding" our own traditions, especially as we not only believe but also understand that Europe's "lung" is comprised of two parts. In this sense, no matter how incomplete the self-reflection of Eastern Central-Europe, its integration is essential for the intellectual reunion of Europe. The science of theology (as the only way of thinking that solely demand universality) also abides by the

⁴ See more details in R. Schaeffler, *Religionsphilosophie* (Freiburg i. Br.: München, 2002).

⁵ See more details in T. S. Eliot, *Religion and Literature. Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 388-401.

norms of the prevailing scientific paradigm and abandons the areas indicated, kept and reserved by it, the thought systems, conclusions and assertions. In Eastern/Central Europe the prohibition of communism relating to dialogues resulted in the isolation of not only the theological tradition, but other thought systems as well. At the same time this heritage even if handicapped, is alive. This is what we have to compare with any thought and reflections arriving from the West.

We cannot add anything significant to the debates of the discourse terrain affecting us, we falter – our voicelessness cannot find an adequate way of expressing how to face up to, accept and internalize our experiences, nor of using the cultural, scientific language we do have to use in order to get our confusion across. This makes us seem mostly like we are making a fuss about what we would like to communicate, even if a bit stumblingly to the West.

Those without sound, language, without any listeners, must develop such methods of expression, chattering-like language that will attract attention towards their thoughts. Inorganic religiosity is only part of East and Central Europe's confusion that is of a cultural nature; our scientific, economic, cultural life is similarly inorganic. Those western institutions that support conducting research regarding ourselves are at a loss faced with so much ignorance, incomprehension and at the same time feelings of aggression that stems from inferiority. The occasional people who shed a light to current events, their partial criteria from the East is able to break through the circles of muteness and offer a few realizations and insights for integration to the listening West.

As the rapid changes of economic, scientific, religious, and cultural processes do not favor the recollection work that is already delayed. Just like an autistic person, who spends long hours between perception and the interpretation of perception, and reacts in a delayed fashion. Suddenly, hours after the event we get a fright that a truck has loudly driven past nearby us.

In the following paragraphs we will endeavour to employ some criteria arriving from the West in an Eastern Central European fashion.

It was exactly a decade ago that Hans Joas – adding his brief comments – presented Charles Taylor's views on the relationship between Catholicism and modernity, faith and reason. In his short

essay,⁶ he makes noteworthy observations about the status of religious discourse in present day social sciences. Similar to Charles Taylor, who was influenced by the pioneering approach of William James – his concept of placing religious experience in the center of his theory was ground-breaking at the time – Hans Joas denotes self-transcendence as the relevant starting point for the analysis of religion. As a European follower of American pragmatism his position is unique⁷ in the sense that he bases his theory of value not on the active choice of values but on the passive spiritual experience and the concept of self-transcendence.⁸ There is one distinction he makes concerning Taylor's theory in his 1996 lecture *A Catholic Modernity?*⁹ Taylor is opposed to the dichotomy that defines, as the starting point of the discourse on religion either, the simple existence of Christian aspects in a secularized society or, modernity's opposition to Christianity and its push towards secularization. He highlights that secular culture – although representing a break from Christianity – has numerous elements that do a better job at representing the evangelical cause than had the so called Christian centuries, with their long standing Church establishments. Meanwhile, Hans Joas makes no attempt to deny that secular humanism performs a *spiritual lobotomy* on the masses, extinguishing people's inherent spiritual inclinations.

From our perspective, Hans Joas's detailed theory of what is presented in *Secular Age* is of less relevance; we focus on his observation that Taylor's optimistic evaluation of secularity, which regards a return to human transcendence as feasible without the reemergence of faith in secular society, could be applied to primarily Western European societies. Evidence seems to point to certain differences in the secularization process of post-communist countries, "where it would be quite impossible to consider present

⁶ H. Joas, "Eine katholische Moderne? Das Verhältnis von Glauben und Wissen bei Charles Taylor," *Braucht der Mensch Religion? Über Erfahrungen der Selbsttranszendenz* (Freiburg: Herder, 2004), pp. 96-107.

⁷ See also S. Schößler, *Der Neopragmatismus von Hans Joas. Handeln, Glaube und Erfahrung* (Münster: LIT, 2011).

⁸ H. Joas, *Die Entstehung der Werte* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1997).

⁹ J. L. Heft, ed., *A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

day value concepts as pertaining to the secular humanistic credo." In these countries "we are met with new forms of religionlessness and anti-religiosity that cannot be considered a continuation of previous Christian factors. While secular humanism facilitates the consensus in accepting certain values, human rights being an example, in these countries the situation is more complicated. Believers constitute a minority often attacked and ridiculed; dialog between Christianity and Enlightenment can easily seem eccentric."¹⁰

These remarks are noteworthy because they substantiate a distinct anti-communist paradigm of secularization – with its own historical background, personal and collective experiences, cultural and social aspects and constellation of general value concepts – which distinguishes Easter and Central European processes from those in other parts of Europe. Some attempts have been made to better understand¹¹ the paradigm of secularization in these post-communist countries, so far these can be considered little more than initial or preparatory steps to substantial research. It appears that within the paradigm reflecting on post-communist countries further light has to be shed on the special denominational dimension of the public presence and public sidelining of Christianity, as well as on the political aspects and political instrumentalisation of religion, and the links between national and religious identity. David Martin, focusing on the distinct Easter European brand of secularization, considers this last question to have a particularly Hungarian character:" In Hungary, however, there is a certain ambiguity in the relation of Catholicism to national identity, partly because the national myth has important roots is Calvinist Protestantism, which after the Counter-Reformation was restricted to a minority, largely in the east of the country. This has resulted in conflicting cross-currents and a relatively weak religiosity."¹² The list of questions could easily be continued, but we shall only revisit them in detail at the end of this paper.

¹⁰ H. Joas, "Eine katholische Moderne? Das Verhältnis von Glauben und Wissen bei Charles Taylor," p. 101.

¹¹ A. Máté-Tóth and P. Mikluscak, *Nicht wie Milch und Honig. Unterwegs zu einer Pastoraltheologie Ost(Mittel)Europas* (Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 2000).

¹² D. Martin, "An Eastern European Pattern of Secularization?," *The Future of Christianity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), pp. 135-148, p. 136.

There are two phenomena which indisputably prove that in Hungary even the most basic exploratory phase of the research considering these issues still waits to be undertaken. First, that newer secularization theories are inaccessible to Hungarian readers and Hungarian social sciences and religious theory have nothing substantial to say about these thought experiments. Without a familiarity with Charles Taylor's main work,¹³ David Martin's revised secularization theory¹⁴ and José Casanova's discourse provoking book¹⁵ it is hard to even try to approach these complex questions. Closely related to this factor is the "foreignness" of these thought experiments, which can only partly be explained by the physical distance between Europe – Western Europe – and North America. It is as though this foreignness – this Eastern European disinterest toward such ideas and theories – is rooted in cultural and religious aspects that could have resulted from the same, above mentioned post-communist experiences. Secondly it is quite telling that in Hungary the newer reasonings – following the famous speech of Jürgen Habermas in 2001 – examining the coexistence of religious and secular citizens, and the public relevance of religious content in a new light – have yielded little to no reaction. Several works of Habermas – newer ones included, like his great essay on European constitution – can be accessed in Hungary, titles like the *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion*,¹⁶ which constitutes a turning point, his dialog with the Jesuits of Frankfurt¹⁷ or the second volume of *Nachmetaphysisches Denken*¹⁸ – a book dedicated primarily to questions of religion – have never become part of Hungarian public philosophical and religious discourse. To be fair, it is also true that it

¹³ Ch. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁴ D. Martin, *On Secularization. Towards a Revised General Theory*.

¹⁵ J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹⁶ J. Habermas, *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion. Philosophische Aufsätze* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2005).

¹⁷ M. Reder and J. Schmidt, eds., *Ein Bewußtsein von dem, was fehlt. Eine Diskussion mit Jürgen Habermas* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2008).

¹⁸ J. Habermas, "Ein neues Interesse der Philosophie an Religion. Ein Interview von Eduardo Mendieta," *Nachmetaphysisches Denken II* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2012), pp. 96-120.

would be useless to search for Jürgen Habermas's name in David Martin's writings, even Charles Taylor – in his monumental work – only dedicates a few references to *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (compared to this, Habermas is overrepresented in Hungary). Another slight mystery for those examining newer secularization theories from the post-communist vantage point is their lack of references to Johann Baptist Metz – an author who is relatively well known in Hungary. From this perspective, it would seem likely that the post-communist paradigm mentioned by Hans Joas could contribute valid theoretical recommendations to the debate on secularization, by integrating the reflections of Johann Baptist Metz for example, while at the same time acknowledging the need to learn from the past two decades of primarily American and British research.

After these introductory remarks, I would like to examine two issues in a more detailed fashion. First, I will offer an overview of the main components of the various secularization theories – this, I believe is an area where the post-communist secularization paradigm has to be developed further. Next, I will examine a few theories – associated with Jürgen Habermas's and Johann Baptist Metz's more recent concepts – that could have a potential to contribute to the foundations of a post-communist, post-secularist perhaps desecularist viewpoint. We must take up this task and hope that our results will bear significance for countries that have no first-hand experience of communist type totalitarian oppression. There is a general view of secularization that holds it should be examined in the framework of, and in relationship to modernization, which shows that the theoretical reflection's horizon has changed little since its formulation at the turn of the 19th century. Questions of secularization were integrated into the study of modernization by both Max Weber and Émile Durkheim. The central question was aimed at ascertaining how changes in religiosity were connected to, or could be differentiated from Western society's experiments and processes of modernization. Some detected a close link between the development of the science of sociology and the evolution of secularization theory, as though sociologists were the ones keeping secularization theory alive. An interesting dimension of the question is the possible connection between the "sociologists' enthusiasm" for the potentially existing phenomenon of secularization and their

theoretical aversion¹⁹ to the universal demand for theological phrasing. In the end, Max Weber designates the process of rationalization and Émil Durkheim the process of individualization as the driving force behind changes in religion. Weber's theory draws a straight line from the Jewish prophets and Greek sciences to the anti-magical stance such that monotheistic religion becomes obsolete altogether. Yet according to some observations, at the turn of the millennium exactly the opposite processes were taking place with modern science and culture mythicizing medial content and technically constructing alternative mythical worlds, in turn contributing to the re-enchantment of reality.²⁰

In the last few years the theory that the importance of religiosity linearly declines with modernization has proven to be problematic in at least three aspects. First, José Casanova has shown that secularization theory – or secularization thesis as it is often called due to its lack of consistence – was considered so intuitive by the vast majority of social scientists that detailed exposition or in-depth analysis was neglected as unnecessary by mostly everyone.²¹ For a century this statement stayed dominant without being subjected to critical review; social sciences grounded in a tradition of critical examination were trapped by their own lack of criticism. For this reason, since the publication of Casanova's book more attention has been directed towards those authors who were exceptions in their approach to the secularization theory. In today's more problem conscious, more critically inclined reality, Hans Joas considers "Alexis de Tocqueville, William James, Jacob Burkhardt, Ernst Troeltsch and Max Scheler,"²² – especially Ernst Troeltsch (integration, compromise, mystic), who was not just a friend but also a rival of Max Weber – as those authors who could offer a newly fertile connection point. Troeltsch's descriptions of European

¹⁹ J. B. Metz, *Zum Begriff der neuen Politischen Theologie*, pp. 143-147.

²⁰ These contra-Weberian processes are emphasized in for example G. Ward, "The Future of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, 2006, pp. 179-186.

²¹ J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, p. 17.

²² H. Joas, *Glaube als Option. Zukunftsmöglichkeiten des Christentum* (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), p. 31. Joas's book's title can be considered a research program in itself: the main title of the book undoubtedly refers to the central convictions of Charles Taylor's main work, while the subtitle references Ernst Troeltsch book titled *Zukunftsmöglichkeiten des Glaubens*.

processes in the Early Modern Time have shown themselves to be more reliable than the Weberian analyses that were dominant in the past century.

The second aspect can similarly be linked to the works of Casanova. He considers secularization a phenomena encompassing at least three other concepts: the decline of the importance of religion; a decline of religiosity's presence in the public spheres; and the liberation of other domains of society from the control of religion. Casanova claims that in the Western world the deprivatization of religion is an unquestionable fact,²³ essentially coinciding with the process of desecularization. In other words, Casanova rightly detects a strong link between the internal problems of the secularization theory and the concept of deprivatization. In opposition to this, the advocates of secularization, following a Durkheimian tradition argue that religion's steadily lessening importance follows the increase in significance of other areas of society. These critiques are dominantly Western European and refuse to contemplate the growing importance of global religious phenomena, and they resort to a mechanic repetition of their views – almost as though they constituted articles of faith. Steve Bruce exemplified this approach by his constant defense²⁴ of the secularization theory, a theory being increasingly questioned today.

Thirdly, opinions diverge concerning the concept of deprivatization and many attempt to describe explicitly opposite processes. Let just one, more recent polemic experiment stand here as an example of the wealth of supporting and opposing opinions available when deprivatization is concerned. Jens Köhrsen²⁵ – who argues with Casanova – claims that newer approaches – labeled under public religions – make three types of assumptions: religion is empirically present in the public sphere, this presence is gaining weight and strongly affects public debate. In essence, these same factors are considered by both those welcoming and lamenting the growing

²³ P. L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Grand Rapids: B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999).

²⁴ S. Bruce, *Secularization. In Defense of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²⁵ J. Köhrsen, "How religious is the public sphere? A critical stance on the debate about public religion and post-secularity," *Acta Sociologica* 2012, Vol. 55, pp. 273-288.

presence of religion in our age. Köhrsen questions what criteria qualify a public manifestation as particularly religious in nature. Is it enough if a comment is made in one arena or another of mass communication in association with some event related to religion? Or if a person with religious identity speaks about a public issue? What criteria can be used to differentiate between the religious and non-religious communication of a person with religious identity? Köhrsen considers the excessively wide and indefinite concept of religion to be the main reason behind the perceived increase in the presence of religion. In his opinion, only those acts of communication should be regarded as explicitly religious in nature that refer to transcendent realities. But since the “religious news” in mass media does not channel transcendent concepts, it cannot be considered as religious in nature. Furthermore, representatives of religions seldom use religious reasoning – referring to transcendent realities – in public debates because they adopt the secular logic of the secular public.²⁶ Hence the perceived presence of religion has nothing to do with the true substance of religion.

After examining the ambiguous concept of secularization and the semantic consequences of the secularization theory paradox, the uncritical use of it in the critically inclined sciences, we will look at the second problematic aspect of the secularization theory. Discourse on the theory is substantially shifting due to the changing opinions concerning the European situation. What is happening exactly? It is becoming increasingly obvious that the concept and theory of secularization was founded on only a few incidental European experiences, and is thus unsuited to explain global connections and processes.²⁷ It is possible that even in the case of the European processes – which have again become the focus of historical analysis²⁸ – it could prove insufficient insight. Even if we temporarily

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 281-282.

²⁷ J. Zachhuber, “Die Diskussion über Säkularisierung am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts,” in Chr. von Braun, W. Gräb and J. Zachhuber, eds., *Säkularisierung. Bilanz und Perspektiven einer umstrittenen These* (Münster etc.: LIT, 2007), pp. 11-42.

²⁸ More recently the secularization theory’s historical applicability was examined by K. Gabriel, Ch. Gärtner and D. Pollack, eds., *Umstrittene Säkularisierung. Soziologische und historische Analysen zur Differenzierung von Religion und Politik* (Berlin: Berlin University Press, 2012).

accept the validity of the connection between modernization and secularization, we still have four questions to answer according to Hans Joas: 1. Can the secularization theory provide ample explanation for the European exceptions to the secularization formula; 2. Exactly how should the grand “exception,” the United States be evaluated; 3. How would choosing a non-European-centered perspective affect our view of the big picture; 4. How does earlier European religious history manifest in the secularization theory.²⁹ This area calls not only for the analysis of complex historical processes – examining for example, whether in the United States where modernization and religiosity go hand in hand, the flourishing religiousness is a result of only the puritan tradition or due only to immigrants, but also an overview of whether an integrated religious scene – in the European model of big Churches – or religious plurality – the characteristic religious segmentation of the United States – contributes more to secularization. Charles Taylor for example, links the probability of religious presence to the plurality of choice. It should be mentioned here, that citing Dipesh Chakrabarty, José Casanova warns that Europe should be “provincialized” and we should “turn the European theories of American exceptionalism upside down.”³⁰ In other words, the United States cannot be viewed as an exception from the secularization paradigm. In global comparison it is exactly the Western European secularization processes that constitutes an irregularity, and it would be an error to force theories founded on these processes upon other parts of the world.³¹

After examining the semantic and global aspects of secularization the third relevant problem is markedly retrospective in nature: when talking about secularization, we make a prior assumption that at a certain time a non secularized social context existed. Let us note here, that although incorrect, a resilient modern myth still holds that Europe was once fully purged of Christianity. We can ask what

²⁹ H. Joas, *Glaube als Option*, p. 34.

³⁰ J. Casanova, “Westliche christliche Säkularisierung und Globalisierung,” *Europas Angst vor der Religion* (Berlin: Berlin University Press, 2013²), pp. 83-119, 103.

³¹ An early warning can be found in Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion. Discipline and Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

claims can be made about a prior Christian golden age, in relation to which secularization could have taken place by enlightening the masses. It is sufficient to invoke Charles Taylor's essential work³² that strives to prove the continuity of religion's presence in society. At the same time, we can state that taking into consideration this continuity and the precarious nature of the secularization theory; it is quite problematic to talk about some sort of desecularization. From the perspective of the question relevant to us presently, it is sufficient to reference the words of Johannes Zachhuber: "We must be wary if those, who disillusioned in their expectations, directly conclude the existence of a social dynamic. Put differently: if people working in the churches feel that Christians are reluctant to contribute dedicated work to the congregation does this necessarily mean that they were more eager to make commitments in the past? Or could this simply imply that the expectations toward commitment have risen?"³³ Overall there is place for serious doubt when contemplating whether Christianity can be extracted from Europe to the degree that the secularization theory suggests, after all "in many regards Europe was saturated only superficially and defectively with Christianity and often permitted pre-Christian forms."³⁴ For this reason the secularization theory must be questioned; there never existed a homogenous religious environment that could have been subjected to secularization.

In the next segment of the essay our goal will be to analyze the situation of Central-European dwellers using the findings introduced in the previous section. We assert that Central-European identity studies will not yield substantial insight without first taking into account the historical facts: between 1945 and 1990 religious people living in these areas were often subjected to violence and bloody persecution which claimed lives, humiliated and ridiculed them. This was especial true for those who expressed their church affiliation. From this perspective Karl Rahner's words hold special bearing: "The intellectual, the scientist who – in accordance with his conscience – wishes to embrace Catholic Christianity cannot dismiss church preaching or teaching as an arbitrary partner ("nicht

³² Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

³³ J. Zachhuber, *Die Diskussion über Säkularisierung am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts*, p. 20.

³⁴ H. Joas, *Glaube als Option*, p. 41.

beliebiger Partner“),”³⁵ (...) “he must submit to them.”³⁶ His subjection elevates this to the status of public act; his belonging to the Church in this case is not partial but is based on the community. The dweller who visibly embraced his affiliation with the Church, because of this submitting factor was subjected to the persecution of the Church and religious people. In this sense, dwellers in today’s societies from Egypt through Saudi Arabia and Syria to Iraq share in their Churches’ fates. Here our present aim is to understand what happens when a Christian who considers the Church to be a “non-arbitrary partner”³⁷ (such Christians are referred to as dwellers) cannot and refuses to evade the most basic question of his existence embedded in historical circumstances; or what are the consequence of him – for reasons of fear, greed, survival instinct or any other – trying to waive these questions.

It might be of value to refer to Johann Baptist Metz’s comments – perhaps somewhat rarely cited in English language literature – related to this. Johann Baptist Metz points to evolutionism (aptly calling it Euro-Darwinism) – a belief contrary to Enlightenment and one that misinterprets its concepts – as an underlying factor in today’s European postmodern practice. Euro-Darwinism – in our case it could be white man’s Euro and USA Darwinism – a narrative of the winners of history, of those who cast the stories and cries of the suffering innocents into oblivion and relegate their recompense into some obscure never to be had future – a future attained through fictional evolution, a new form of communism, the dreams of liberal democracy, or the reemergence of shady national myths. Widening its implications, we find that Metz’s thoughts provide an exact account of the present day situation of Central-European dwellers who consider the Church as a non-arbitrary partner in their lives. In our opinion the postmodern concept of Darwinism comfortably distances itself from the very real deprivation of the third world,³⁸

³⁵ Karl Rahner, “Zur Situation des katholischen Intellektuellen,” pp. 368-385.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ We must note here, that often post-socialist countries also see themselves in the position of third world countries. Not only can they not speak without prior permission, but they are also silenced if they mention the communist atrocities of the last few decades. It is obviously an uncomfortable position for Western Europe and the USA to have to admit that they liberated Central-Europe from

and refrains from earnestly examining its historical experiences and the resulting consequences – its suffering, the muted, voiceless reality of its defeated position.

We stop here to introduce two more fitting concepts from Metz: Euro-aestheticism and Euro-provincialism. Euro-aestheticism describes the state where Europe renounced the postulate of the endpoint of time, abandoned metaphysics and historical philosophy and in their place – starting with Nietzsche – adopted aesthetics and psychology; instead of an end of time it promises and infinite future. From here, a straight path leads to the belittling of perspectives and concepts pertaining to religious consciousness. Simultaneously, (Western) Europe – Eastern and Central Europe are not even drawn, or could not be redrawn on the map – aestheticizes and psychologizes its own (and other's) identity and relates to non-European cultures through aesthetic and psychological concepts as well, this way – out of cluelessness – impeding any possibility of intercultural exchange. Europe pays no attention to outside sources. Omitting and removing grand universal concepts for example, results in what Metz calls Euro-provincialism: "Nietzsche predicted that due to the death of God the entirety of the European moral system will collapse. Was he not right? Are we not witnessing today the depletion of European morality? Hasn't the moral worldview yielded its place to an aesthetic one in our intellectual culture for some time now? Why do our ethical discourses seem so strained and troubled?"

Moral thinking in Europe fluctuates between the expressed intention of abandoning all ethical considerations and the less substantial morality of the postmodern paradigm. Small morality constitutes a system of minimalized and freely selectable moral

the Nazi demon in alliance with the other European demon, the communist Soviet Union, and they allowed half the population of Europe to go from the execution chambers of national socialism to those of international socialism; still, in spite of this, it would be worth to start a new, democratic discourse about these experiences. If the question is not debated from the perspective of the falsely piteousness of suffering-nostalgia, meaning that we do not expect special treatment and attention (from Western-Europe and the USA) for our many decades of futile suffering, then it would be important to finally hear the "silent screams" of half of the continent that was left crippled by the communist demon. Nothing highlights the relevance of this question more than Russia's cynical rampage in present day in Ukraine.

guidelines; morality ceased to be long term, there are no lifelong loyalties; freedom to self-realization is advocated even if risks are high; freedom of choice is upheld in all forms of commitment. Generally speaking, it is a morality where all conflict takes place at an individual level; it is indifferent towards comprehensive consensus and distrustful of all universal concepts. Today the European spirit seems to prefer the small. It is enchanted by a novel dream of innocence. Its dreaming manifests itself in an enthusiasm for the mythical and the romantic, things that can be expressed with its back turned to a history filled with suffering. The new European spirit truly appreciates this moral unburdening which shifts the world we inhabit into the realm of the mythical and the literary and numbs our alertness to catastrophe. The European small morality is the morality of the satisfied majority, a majority that lacks all concern for the disgruntled minority, for the suffering of others.”³⁹ We believe that here lies the moral dilemma of the postmodern thinkers defending secularization theory; Steve Bruce – to mention an example – still envisions the end of religion in different context but much the same way as did Nietzsche or Marx.

During his arguments with Jürgen Habermas Metz separated to an ever greater degree Europe’s secularist and secular or laicist and secular projects.⁴⁰ Phrased more accurately, it is the question of the practical and theoretical attitude behind the – in itself fortunate and welcome – intellectual atmosphere emphasizing Europe’s neutral worldview. The non-laicist interpretation of neutralism does not banish religion from the public sphere “but forces the public to contemplate the existing plurality of religions and worldviews.”⁴¹ The laicist model – in contrast to pluralistic neutrality – clearly and ruthlessly privatizes religion, relegating it to the private sphere. In reality, it is not neutral towards religion, “while underlining its neutrality, it forcefully expresses its preference towards a negative

³⁹ J. B. Metz, *Memoria Passionis. Ein Provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2006), p. 102.

⁴⁰ Post-secularism is one of the most heavily debated concepts among thinkers pertaining to the school of the new political theology; for more on the topic see J. Reikerstorfer, *Weltfähiger Glaube. Theologisch-politische Schriften* (Münster: LIT, 2008)

⁴¹ J. B. Metz, *Memoria Passionis, Ein Provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft*, p. 198.

freedom of religion."⁴² Instead of granting freedom to religion it emphasizes one-sidedly the guarantee of independence from religion. In other words, the laicist, secularist neutrality-model can be considered fundamentally antipluralist; it could even be described as fundamentalist in its quest to purge all forms of public treatment of religion that do not coincide with its own thought structures. Johann Baptist Metz and others who question simple narratives do not believe the laicist Europe-model will continue to gain ground. Metz is convinced that laicism can only be backed by an approach which is blind to the contradiction burdened conflicts of the historical processes of a "one dimensional Enlightenment." To simplify this, we can also say that the secularist approach can only make its aforementioned fundamentalist demands once it has distanced itself from its own historical formation story, which integrates religion. It must disregard the well-established fact – that would be hard ignore since the contributions of the Frankfurt School – that the linear program of the Enlightenment was and is being fragmented by polemics.

At the same time, Metz fundamentally criticizes the Habermasian program aimed at the dialectic of Enlightenment – partly because of the neglected anamnesis so characteristic of Habermas, partly due to the not sufficiently explored dialectic of secularization.⁴³ Although Metz is aware that conflicts and wars in European history were mostly the result of harsh and painful national recollections, his memory theory aims to supply the pluralist public space with a thought model which ensures that the "mandatory criteria of consensus and coexistence – required of all parties, and which manages to reflect reality in this sense – is met."⁴⁴ In a less than surprising manner, he essentially designates the dignity of those suffering as the inevitable criteria of inter-European and external cultural contact; this dignity can be regarded as the central installation of the history of the European spirit. The European ethos is impossible to define without the historical

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ See also J. Reikerstorfer, "Postsekularität – oder die verdrängte Dialektik der Säkularisierung?," *Jahrbuch Politische Theologie. Band 5: Politische Theologie – gegenlesen* (Münster: LIT, 2008), pp. 269-273.

⁴⁴ J. B. Metz, *Memoria Passionis, Ein Provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft*, p. 201.

recollection of its development, and this cannot disregard Europe's historical and cultural deep structures – as Metz emphasizes: “democracy is rooted in consensus, but the ethos of consensus stems, for the most part, from memory.”⁴⁵ For this reason, we believe that religion must not be eliminated from the democratic public space; instead a transformation must take place towards a pluralistic public space from religious and world view perspective – towards a public space that facilitates the very real practice of religious freedom.⁴⁶ In turn, Metz is convinced that Europe was the birthplace of a certain kind of universalism – in this sense Casanova's plan to provincialize Europe can easily be comprehended – which at core is strictly anti-Euro-centered and provincializes Europe from the start. This universalism is represented by political enlightenment despite the fact that its universalism often does not extend beyond the semantic level, and its practical manifestations are mostly malformed or inadequate. The hermeneutic and communicational culture outlined by political enlightenment – to quote Metz's frequently employed phrase – is based upon the recognition of the right to freedom and dignity of each individual. It is precisely this universalism – rooted in European culture – of human rights that guarantees that the cultural pluralism resulting from the expansion of the World does not disintegrate into mere relativism.

Unfortunately, in the context of a global World, the communication and seriousness of Europe's universalism in relation to rights is just as flawed as the European implementation of enlightened universalism. A simple example can help to demonstrate this: advanced industrialized countries would be quite surprised if it was not just their prerogative to intervene – in defense of human rights – in the lives of developing countries, and developing countries could also claim the right to influence the global politics of developed nations. And this is where we reach the basic question of this essay's post-communist paradigm – the question Hans Joas also reflects on in this quote we have already cited above: “it seems impossible to consider the dominant value concepts as pertaining to the creed of secular humanism,” since in these countries “we are met with new

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ In relation to the third world: J. B. Metz, “Die Dritte Welt und Europa. Theologisch-politische Dimensionen eines unerledigten Themas,” *Stimmen der Zeit*, Vol. 211, 1993, pp. 3-9.

forms of religionlessness and anti-religiosity that cannot be considered a continuation of previous Christian factors. While secular humanism facilitates the consensus in accepting certain values – human rights being an example, – in these countries the situation is more complicated. Believers constitute a minority often attacked and ridiculed; the dialog between Christianity and Enlightenment can easily seem eccentric.”⁴⁷

Finally, instead of presumptuously wishing to present a comprehensive “theory,” we attempt to supplement the above mentioned arguments with anti-communist additions. Taking Hans Joas’s theory seriously, we wish to highlight a few aspects of our present day post-socialist “much more complicated situation.” We would argue that using the term anti-communist instead of post-socialist is more fitting, because we are not yet capable of disregarding the fundamental effect of historical communism on the present day situation of this region. Often we are tempted to think otherwise, but reality overrides our wishes. We would also like to state, that in our view “it is unnecessary to first transfer Christian faith to the political sphere; there is no need to find a secondary use (...) that will ensure its substantive significance. The Christian faith is not confined to politics. At the same time its political relevance is never lost. It is rooted in a remembrance capable of self-criticism and self-destruction, its memory of the defeated and the victims stays vivid and inspires the believers to enforce their perspective.”⁴⁸ Today’s post-socialist, anti-communist dweller – a Christian who regards the Church as a non-arbitrary partner and who submits to the teachings to Church teaching – cannot fully immerse himself into any worldly discourse be it cultural, economic, political or scientific. He must – in an eschatological sense – hold onto his reservations⁴⁹ and impede⁵⁰ all discourse that, through arguments of evolution,

⁴⁷ H. Joas, “Eine katholische Moderne? Das Verhältnis von Glauben und Wissen bei Charles Taylor.”

⁴⁸ J. Drumm, “Hoffnung für das Haus Europa. Das christliche Potential und seine Wahrnehmung,” in Walter Fürst and Wolfgang M. Schröder, eds., *Ideen für Europa. Christliche Perspektiven der Europapolitik* (Münster: LIT, 2004), pp. 489-494, 489.

⁴⁹ Cf. J. B. Metz, “Politische Theologie,” *Sacramentum Mundi. Theologisches Lexikon für die Praxis*, Bd. 3 (Freiburg i.Br., 1996), pp. 1232-1240.

⁵⁰ See more about the concept: T. R. Peters, *Johann Baptist Metz. Theologie des vermifsten Gottes* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1998), 46ff.

revolution or worldly salvation, aims to extinguish the eschatological prospects of an imminent and always definite end. He cannot immerse himself unconditionally into worldly discourse, and must examine them continuously from an eschatological perspective. His outsider position provides him the opportunity to preserve his integrity in the seemingly omnipotent discourses; this outside position presupposes the existence of a separate authority – one suffering, dying and resurrecting – to which he can compare himself to, which in turn liberates him from having to give into any form of worldly salvation. In effect, it was this eschatological perspective and personal reservation against the notion of a communist paradise that communist secularization attempts were most disgruntled with.

A second study would be required to examine who were the ones broken and with what methods for continuously relativizing communist salvation theories – by holding onto a clear spiritual perspective – and intercepting communist paradise dreams. This perspective and reservation holds a similar problem for Western-Europe when it attempts to pacify Central-Europe according to its own taste; a spirit accustomed to oppression does not necessarily make distinctions between the rule of money and the rule of tanks. The more so, since a mind raised on theoretical atheism is perceptive to the implications of practical Western-European atheism; which tries to seem Christian while refusing to be branded as one-sided (rightfully) for any adherence to the eschatological perspective or personal reservation. This in turn leads to practically losing all potential to play any role in society. They strive to align their terminology with a terminology we refer to as detranscendentalized – Jens Köhrsen also touches upon this – and they refuse to risk the unpopularity that would arise from mentioning eschatology or the “shocking perspective.”⁵¹

With this, comes the obviously uncomfortable consequence of the dweller’s eschatological position – he does not wish to forget what happened to him. This seemingly rigid one-sidedness could even alienate the dweller from other Christians – those who consider the Church an arbitrary partner for one reason or another – or from any

⁵¹ J. B. Metz, *Memoria Passionis, Ein Provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft*, pp. 215-258.

type of seeker. Still, the “confirmed one-sidedness”⁵² that characterizes the dweller in any kind of professional or other type of debate warrants that he will not wish to or be unable to disregard Church tradition and the concrete historical experience of all humankind. This one-sidedness is the result of a commitment that the post-modern spirit avoids; after modernity’s grand historical movements and narratives turned out to be complete dead-ends, from the post-modern perspective all narratives became suspect. Since Christianity does not preach an actual doctrine of salvation, compared to concrete (worldly) narratives it is capable of incorporating endless semantic and historical complexity. In this sense, it maintains an organic and fertile connection with the culture of its time.⁵³ The always concrete Christian and Christianity are forever the (one-sided) witnesses of the eschatological reality⁵⁴ open to the future. In opposition to the modern, procedural rationality model of official expertise,⁵⁵ religion as a form of non-procedural rationality – with its “foreignness” and anamnestic rationality built on remembrance – becomes recognizably one-sided in today’s theoretical discourses.

Of course, knowledge of the Church’s historical role constitutes part of the historical self-perception of dwellers. The “double face of religion”⁵⁶ highlights the precarious relationship between the Church and society. In addition to remembering the atrocities committed by the Church and Christians strictly adhering to Church teachings, it is also essential that victims are not forgotten. From a general religious viewpoint what are the defining features of a public political testimony – of traditionally defined martyrdom in the broad sense of the word?

- One of the most fundamental problems of public (political) testimony is that – since broadly interpreted politics is often

⁵² D. Wiederkehr, “Spektrum kirchlicher Existenztypen,” *Mysal*, Vol. IV. No.1. 385 (Zürich: Benziger, 1969).

⁵³ Thomas Stearns Eliot, *Religion and Literature. Selected Essays*.

⁵⁴ Tiemo Rainer Peters and Johann Baptist Metz, *Theologie des vermissten Gottes* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1998), p. 46ff.

⁵⁵ Harold Perkin, *The Third Revolution. Professional Elites in the Modern World* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996).

⁵⁶ For further details see also Hans Maier, *Das Doppelgesicht des Religiösen. Religion – Gewalt – Politik* (Freiburg: Herder, 2004).

narrowed down to a particular political issue – it can easily find itself embroiled in the conflict of several competing truth claims. To avoid truth related particularism which is the byproduct of political particularism, the correct path for the political martyr or political testifier – instead of advocating the interest of one party – is to fight not for the particular interests of the participants of a particular political clash, but for universal principles: human rights, human dignity, the positive human content that is inseparable from religion.

- During the totalitarian rule of communism and National Socialism political testimony for universal causes differed from previous forms of testimony in that “communists and national socialists strived not only to break the resistance, but also to confine it to anonymity, isolate it, drive it to a place where it can no longer affect society, where it will remain unnoticed. The basis for Early Christian martyrdom was testimony on a public trial: Nero’s circus and the Colosseum were public venues. Contrary to this, most 20th century martyrs died nameless, unrecognized and lonely.”⁵⁷ They were tortured, mutilated and killed in a seemingly irrational manner – lacking meaning or significance.

- So while post-totalitarian martyrdom is once again played out directly in the public eye – especially particular forms of martyrdom like in the case of Islamic acts of terrorism – the martyrs who were subjected to the power mechanisms of totalitarian systems suffered their fate not in the historically public manner, but were martyred hidden from public view – more precisely, this was witnessed by the living body of the Church’s public sphere, which – as a result of the peculiarities of the totalitarian system – did not directly mean it had an impact in the political public sphere.

- Religious testimony outside direct public eye publicly demonstrates the tyranny of the strong and powerful in much the same way as direct political public exposure. The persecution of Early Christians (their directly public martyrdom) – who had strong faith in their soteriological beliefs – publicly exposed the empty promises of negative power (*pompa diaboli*). Similarly, even before the fall of the regime, martyrdom that does not take place directly in the public eye exposes its aggression in its own way. Only under

⁵⁷ H. Maier: “Politische Religionen. Grenzen und Möglichkeiten eines Begriffs,” in Hans Maier, ed., *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1995), pp. 299-310.

totalitarian rule, exposure comes later; at the time of the persecution the public's enraged cries cannot be heard. Furthermore – and the unresolved nature of this is sadly felt to this day by Hungarian and other post-socialist countries' religious martyrs – the empty deceit (*pompa diaboli*) has its own means of protecting its alleged innocence and is more than willing to employ them (markedly felt during the regime change); the religious martyrs of totalitarian systems usually stay anonymous even after the fall of the regime. One of the reasons for this is that the ongoing activities of those who contributed to maintaining the given totalitarian system help to keep hidden the negativity of the exercise of power and the achievements of this negativity (which at the same time also constitute the system's failures).

- Finally, it is worth highlighting that in monotheist religions the religious community, religious law and tradition differentiates public (political) martyrdom (testimony) from the "subjectivity of charismatic persons (and radical heretics)"⁵⁸ In other words, public testimony is primarily related to the social structure and social goals of the religious community; the martyr sees himself as merely a small piece in the bigger picture, he does not proclaim his deeds as heroic ones.⁵⁹ This form of religious and political testimony – which lacks heroic characteristics, is embedded in the community (is social), takes place in a hidden manner that is not directly visible to the public – describes the experiences of the religious people persecuted by the totalitarian regimes.

- The Church can only perceive the unmasking and public exposing of *pompa diaboli* in a sphere where *Gloria Dei* and *pompa diaboli* can be simultaneously identified, in other words in an apocalyptic sphere. The defining characteristics of such an apocalyptic religious sphere (the Hungarian for example) can be explored from a practical point of view through the "apocalyptic pastoral method";⁶⁰ but we must also recognize that under totalitarian oppression – and similarly in our modern mass media

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁵⁹ The opposite process takes place when the a person making the testimony identifies his or her suffering – that is only a part of the bigger picture – with the whole picture, thus dismissing the law of the economics of suffering.

⁶⁰ O. Fuchs, "Neue Wege einer eschatologischen Pastoral," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, Vol. 179, 1999, pp. 260-288.

mediated culture –with the decline of the importance of testimony, and the disappearance of a political public sphere receptive to testimonies the apocalyptic sphere loses its meaning and significance; a new sphere emerges where exposing *pompa diaboli* becomes quite impossible.

The apocalyptically inclined mind is not burdened primarily by the fear of imminent danger or the paralyzing terror of a looming catastrophe but is constantly aware of the necessity of solidarity with the “smallest brothers” – as we see in the Little Apocalypse from the Gospel of Matthew. A dweller who throughout communist times and even after the Central European regime changes still holds onto the historical past, must continue living in communion with the most vulnerable of society; if he forsakes this path, he becomes disloyal to the apocalyptic mindset, the preservation of which should be the responsibility of Eastern and Central Europe. In contrast to the evolutionary (not even atheist any more) “naked godlessness” which is based on a continuous conception of historical time, the emerging Christ-following mindset is ever anticipating the End times and believes in the finite nature of historical time. Metz argues that this Christ-following mindset does not weaken resolve but enables the taking responsibility. This is the foundation from which solidarity, action that is attentive to the “Signs of the Times,” a practice that emphasizes the necessity of social responsibility can spring.⁶¹ In this frame of interpretation, the time dynamics of eschatology connect the final times with the present – and in this way the final concerns become the primary concerns of each individual. Jesus’s teachings directing us to care for “the smallest among us” elevated this historical practice to the norm; and by making the adherence to this practice the criteria by which the Final Judgment will be passed, he set before us a form of eschatological hermeneutics.⁶² This concept of eschatological hermeneutics can only incite action because it regards eschatological reality as conceivably existing and not as an abstract motif:⁶³ eschatological practice can only exist if the eschaton is internally related to our present, if it can be imagined. In our case, in

⁶¹ This concept is in the back in P. Zulehner; cf. idem, ed., *Solidarität. Option für die Modernisierungsverlierer* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1996).

⁶² For more details see: O. Fuchs, *Praktische Hermeneutik der Heiligen Schrift* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004).

⁶³ O. Fuchs, *Neue Wege einer eschatologischen Pastoral*, p. 265.

addition to this, we have in front of us the picture of the imprisoned friend, relative, priest, the tortured or executed father, the student denied admission to the university – a wide range of life experiences. This is why Fuchs highlights, after H.-J. Sander's works,⁶⁴ that what Gaudium et spes is about is "the Signs of the Times": that the Second Vatican Council considers people of a given era not merely "accidents of a timeless idea,"⁶⁵ but regards them as relating to the end of time in concrete circumstances; the Church (and within the Church the religious dweller) – recognizing the Signs of the Times – involves itself in the conflicts of its era.⁶⁶ The dweller awaiting execution, who considers the Church – a Church that holds these experiences in its memory – a non-arbitrary partner understands precisely that "martyrem non facit poena, sed causa,"⁶⁷ or that it is not the suffering endured that makes a martyr but the cause he represents.

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⁶⁴ H.-J. Sander, "Die Zeichen der Zeit. Die Entdeckung des Evangeliums in den Konflikten der Gegenwart," in G. Fuchs and A. Lienkamp, eds., *Visionen des Konzils: 30 Jahre Pastoralkonstitution "Die Kirche in der Welt von heute"* (Münster, 1997), pp. 85-102, 86.

⁶⁵ O. Fuchs, *Neue Wege einer eschatologischen Pastoral*, p. 266.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Augustinus: *Ad Cresconium grammaticum* 3, 47.

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Part II
Context of the Hungarian Church:
State Relationship

A Short History of the Hungarian Catholic Church (1945–1990)

CSABA SZABÓ

The history of the Hungarian Catholic Church from 1945 to 1990 was dominated by *oppression*. Its fate in this regard is similar to the other eastern-European churches which saw the end of World War II in territories, where the Soviet Union, ally of the winners but having opposing social and economic ideals, was able to enforce its influence.

Different churches of different countries have found and gave different answers to their common fate, church prosecution. Their 45 year long fates can hardly be compared, since their paths vary from complete cooperation, to pressure induced collaboration, to completely "underground" churches. For four and a half decades after the war, the actions and reactions of the Hungarian Catholics and the single-party state changed constantly according to the internal and external politic situation of the country. A monograph processing this era with a scientific directive is still awaited. This study will concentrate on the relationship between the Hungarian Catholic Church and the communist party, responsible for the shaping of the single-party state.

The Era of the Active Church (1945–1956)

The eleven year period after the war was dominated by confrontations in Hungary and in international politics. During the forming of the single-party state and the seizing of power, the Communists eliminated all political and social resistance. They were ideologically opposed to the church (religion, the religious establishment), their goal was to completely eliminate it. At first the church was not willing to cooperate, and even after the mutilation of their hierarchy (the trial of Archbishop József Mindszenty in 1948, and the suit of Archbishop József Grósz in 1951) was only willing to cooperate by coercion. The church waited: the eleven years following the war for the international political situation to provide the

possibility of change within. Broadly, in¹ his election speech in February 1946 Stalin spoke of deteriorating relations with the West. Churchill, the leader of the English conservative party stated clearly in his speech at Fulton on 5 March 1946. *"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe."*² One year later, 12 March 1947 President Truman of the United States conveyed a message to the congress, explaining that in the interest of the security of the USA, he shall provide aid to those countries fighting communism (Truman-doctrine). On 4 April 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed in Washington, the alliance of 28 North-American states and European countries. On 7 September 1949 the German Federal Republic was formed, and on 7 October the German Democratic Republic. After the war the first country to acquire nuclear weapons was the Soviet Union. In November 1947 the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Molotov bragged saying *"the nuclear secret, is a secret no more."* The first Soviet experimental detonation was on 29 August 1949 in Kazakhstan. On 25 September TASS reported the Soviet Union to be in possession of nuclear weapons. In October 1949 the four-year long civil war ended in Greece with the defeat of the left-wing forces. Hostilities barely ceased in the Southeast-Balkans, when as another test, the Korean War broke out in Asia in June 1950. With the formation of the People's Republic of China, a Soviet style communism became a decisive factor in Asia as well as in Eastern-Europe, capable of forming world politics. The world was never so

¹ Literature used to analyze the international situation: Paul Johnson, *A modern kor. A 20. század igazi arca* [The modern age. The true face of the 20th century] (Budapest: XX. Század Intézet, 2000); Norman Davies, *Európa története* [History of Europe] (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2001); John Lukacs, *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok XX. századi története* [The history of the USA in the 20th century] (Budapest: Európa Kiadó, 2002); John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War. A New History* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005); Rolf Steininger, *Der vergessene Krieg. Korea 1950-1953* (München: Olzog, 2006); Henry Heller, *The Cold War and the New Imperialism. A Global History: 1945-2005* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2006).

² The text of Sir Winston Churchill's "The Sinews of Peace" speech is quoted in its entirety from Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston Sir Churchill, His Complete Speeches 1897-1963* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974), Vol. VII, pp. 7285-7293.

close – maybe with the exception of the Cuban missile crisis – to a World War III or a nuclear war as at the beginning of the 1950s. As the next step in the arms race of the Cold War at the beginning of 1950, President Truman ordered to research the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb. Three years later the Soviets detonated their first hydrogen bomb (12 August 1953). Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and the Soviet Union created their own defense alliance in May 1955, the Warsaw Pact.

Using the Cold War hysteria, the Hungarian communists did away with political rivals in 1948/1949, and eliminated resistance in society, and the single-party dictatorship was slowly born. By this time, the state forced the Hungarian churches and sects to cooperate, with the exception of the Catholic Church. So called agreements were reached between the government of the Hungarian Republic, the Reformed Church, the Evangelical and Unitarian Church, and the Israelite sect in order to "settle the relation between state and church in a peaceful and appropriate manner desired by both sides." The four agreements affected 30 percent of the Hungarian population. The Catholic Church tried to resist the dictatorship in spite of constant humiliation.

The Elimination of Democracy in Hungary (1945–1948)

The Hungarian communists returning with the Red Army had no precise script about reforming, but they had to correspond to the requirements set forth in Moscow. The majority of them spent years in Moscow studying the seizure and holding of power. For example Ernő [Singer] Gerő had already been transferred to the Soviet Union in 1924, but was also active in Western Europe and Spain, by the orders of the NKWD (predecessor of the KGB). Imre Nagy had lived only in the Soviet Union since 1930. József [Lederer] Révai had lived in Moscow with a short break Prague in 1934. Mihály Farkas [Lőwy Hermann] went to the Soviet Union after the Spanish civil war, Mátyás [Rosenfeld] Rákosi and Zoltán [Weinberger] Vas were there from 1940. The "Muscovites" and the remaining communists in Hungary (e.g. János [Csermanek] Kádár, Gábor Péter [Eisenberger Benjámín], László Rajk) had to produce results according to the local circumstances, to grab power as soon as possible. They had to consider the role of the Allied Control Commission (ACC), a media more open than the Soviet model, and the control of the civilian and

democratic parties. Neither Stalin, nor his Hungarian administrators had any idea what kind of resistance they would have to overcome, nor about the reactions of the Allies. Patience and gradualism were dictated by the international and domestic political situation. The deterioration of Soviet relations with Tito and Yugoslavia accelerated events. Eventually, the three years following the war were enough for them to reform and intimidate the Hungarian society, and to prepare it for the single-party system. Simultaneously they destroyed the economic strength of the Catholic Church (land reform), routed its social base (disbanding organizations) and eliminated their educational monopoly.

When processing the history of the Catholic Church after World War II, along with the roles of the state and political powers, most notably the communist party, we have to consider the heritage the church brought with itself to the social reformation after 1945. After the fall of the "old system," the "Horthy-Hungary" not only had an invading force landed on the country, but the values of the past also wavered, and one of its pillars was the Catholic Church.

During the war the Catholic Church suffered significant losses, but its influence on society had barely decreased. By the end of the war the Hungarian Catholics lived in three archdioceses (the Esztergom, Kalocsa and Eger archdioceses), eight dioceses (Székesfehérvár, Veszprém, Győr, Szombathely, Pécs, Vác, Csanád and Hajdúdorog dioceses), four apostolic governorates (Nagyvárad, Szatmár, Kassa – Rozsnyó and Bácska) and the Benedictine diocese in Pannonhalma. In 1950 there were 3846 clerics (2150 in parsonages and 2672 in curacies). According to a contemporary communist study in 23 convents had 2582 members, and in 40 sisterhoods 8956 members, and a total of 11538 monks and nuns were active.³

After studying the religious division of Hungary, we can conclude in spite of the World Wars, civil and proletarian revolutions the Catholic nature of the country remained unchanged after 1945.⁴

³ Zsuzsanna Bögre and Csaba Szabó, *Törésvonalak. Apácasorsok a kommunizmusban* [Fault lines. Nun fates in communism] (Budapest: METEM–Szent István Kiadó, 2010), p. 21.

⁴ According to some studies, 62.4% of the Hungarians were Catholics in 1964, and 61.3% in 1980. Cf. Emmerich András and Julius Morel, *Bilanz des ungarischen Katholizismus. Kirche und Gesellschaft in Dokumenten, Zahlen und Analysen*

The Division of Religious Communion in Hungary between 1910 and 1949

Communion	Population census – 1910 (Population: 18 264 533)*		Population census – 1920 (Population: 7 980 143)		Population census – 1930 (Population: 8 688 319)		Population census – 1941 (Population: 9 319 992)		Population census – 1949 (Population: 9 204 799)	
	Number of worshippers	In relation with the population in percentage	Number of worshippers	In relation with the population in percentage	Number of worshippers	In relation with the population in percentage	Number of worshippers	In relation with the population in percentage	Number of worshippers	In relation with the population in percentage
Roman Catholic	9 010 305	49,3	5 096 729	63,9	5 634 103	64,9	6 122 583	65,7	6 240 427	67,8
Greek Catholic	2 007 916	11,0	175 247	2,2	201 093	2,3	233 672	2,5	248 355	2,7
Orthodox (Greek orthodox)	2 333 979	12,8	50 990	0,6	39 839	0,5	38 321	0,4	36 010	0,4
Evangelical	1 306 684	7,1	497 012	6,2	534 065	6,1	557 647	6,0	482 152	5,2
Reformed	2 603 381	14,3	1 670 144	21,0	1 813 162	20,9	1 934 892	20,8	2 014 707	21,9
Unitarian	74 296	0,4	6224	0,1	6266	0,1	8465	0,1	9447	0,1
Jewish	911 229	5,0	473 310	5,9	444 567	5,1	400 980	4,3	138 862	1,5
Baptist	8086	0,0	4187	0,0	9399	0,1	17 917	0,2	18 874	0,2
Other**	9366	0,1	6300	0,1	5825	0,0	5515	0,0	19 965	0,2

(München: Heimatwerk Verlag, 1969), pp. 240-241; and Balogh and Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992. Adattár*, pp. 200-202.

The aggressiveness of the invading Soviets and the Hungarian communists, and the first government measures affected the Catholic Church deeply, although indirectly.

In June 1945 Mátyás Rákosi gave a presentation in Moscow in front of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (it took over the duties of the Communist International which was disbanded in 1943, and was led by Georgi Dimitrov) about the situation in Hungary and role of the Communist Party in national events. Rákosi mentioned the Catholic Church in his presentation. He declared, *"This is a huge organization. This is what we are mainly fighting. [...] we tried to smooth the edge of the situation, but they are aware that we do not fancy them, as much as they do not fancy us. The fight will go on, of course, but we are not afraid of them."*⁵

On 21 December 1944 when the provisional National Assembly convened, Budapest and the larger part of the country were still in the hands of the Arrow Cross Party. The communists occupied more than 30% of the Assembly, and had three ministers in the Provisional Government, which did not reflect the actual political relations, as there were only a few thousand communist party members and sympathizers.⁶

One of the main goals of the communist party was to take control over the population in Hungary. The country had not even been liberated yet, when they already established the first communist rules, mainly communist apparatus services inside the government police, aimed at controlling society and the population. The Political Police Department was formed at 60 Andrásy Street under the leadership of András Tömpe. In addition the Budapest Police Main Command Political Department (Budapesti Főkapitányság Politikai Rendészeti Osztálya, PRO) was led by Gábor Péter. The Budapest Political Police was soon turned into the Hungarian State Police State Protection Department (Magyar Államrendőrség Államvédelmi

⁵ Piroska Póth, "Rákosi Mátyás előadása Moszkvában 1945 júniusában [Presentation of Mátyás Rákosi in Moscow in June 1945]," *Múltunk* 1999, Vol. 44, No. 4, p. 222.

⁶ Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században* [History of Hungary in the 20th century] (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2010), pp. 278-279.

Osztálya, the dreaded ÁVO).⁷ In addition to their crime prevention, police and other duties, these organizations were used by the communists to implement their political schemes.⁸

On 29 March 1945 Prince Primate Jusztinián Serédi, who had been the head of the Hungarian Catholic Church since 1927, died of illness (1884–1945). In this critical time for Hungarian Catholics the Soviets demanded that archbishop, legate Angelo Rotta leave the country, along with every member of foreign embassies who have been accredited under the reign of Hungarian governments during the war. They did not take into account the special circumstances of the legate, neither did they pay any regard to his actions in helping the Jews and other refugees during the war.⁹ The Soviets thought that these churches, once cut off from Rome could be quickly brought down. Until 1949 all Eastern-European communist countries broke off their connections with the Holy See.¹⁰

Along with the casualties of war and the atrocities, the Hungarian Catholic Church was deeply affected by the "land law" that shook its economic strength. The Provisional Government enacted the 600/1945 decree about land reform, in order to solve long required agrarian reform on 17 March 1945.¹¹ The used land was 5,6 million

⁷ The ÁVO III subdivision was in charge of intelligence gathering and protection against the churches.

⁸ Gergő Bendegúz Cseh, "A magyar állambiztonsági szervek intézménytörténeti vázlat, 1945-1990 [Institution history sketches of Hungarian state security services, 1945-1990]," in György Gyarmati, ed., *Trezor 1. A Történeti Hivatal évkönyve* [Safe deposit 1. Almanac of the Historical Office] (Budapest: Történeti Hivatal, 1999), pp. 73-89.

⁹ Margit Beke, "Angelo Rotta apostoli nuncius (1930-1945) [Angelo Rotta apostolic nuncius (1930-1945)]," *Magyar Egyháztörténeti Évkönyv I* [Hungarian church history almanac I.] (Köln/Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó, 1994), p. 173 and Lapo Lombardi "Magyarország és a Szentszék a hidegháború hajnalán [Hungary and the Holy See at dawn of the Cold War]," *Magyar Egyháztörténeti Vázlatok* 1998, Vol.10, No. 1-2, pp. 69-83.

¹⁰ Gabriel Adriányi, "Das Verhältnis der katholischen Kirche Osteuropas zum Westen nach dem weiten Weltkrieg," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 1990, Vol. 39, p. 219.; Andrea Riccardi, *Keresztények a vértanúság századában* [Christians in century of martyrdom] (Budapest: Új Ember Kiadó, 2002), pp. 145-150.

¹¹ From a Catholic perspective, the land question has been around since World War I. Margit Balogh, "Örökbérllet vagy verkli? [Leasehold or hand-organ?]," in Ferenc Szabó, ed., *Prohászka ébresztése* [Waking of Prohászka] (Budapest: Ottokár Püspök Alapítvány/Távlatok, 1998), pp. 110-127. The effects of the 1920 annual

acres, of which 58% (3,2 million acres) was distributed to the 642 000 land claimers, thus changing the percentage of landlessness from 46% to 17%, and changing small producers from 47% to 80%. Every medium or large property was divided, and an average of 5 acre lands was created.¹² The agricultural population and the frame of the agriculture were completely transformed, which could have facilitated a healthy development of the peasant population, if it had not been cut off a few years later.

The importance of the land decree was not questioned by the churches, but the implementation *method* and *timing* were debated. They also argued that they did not receive any assurances of compensation for the lands taken.¹³

According to annual statistical surveys in 1935, the Hungarian Catholic Churches had 862 700 acres of land. The agrarian reform of 1945 appropriated 765.684 acres of that land. The bishops, convents and seminaries got only 100 acres of land each; clergy-houses could only have 30 acres of land. The sustenance of about 6000 clerics, 12,000 canonical teachers, 3000 churches, 1500 clergy-houses, 200 social institutions, 2000 pensioners and thousands of worldly employees became the task of the state and the believers.¹⁴ A few years after the land dispensation, the communists, grabbing power by that time, started the "collectivization" of the land. Some of the priests along with the more wealthy believers were put on kulak lists. In 1951 – with the exception of market gardens not bigger than 800 square fathoms – they willingly disclaimed all their lands. From

Nagyatádi Szabó István land reform law, fell short compared to the neighboring countries land rearrangements, as it made small peasant properties, but did not change the land ownership drastically. József Sipos, "A Nagyatádi-féle földreform 1920 [The Nagyatád style agrarian reform, 1920]," *Rubicon* 2010, Vol. 20, No. 4-5, pp. 78-81.

¹² Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században* [History of Hungary in the 20th century], pp. 283-284.

¹³ József Török, ed., *Grósz József kalocsai érsek naplója 1944-1946* [Diary of József Grósz archbishop of Kalocsa 1944-1946] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1995), p. 179. Also István Mészáros, *Kimaradt tananyag. Diktatúra és az egyház 1945-1956* [Missed curriculum. Dictatorship and the church 1945-1956] (Budapest: Márton Áron Kiadó, 1993), p. 38.

¹⁴ Jenő Gergely, *A politikai katolicizmus Magyarországon 1890-1950* [The political Catholicism in Hungary 1890-1950] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1977), p. 238.

here on in, the church became economically completely dependent upon the state.

After the first elections following the World War, the new government issued a decree about Hungary's form of government. On 1 of February 1946 Hungary became a republic. The parliament approved the 1946 annual VII law about the defense of the democratic state by penal law, which severely punishes organizations opposing the republic, and its propaganda. Because communist interests were present in jurisdiction as well as in the police force, the law was made to serve the "fight against reaction" by the Hungarian Communist Party. This was of great help in the elimination of Christian organizations, and later civilian parties. This decree was then called the "*hangman law*" and with the help of this the "*Gleichschaltung*" of the public soon took place. Under the decree of 1946-annual VII-law, József Mindszenty archbishop of Esztergom was convicted in 1949, as well as the communist László Rajk, and János Kádár along with József Grósz archbishop of Kalocsa in 1951, as well as thousands of citizens over the years, many of them Catholic priests.¹⁵

During the spring of 1946, a real rumor campaign started in the communist media against Catholic "conspirators." In these circumstances an event took place in the capital city, on Theresa Boulevard that was later used as an excuse to disband Catholic organizations. According to a witness, on 17 of June 1946 three soviet soldiers went into the Edison cafe on Theresa Boulevard, where they got into a heated argument concerning a Hungarian woman at the café, and turned into a gun fight claiming two lives. The GPU, Russian military police soon turned up. The corpses were thrown upon a Russian truck, people watching from their windows were ordered back into their homes. They gave emphasis to their orders with machinegun shot fired across the roofs. One bullet probably

¹⁵ Csaba Szabó, "A katolikus egyház elleni koncepciós perek Magyarországon (1946-1972) [Show trials against the church in Hungary (1946-1972)," in Magdolna Baráth and Antal Molnár, eds., *A történelemtudomány szolgálatában. Tanulmányok a 70 éves Gecsényi Lajos tiszteletére* [In services of historical studies. Studies in honor of the 70 year old Lajos Gecsényi] (Budapest/Győr: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2012), pp. 851-862.

strayed into an attic, hitting a young bystander in the head.¹⁶ Contemporary reports are contradictory.¹⁷ The "terrorist" was found dead, half burned. He was assumed to be a Catholic organization member, or scout. He was set up to have been the assassin of the two soviet soldiers. This served as an excuse to ban Catholic organizations.

Home secretary László Rajk – over fulfilling the orders of brigadier general Szviridov, the leader of Allied Control Commission – began to disband Catholic organizations in 1946. Due to his actions, about 1500 organizations were disbanded. Devotional organizations were allowed to function under strict monitoring (e.g. Rosary, Maria-congregation). Even they could not escape their fate, by 1949 all Catholic organizations were disbanded in Hungary.¹⁸

József Mindszenty protested the decrees of the Home Secretary concerning Catholic organizations to Ferenc Nagy Prime minister on 21 June 1946, and on the 10 August he raised the Prime Minister's attention to the grievances suffered by the church since the war.¹⁹

After the dissolution of the Catholic associations' propaganda against the church schools intensified. The left-wing newspapers strongly objected to church schools, because – according to them – the democratic spirit took a subsidiary place and the level of teaching was low, but the anti-Soviet spirit was strong. Accusations and provocations continued to intensify in the beginning of 1947.

At the 28 February 1947 meeting of the Political Committee of the Independent Smallholders Party Gyula Ortutay, a "crypto communist" (i.e. secret member of the Hungarian Communist Party, who infiltrated into another party in order to disintegrate it from

¹⁶ László Révffy, "Teréz körút, 1946. június 17. [Theresa Boulevard, 17 June 1946]," *História* 1998, Vol. 20, No. 9-10, pp. 64-65.

¹⁷ Lajos Izsák and Miklós Kun, eds., *Moszkvának jelentjük. Titkos Dokumentumok 1944-1948* [Reporting to Moscow. Secret Documents 1944-1948] (Budapest: Századvég, 1994), pp. 98-102.

¹⁸ Margit Balogh, *A KALOT és a katolikus társadalompolitika 1935-1946* [The KALOT and the Catholic social policy 1935-1946] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 1998), pp. 199-200. The Catholic Church had 7522 devotional organizations in 1948, with 708584 members. Margit Balogh and Jenő Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992. Adattár*, p. 195.

¹⁹ József Mindszenty, *Emlékirataim* [Memoirs] (Budapest: Szent István Kiadó, 1989), pp. 135-136, 138-139. Also Lajos Izsák and Miklós Kun, eds., *Moszkvának jelentjük. Titkos Dokumentumok 1944-1948*, pp. 104-105.

inside) made a proposal for the introduction of the optional catechism.²⁰ At the same time the Smallholders Party came under a lot of pressure. Based on the “*hangman law*” the Hungarian State Police State Protection Department (ÁVO) and the Politico-Military Department of the Ministry of Defense uncovered an “*anti-republican conspiracy*” within the Smallholders Party. Due to the unveiling of the conspiracy fifty members of the parliament left the party,²¹ thus the forceful dismemberment of the party began.

In this tense political situation at the joint meetings of the coalition parties on 5 and 11 March the plan for the discontinuation of the obligatory catechism and the introduction of the unified school books were put on the agenda. There was no question about asking for the opinion of the churches, too.²²

In the end the issues of the optional catechism and the state school books were not discussed by the parliament as a bill, and were removed from the agenda. The communists, however, successfully used the (trial) debate against the smallholders.

In late summer of 1947 the two most important events were the opening of the year of the Virgin Mary and the new parliamentary elections.

József Mindszenty Archbishop of Esztergom in the presence of the episcopacy and some 60,000 believers opened the year of the Virgin Mary in Esztergom on 15 August. In the 20th century history of the Hungarian Catholic Church beside the XXXIV Eucharistic World Congress organized in Budapest in 1938, it may have been the second most significant religious event. The religious events of the holy year lasted till 8 December 1948. The police and the local units of the communist party did everything in their power to set back the Virgin Mary days organized in the various parts of the country. Even water and electricity services were suspended during the events; the transport facilities were sometimes restricted, so that believers could

²⁰ Margit Balogh and Jenő Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992. Kronológia* [Churches in modern Hungary 1790-1992. A Chronology] (Budapest: História/MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1993), p. 263.

²¹ Ferenc Nagy, *Küzdelem a vasfüggöny mögött I-II* [Fight behind the iron curtain I-II] (Budapest: Európa-História, 1990), Vol. II, pp. 70-104.

²² István Mészáros, *Mindszenty és Ortutay. Iskolatörténeti vázlat 1945-1948* [Mindszenty and Ortutay. School history sketch 1945-1948] (Budapest, 1989), pp. 66-67.

reach the destinations of the religious ceremonies only with difficulties. Despite the efforts of the authorities almost 4.6 million people took part in the events of the Virgin Mary year, at masses and pilgrimages.²³

Not only Catholic followers, but also the whole country was interested in the upcoming parliamentary elections and the election campaign in the summer of 1947. The elections were held on 31 August 1947. Several parties could enter, just like in 1945, but the new parties were partly formed from the members of the declining Smallholders Party.

Severe electoral fraud took place in the election. Approximately 10% of the electorate were excluded beforehand, but only among opposition voters. About 62,000 of the MKP (Hungarian Communist Party) votes were the consequences of the so-called “blue ballot” frauds. Forged ballots were printed, and with them the followers of the Communist Party voted in several places, travelling by lorries from one place to another. This way some 12,000 “activists” helped the fraud in 4729 constituencies.²⁴ Despite this the communists were not able to get the absolute majority. The coalition parties got 60.9% of the votes, but the balance of powers changed considerably within the coalition. The smallholders lost two million votes, the communists “gained” 300,000 and thus they became the largest party within and outside the coalition.

The Democratic Popular Party led by István Barankovics became the second largest party of the country gaining 16.4% of the votes. Fifteen months after the election at the turn of 1948 and 1949 also the Democratic Popular Party fell victim to the so-called “salami tactics” of the Communist Party. István Barankovics emigrated to Vienna on 2 February 1949 (one day before the start of the Mindszenty-case). The Democratic Popular Party announced its dissolution in the parliament on 4 February.²⁵

²³ István Mészáros, *Boldogasszony Éve 1947/48* [Year of the Blessed Virgin 1947/48] (Budapest: Ecclesia, 1994).

²⁴ Károly Szerencsés, *A kékcédulás hadművelet (Választások Magyarországon, 1947)* [The blue tag operation (Elections in Hungary, 1947)] (Budapest: Ikva, 1992).

²⁵ Lajos Izsák, *A Keresztény Demokrata Néppárt és a Demokrata Néppárt 1944-1949* [The Christian Democratic People’s Party and the Democratic People’s Party 1944-1949] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1985), p. 158.

After the 1947 elections the issues of church politics were put on the agenda again, this time focusing on church schools. The communist propaganda continually intensified. The concentrated attack began with a paper entitled *“The spirit of the democratic education”* delivered by József Révai at the Music Academy on 12 December 1947. Révai made it clear that education must be the responsibility of the state, particularly because church schools are supported by the state, but without the state having any influence on them.²⁶ Mátyás Rákosi stated at the 10 January meeting of the Budapest functionaries of the Hungarian Communist Party that the clerical reaction must be eliminated by the end of the year.²⁷

Hungarian society was full of stress and anger in the summer of 1948. Communist agitators, labor union speakers and representatives of the people’s colleges visited the villages and tried to prove the benefits and progressiveness of the nationalization of the schools. The newspapers and the radio kept repeating how low the standard of the church schools was and how bad their conditions were. In some places teachers and students were promised allowances and benefits, higher wages, career opportunities, better conditions if they pledged themselves to the nationalization of schools. In other places the Communists chose to use threat and force.²⁸ At the same time the local parish priests and the committed teachers of the church schools tried to convince people that there was no need for nationalization, it is merely another step toward the suppression of the church and forming a totalitarian state. Both sides were properly stirred up when a tragic case happened in Pócspetri (Szabolcs County), when the state acted by force.

On 3 June 1948 after the evening prayer the believers walked from the church to the village hall, where the representative body was just discussing the nationalization of the local Catholic Church. Two policemen tried to control the arguing, scuffling of the mass of people, when one of the policemen was killed by his own weapon. The village was entirely cut off from the outside world for three days because of the investigation. On 6 January János Kádár, Minister of

²⁶ Mészáros, *Mindszenty és Ortutay. Iskolatörténeti vázlat 1945-1948*, p. 108.

²⁷ Balogh and Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992. Kronológia*, p. 269.

²⁸ Mindszenty, *Emlékirataim*, pp. 202-209, and Mészáros, *Mindszenty és Ortutay. Iskolatörténeti vázlat 1945-1948*, pp. 111-112.

Home Affairs issued a statement in which he accused the communist clerk of the village with murder and the parish priest with conspiracy. The Budapest Criminal Court as a court martial condemned both of them to death, but the president of the republic changed the punishment of the parish priest to life imprisonment. The clerk was executed. Several inhabitants of the village were condemned to imprisonment for different length of time. In 1990 the Metropolitan Court of Justice rehabilitated all the convicts.²⁹ While reading the documents of the proceedings and the recollections it can be stated that the defendants, the people of the village were all decent, religious, common people without exception, who worked hard on their small pieces of land. Some were party members (Smallholders and Communists), but the majority was not interested in politics. In June 1948 what happened in Pócspetri could have happened anywhere in the country. The Pócspetri accident was fully used in favor of the communist propaganda. The church was made responsible for the stirring up the masses, ignoring that it was not the church that raised the issue of the nationalization of the schools and agitated the “cultural fight,” which irritated the whole society.

At the episcopal conference on 7 June the prelates discussed for the first time, that the government decree on the nationalization of the school had been issued, therefore they found it necessary to prepare themselves to accept the fact. Under the decree of the episcopal conference priests, monks and nuns were not allowed to hold a job in schools, which were to be nationalized.³⁰

For the second time the Hungarian Communist Party prepared action against the church schools. The Political Committee formulated on 13 May that the mobilization and the campaign for the nationalization of schools must be enhanced. According to the minutes taken at the meeting of the Political Committee on 4 June 1948 the full storyboard was ready for the adoption of the law. The

²⁹ Zsuzsanna Mikó, “A Pócspetri-per(ek) [The Pócspetri suit(s)],” in Csaba Szabó and László Szigeti, eds., *Az egyházi iskolák államosítása Magyarországon 1948* [Socialization of canonical schools in Hungary 1948] (Budapest: Lénárd Ödön Közhazsnú Alapítvány–Új ember, 2008), pp. 123-138.

³⁰ Margit Beke, ed., *A magyar katolikus püspöki tanácskozások története és jegyzőkönyvei 1945-1948 között* [Conferences and proceedings of the Hungarian episcopacy between 1945-1948] (Köln/Budapest: Argumentum, 1996), pp. 344-349.

10 June meeting of the PC decided that the bill proposing the nationalization of schools must be submitted to the parliament as early as on 16 June and must be adopted on the same day.³¹

Everything happened the way the communists had planned and the parliament adopted the bill on the nationalization of schools on 16 June 1948. 230 voted for, 63 against and 69 abstained from voting.³² After that the Catholic Church had to take care of placing 546 monk teachers, 1927 nun teachers and 216 nun nursery-school teachers, altogether 2689 persons.³³

In the spirit of the law the churches lost 4597 schools – out of which 3094 were Catholic schools. Alongside the schools the hospitals, orphanages, social and foster homes and even the cemeteries were nationalized. Gyula Ortutay, Minister for Religion and Education promised in the parliamentary debate on the school nationalization that the compulsory religious education will be unchanged, but this promise was not kept and on 6 September 1949 the Decree Law No. 5/1949 of the Presidential Council on the optional religious education was published.³⁴

Millions of believers – i.e. the majority of the nation – were deeply affected by the nationalization of the church schools and the cancellation of the obligatory religious education. The communists replaced a multicolor education system consisting of both church schools and secular schools maintained by different bodies by the monopoly of an atheist state education, one ideology, moreover, the exclusive rule of a single party in education.

³¹ Detailed studies were published commemorating the anniversary, Ödön Lénárd, Ágnes Tímár and Viktor Attila Soós, *Istennel, vagy Isten nélkül. A katolikus iskolák államosítása Magyarországon a II. világháború után* [With or without God. The socialization of Catholic schools in Hungary after World War II] (Budapest: Kairosz, 2008), and Csaba Szabó and László Szigeti, ed., *Az egyházi iskolák államosítása Magyarországon 1948*.

³² Balogh and Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon 1790-2005. Dokumentumok*, Vol. II, pp. 853-855.

³³ Beke, ed., *A magyar katolikus püspökkari tanácskozások története és jegyzőkönyvei 1945-1948 között*, p. 400.

³⁴ Balogh and Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon 1790-2005. Dokumentumok*, Vol. II, p. 894.

Strengthening Communism (1949-1951)

After World War II three years were enough for the Hungarian communists to gain the power in Hungary with the support of the Soviet Union. Another three years were needed for establishing total dictatorship. This period was characterized by terrorizing the society entirely. Concerning the Catholic Church beside the numerous arrests, internments and legal processes two legal cases set the time boundaries of the age: one against Cardinal József Mindszenty, Archbishop of Esztergom (1949) and the other against József Grósz, Archbishop of Kalocsa (1951). Prosecution against the church went beyond arrests and frame-ups. The communists tried to destroy the churches by any means. By creating the office of the peace priests they tried to corrupt the clergy from inside. With the displacement of the monks and the undermining of their situation even the most sincere faith was put to the test.

Up to this time direct evidence has been found about when the management of the communist party made a decision on the arrest of József Mindszenty, Archbishop of Esztergom or who made that decision. In May 1948 Gábor Péter had already sent over to Mátyás Rákosi a thick volume of ÁVO documents and analyses, concerning the leaders of the Catholic Church and on the Archbishop of Esztergom in the first place. The documents had already been collected since 1945. The collection contains the copies of Mindszenty's letters to Prime Ministers, ministers, some minutes taken at the episcopal conference, reports on priests, confessions, and also Mindszenty's letters written during his arrest in 1944. A small note was attached to the documents addresses to Gábor Péter with the following message, "*Comrade Rákosi, I underlined those lines, on the basis of which (when the right times comes) Mindszenty could be prosecuted.*"³⁵

In summer the two workers' parties merged (12 June 1948). The Hungarian Communist Party practically annexed the Social Democratic Party (SZDP). The party had already been deprived of its democratic leaders. The two parties merged and operated under a new name, the Hungarian Workers' Party.

³⁵ Csaba Szabó, ed., *Egyházügyi hangulat-jelentések 1951, 1953* [Church mood reports 1951, 1953] (Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára–Osiris, 2000), p. 37.

Even after the nationalization of the church schools the campaign against the church was in full swing. The main target of the aggressive attacks was József Mindszenty. The cardinal protested against the attacks himself and the Catholic Church to the Prime Minister and, in the lack of other possibilities through his circular letters he tried to inform the general public. On 18 November he closed his message to the priests and the believers with the following words, *“I stand for God, the Church and the Fatherland, because that is my duty put on me by my loneliest nation on the planet. That is my historic service. Seeing the suffering of my nation my personal fate is not important.*

*I do not accuse my accusers. If I have to make clear the situation sometimes, it is nothing else, but the cracking pain, the overflowing tears and the deserved truth of my nation. I pray for the world of justice and love. I also pray for those who do not know what they do, as my Master said; I forgive them from the bottom of my heart.”*³⁶

The prelate must have counted on his upcoming arrest, but before that, on 19 November his secretary, András Zakar was arrested by the political police, as he was walking home after morning mass. The cardinal formulated a brief statement after this, in which he denied the later accusations against him in advance, *“Personal freedom was extinct.” What has just happened was promised by R.(ákosi) in May via a personal envoy if... Certain circles also contemplate plans of assassination.*

What they advocate now and moreover, what they will advocate is not trustworthy at all. Nullius in verba. Nullius in verba. Nullius in verba. [I do not take part in any conspiracy and I was not and am not part of it.]

*All rejection, acknowledgement etc. are excluded. If something similar is announced, that is either deceit or was created under pressure beyond any human force, therefore it is null and void.”*³⁷

The police detachment under Colonel Gyula Décsi of the political police arrested the archbishop at the primal see in Esztergom on 26 December 1948, and then kept him under arrest at 60 Andrassy Street for 39 days. János Kádár, that time Minister for Home Affairs published the results of the police investigation at a “surprising speed” as early as on 29 December. They served later as the counts in

³⁶ József Vecsey, ed., *Mindszenty Okmánytár. III. kötet. Mindszenty áldozata* [Mindszenty Record Office. Volume III. Sacrifice of Mindszenty] (München, 1957), p. 265.

³⁷ Jenő Gergely, *A Mindszenty-per* [The Mindszenty suit] (Budapest: Kossuth, 2001), p. 56.

the trial. They fully complied with the principles stated by Mátyás Rákosi on 27 November 1948 in front of the Central Management of the Hungarian Workers' Party. The Archbishop of Esztergom was accused of anti-republican conspiracy, espionage, stock agiotage and organization for reinstating the kingdom in Hungary. The trial was organized in great haste, and it lasted only for five days (from 3 and 8 February 1949). The short time between the arrest and conviction of the archbishop would have been far too short for preparing and conducting a very sensitive and complicated case in a properly operating democracy, but in the people's democracy – based on Soviet example – it was common practice to prepare and conduct a show trial in a short time.

József Mindszenty was made responsible for the present situation and the decayed relationship between the state and the church. In fact, his person was of no interest, anybody could hold the position of the archbishop then, he would have been brought to his knees anyway, because the liquidation of the cardinal was only one of the means, just the first step toward the final goal, the liquidation of the Catholic Church.

After the arrest of the cardinal, the archbishops were put under pressure; the communists did everything they could to enhance their fear. Even if the intimidated bishops showed willingness to make an agreement with the state, it did not happen, because the Jesuit priest, Imre Mócsy brought the letter of Pope Pius XII dated 2 January 1949 with himself on his way home from Rome. In the letter the Pope stood by the justice of Cardinal Mindszenty and asked the Hungarian bishops to hold on.³⁸ From this time on József Grósz, Archbishop of Kalocsa led the bishops, who had been maneuvering for one and a half years amidst of constant attacks, and he did not want to sign any agreement or treaty but insisted on the policy of the Pope.

In Hungary the fighting for peace (even the name is controversial) became the basis for the test. As early as in the spring of 1949 in the communist camp the organizers tried to involve the churches in the fighting for peace hysteria, which was supported from above. The episcopacy declared on 28 April that service for peace was the most

³⁸ Gábor Salacz, *A magyar katolikus egyház tizenhét esztendeje* [Seventeen years of the Hungarian Catholic Church] (München: Görres Gesellschaft, 1988), pp. 38-39.

important moral task of the Catholic Church. They disapproved weapons, which risked also the lives of innocent people. The episcopacy stressed that the declaration was made not only in their own name, but also on behalf of the lay clergy, the monks and the nuns. The peace hysteria became nationwide. The activists of the 24,583 peace committees collected 6,806,130 signatures in less than one month; voluntarily or under pressure numerous priests signed the forms.³⁹

The dispersal of nuns and monks became very common after the nationalization of the schools. The communist party leaders inherently regarded the members of the orders as the “most reactionary.” Some 1000 monks and nuns were interned by the police from 7 to 9 June 1950 in the vicinity of the Yugoslav border. The ÁVH interned the Cistercian monks in Eger on 16 June, and on the night of 18 and 19 another 1120 monks and nuns were interned from Székesfehérvár and Budapest.⁴⁰ The members of the episcopacy decided to initiate a dialogue with the government in favor of the monks. Negotiations began on 28 June 1950 and lasted for two months (the parties met seven times altogether).⁴¹ At the meetings the representatives of the Catholic Church were totally in an exposed position as opposed to the government. Rákosi and his circle got up-to-date information from the cover agent(s) from the episcopacy on the tactics, plans, mood of the episcopacy. The episcopacy was in a vulnerable position also because even during the negotiations the pressure on them did not stop, moreover, the fighting for the peace movement increased.

On 16 July 1950 34 Hungarian Catholic priests published a call, in which they expressed their joy over the start of the negotiations between the episcopacy and the government and in favor of a prospective agreement they called the Catholic clergy to join the movement. With this call the movement of the “progressive priests”

³⁹ József Pál, *Békepapok* [Peacepriests] (Budapest: Egyházi Fórum, 1995), pp. 10-12.

⁴⁰ Balogh and Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992. Kronológia*, p. 291.

⁴¹ Jenő Gergely, *Az 1950-es egyezmény és a szerzetesrendek feloszlása Magyarországon* [The pact of 1950 and the dissolution of convents in Hungary] (Budapest: Vigilia, 1990).

or peace priests began. At their conference in the beginning of August some 300 priests and monks took part.⁴²

The movement of the progressive priest reached its goal, and they successfully drove a wedge between the lower and the upper clergy (moreover, even the episcopacy was divided as far as the reaction to the movement was concerned). The movement of the peace priests proved to be a perfect weapon in the hands of the communists, as the church leadership could be blackmailed by it, even by the threat of a split within the church.

The movement of the progressive priests in Hungary, the East European examples and the continuous attacks even during the negotiations between the government and the church (more monks were expelled from their homes; the Ministry of Culture suspended the employment of all the teachers of the Theological Faculty in Budapest, and dissolved one of the oldest faculties of the Péter Pázmány Scientific University), all these led to the signing of the "agreement" by the episcopacy drafted by the representatives of the state (30 August 1950).⁴³

The episcopacy acknowledged the state order and constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic. (In practice that had been the case earlier.) They promised to act under the laws of the church against those who act against the People's Republic and condemn all kinds of subversive activities. They called the believers to participate in the execution of the five year plan. They warned the clergy acting against the socialist reorganization of the agriculture. The episcopacy stated that they will support the peace movement in the future.

The government of the People's Republic of Hungary guaranteed the religious freedom, the principle has been laid down in the constitution anyway, and also that the Catholic Church could operate freely. The government offered to return 6 schools for boys and 2 for girls, together with the clerical teachers. The government promised to take care of the basic needs of the church, and guaranteed to assign a proper amount of money for clerical purposes

⁴² Pál, *Békepapok*, p. 20 and Gabriel Adriányi, "Die Geschichte der Friederpriesterbewegung in Ungarn," *Zwischen Autonomie und Anlehnung* (Nettetal: Veröffentlichung des Missionspriesterseminars St Augustin, 1989), p. 79.

⁴³ Balogh and Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon 1790-2005. Dokumentumok*, Vol. II, pp. 944-946.

for 18 years, the yearly amount to be decreased proportionally. Special emphasis was laid upon paying the salary of the clergy, which had always been public responsibility before 1945.

The most important characteristic of the agreement is that such significant issues, like the relationship with the Holy See and the issue of the monks – apart from the question of the eight secondary schools – were not even mentioned. Analyzing the governmental promises it stands out, that the government expected the gradual decline of the Catholic Church in 18 years, so it would need less and less financial support. Actually, the agreement was not valid either from ecclesiastical or from constitutional point of view. To agree with each state is the sole right of the Vatican. The Hungarian government must have known that, too, as the agreement has never been published in the Hungarian Bulletin, whereas all the agreements between the state and the other churches were published.

Despite the expectations the attacks against the Catholic Church did not stop. One week after the signing of the agreement between the government and the episcopacy the Decree Law No. 34/1950 of the Presidential Council was published, which revoked the authorization of religious orders in Hungary. Under the terms of the regulation in Hungary only the following orders could maintain and operate secondary schools: the Benedictines in Pannonhalma and in Győr, the Piarists in Budapest and Kecskemét, the Franciscans (of St. John of Capistrano) in Esztergom and Szentendre and Poor School Sisters named after the Virgin Mary in Budapest and Debrecen. Each institution was allowed to launch two classes per grade (16 altogether) and two monk teachers each (32 altogether). The remaining 23 male orders (with a membership of 2582) and 40 female orders (with 8956 members) were dissolved, and 635 chapterhouses were nationalized.⁴⁴ After the publication of the decree the issue of the monks and nuns were referred simply to the police.

In Hungary after 1950 the orders have been prohibited for forty years. Thousands of people had to give up their way of life. The dissolution of the orders was a great loss not only for the Catholic Church and the believers, but also for the Hungarian cultural, intellectual, social and charity life.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 947-948.

After the forced agreement, and the withdrawal of the license for the orders to operate, pressure by the single party state on the church was not relieved. In the spring of 1951 concentrated attack was launched in the Hungarian newspapers, in the first place against the Hungarian prelates, József Grósz, Endre Hamvas and József Pétery.⁴⁵

In the meantime the thinkers of the communist party elaborated new policy against the Catholic Church, which was outlined by József Révai at the meeting on 4 May 1951 of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party.⁴⁶

Among the clergy a rumor was spread about the occupation of the archiepiscopal palace and the internment of Grósz. At that time the information was false. By that time the ÁVH explored surrounding the archbishop, the participants of the forthcoming case had already been arrested. After a very thorough preparation at 8 p.m. on 18 May 1951 Colonel Tibor Vajda of the ÁVH and his group arrested Archbishop József Grósz, chairman of the Hungarian Catholic Episcopacy in the archiepiscopal see.

The public main case against Grósz formed the frame of the 24 closed hearings, in which 15 death penalties and several hundred reprehensible judgments were given. The case against József Grósz and eight companions started on 22 June 1951. The state's attorney and the chairman of the court of justice were Gyula Alapy and Vilmos Olti, as in the Mindszenty case. Sentence was pronounced on 28 June 1951. József Grósz, the first defendant was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment, Ferenc Vezér, monk of the Pauline order was sentenced to death. Five additional defendants were sentenced to 8 to 14 years. The cases of two defendants were separated and handed over to the martial court, which sentenced them to death.⁴⁷

On the second day of the hearings the ÁVH put bishops Endre Hamvas, Lajos Shvoy, József Pétery and Bertalan Badalik under house arrest. They were obligated to appoint peace priests as

⁴⁵ Salacz, *A magyar katolikus egyház tizenhét esztendeje*, pp. 103-104.

⁴⁶ Zoltán Ólmosi, "Proletárdiktatúra és egyház, 1951 [Proletary dictatorship and the church]," *História* 1991, Vol. 13, No. 5-6, pp. 23-27.

⁴⁷ Csaba Szabó, ed., *A Grósz-per előkészítése 1951* [Preparation of the Grósz suit 1951] (Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára–Osiris, 2001) and Margit Balogh and Csaba Szabó, *A Grósz-per* [The Grósz suit] (Budapest: Kossuth, 2002).

episcopal office managers and vicars. Later this was the case in each diocese.⁴⁸

The Hungarian Catholic Church lost its leader for the second time in three years. In the case through József Grósz the authorities wanted to compromise that part of the clergy, which was regarded as reactionary, and the United States of America, the Vatican, the former capitalists, factory owners and the orders, regarded as entirely unreliable.

At the same time, beside the obvious ecclesiastical goals the Grósz-case fit perfectly into increasing “class struggle” of the 1950s, when both the internal and the external reactionary forces had to be settled and enemies should be looked for everywhere. Together with the Grósz-case the communist “kicked” also to the left. In May 1951 János Kádár, the former Minister of Home Affairs was arrested and sentenced to three years’ imprisonment.

The legal cases against the Catholics, keeping the bishops in house arrest, appointment of reliable vicars and office managers in the episcopal sees, then the establishment of the State Office for Church Affairs all led the way in the total submission of the Catholic Church under the state. By the summer 1951 the “nationalization” of the churches came to an end. The establishment of the total dictatorship in Hungary was finished.

The Total Dictatorship (1951-1953-1956)

On the second day after József Grósz was arrested the Decree Law No. I/1951 was published in the Hungarian Bulletin on the setting up of the State Office for Church Affairs (ÁEH).⁴⁹ A tested, reliable communist, István Kossa was appointed president of the newly established state office. The office was set up for the managing issues between the state and communions, the implementation and support of the agreements between the state and the religious denominations under the control of the state. The office was to report to the Council of Ministers. The expenses related to the organization and the operation of the office were covered by the state budget. By establishing this office the competence on religious issues of the

⁴⁸ Salacz, *A magyar katolikus egyház tizenhét esztendeje*, p. 108.

⁴⁹ Balogh and Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon 1790-2005. Dokumentumok*, Vol. II, pp. 955-958.

Ministry of Religion and Public Education terminated, therefore the word “religion” was deleted from its name. By the setting up the ÁEH the churches were completely subordinated to the state. The agreements with the churches offered a perfect opportunity for the office to extensively monitor, control and restrict the churches. Its fast growing headquarters and network made the conditions possible. Under the law the ÁEH had also the right to act against the protesting and unreliable priests. It could withdraw their state aid, could order the “disposition,” i.e. the relocation, of the priest into another diocese, or could punish the clergy through their own bishops. On the other hand, of course, there was also room for rewards and promotion. The cases that the office “explored,” but could not solve within its own competence, could be referred to the police or the ÁVH.⁵⁰

The State Office for Church Affairs was not solely a Hungarian institution. In the Soviet Union relatively late, in 1943 the Office for Church Affairs was set up under the Council of Ministers. In all the socialist countries “offices for church affairs” were set up following the Soviet model between 1948 and 1951.⁵¹

In August 1951 the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the HWP put the issues against the clerical reaction on the agenda again. A document characteristic of the 1950s distinctively shows the special atmosphere of the Rákosi era. The principles concerning the

⁵⁰ On the office see: Konrád Szántó, *Az egyházügyi hivatal titkai* [Secrets of the National Church Bureau] (Budapest: Mécses, 1990); Edit Köpeczi Bócz, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége* [Activities of the National Church Bureau] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 2004); Szilvia Köbel, “*Oszd meg és uralkodj!*” *A pártállam és az egyházak* [“Divide and conquer!” The single-party state and the churches] (Budapest: Rejtjel, 2005), and Viktor Attila Soós, “Kísérlet az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal munkatársai életútjának rekonstruálására [Attempt to reconstruct the lives of the staff of the National Church Bureau],” in Margit Balogh, ed., “*Alattad a föld, fölötted az ég...*” *Források, módszerek és útkeresések a történetírásban* [“The ground beneath you, the sky above you...” Roots, methods and route searching in historiography] (Budapest: ELTE BTK Történettudományok Doktori Iskola, 2010), pp. 67-78.

⁵¹ Margit Balogh, “Egyházügyi hivatalok [Church Offices],” *História* 1991, Vol. 13, No. 5-6, p. 24. and Gabriel Adriányi, *Geschichte der Kirche Osteuropas im 20. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn/München/Wien/Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1992), pp. 87, 132, 158.

church were accepted in the resolutions, and they were in force throughout the fifties.⁵²

The document clearly shows that the effort of the communist party was aimed at the complete liquidation of godliness in the long run, but in the short run the party wanted to restrict the activity of the church within the walls of the church; moreover, they even wanted to use this restricted religious activity for its own purposes.

The decree on the method of fulfilling ecclesiastical jobs⁵³ was another new, direct, forcible example for the interference in the internal life of the church. The Hungarian Catholic Church had never been in such a hopeless situation since World War II as it was in the summer of 1951. The upper clergy and the episcopacy were broken, and saw no point in further resistance. Since 1945 the breathing space for the church had been gradually closing, as it slowly lost its possessions, societies, schools and, along with the two archbishops, hundreds of priests were imprisoned. Under the new decree the state acknowledged only four bishops⁵⁴ among those who were still in place. The activity of the church was restricted exclusively within the walls of the churches and limited to the liturgy, but it seemed that the existence of the church, its survival depended on the intention of the communists. Since June the representatives of the state appeared in the halls of the episcopal sees, the vernacular mocked them as “bishops with a moustache.” They were the appointed school directors and controlled the lives of the bishops and the whole dioceses “from inside.”⁵⁵

The frightened and intimidated bishops indicated on by one that they were ready to take an oath for the Hungarian People’s Republic. Circulars were more and more frequent in which the bishops encouraged the believers to finish agricultural work or subscribe to

⁵² The document was published by Szabó, ed., *Egyháziügyi hangulat-jelentések 1951, 1953*, pp. 60-63.

⁵³ Balogh and Gergely, *Egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon 1790-2005*, Vol. II, pp. 959.

⁵⁴ Gyula Czapik, Archbishop of Eger, Ferenc Virág, Bishop of Pécs, Sándor Kovács, Bishop of Szombathely and Miklós Dudás, Bishop of Hajdúdorog.

⁵⁵ István Mészáros, “A szegedi ‘bajszos püspök’ jelentései 1952-ben [Reports of the ‘moustached bishop’ from Szeged in 1952],” *Magyar Egyháztörténeti Vázlatok* 1995, Vol. 7, No. 1-2, pp. 233-246.

the “peace loan,” collect iron etc.⁵⁶ The circulars of these kinds destroyed the authority of the bishops among the clergy and the believers. In 1952 on the occasion of Rákosi’s 60th birthday the congratulations turned into a hysteric flow, to which the bishops joined, which is a sign how exposed was the situation of the leaders of the Catholic Church.

The state further enhanced the terror. The closing and merging of the seminaries for the priests were aimed to suppress the education of the clergy. In 1951 the seminaries in Pécs and Kalocsa, in 1952 in Szombathely, in Veszprém, in Székesfehérvár, in Vác and in Hejce were closed. Between 1945 and 1950 almost 900 novices studied in the different seminaries, by 1954 their number was decreased to 525, then year by year it further decreased.⁵⁷

On 2 January 1953 József Pétery, Bishop of Vác was permanently put under house arrest, and then was interned to Hejce on 6 April, where he was kept in custody until his death on 11 January in the prison hospital. In Budapest Zoltán Meszlényi chapter vicar of Esztergom died in consequence of the treatment he suffered at the Kistarcsa internment camp. He was beatified in 2009 with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI. On 25 February 1953 the ÁEH informed Endre Hamvas, apostolic protector of Esztergom that the building of the seminary of Esztergom must be cleared by the end of the school year and must be handed over to the Army of the Hungarian People’s Republic as a military boarding school.⁵⁸

On 5 March 1953 Josif Vissarionovic Stalin, the “wise leader of the peoples” died. When the news of his death came, even the churches became silent and were empty. The high masses on the anniversary of the coronation of Pope Pius XII had to be postponed by one week, as the dictator was lying on his bier.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Jenő Gergely, “‘A Szentírás szava a párt szava!-1952’ [‘The word of the sacred writ is the word of the party!-1952’],” *História* 1993, Vol. 15, No. 5-6, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁷ Tivadar Ágotha, *Megalkuvás nélkül. Veszprémi kispapok az ateista hatalom börtöneiben* [Without expedience. Seminarists from Veszprém in the prisons of the atheist power] (Budapest: Márton Áron, 1995).

⁵⁸ Balogh and Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992*, p. 305.

⁵⁹ Konrád Szántó, *A kommunizmusnak sem sikerült* [Communism did not succeed] (Miskolc: Új Misszió Alapítvány, 1992), p. 31.

After Stalin's death a "new course" started from Moscow, then news spread of the workers' uprising in East Berlin on 17 June and riots in Czechoslovakia, then led to the exploring the mistakes of the Hungarian party leaders and the weakening of the position of Mátyás Rákosi. On 4 July the Imre Nagy-government was formed. During the year the internments ceased, the "secret camps," the "Hungarian gulags" were liquidated. Some political prisoners were released, the arrest were reduced, the standard of living of the agricultural people was improved, and prices were reduced. At the same time the legal cases against Catholics were carried forward till 1956, such as László Mécs, monk of Premontre, priest poet, who had never published his poems, which were circulated only among his friends, was accused of poems "against democracy and the Soviets"; Gábor Vaszary and his Benedictine school mates; the legal case of the Piarist and the case of Bulányi and his companions; the legal case of the Veszprém novices; the espionage case of the Benedictine teachers; the second case of Alajos Tüll; the Antal Pálos case; the case of Antal Petruch and his Jesuit companions.⁶⁰ The policy of restrictions and allowances had changed: the ÁEH did not allow the announcement of the apostolic circular about the 1954 Maria-year, but on 24 August supplementary subscriptions were held for religious education. Due to the latter the number of student enrolled for religious education was increased from 13% to 27%.⁶¹ On 27 October 1953 Imre Nagy, Prime Minister met Gyula Czapik, Archbishop of Eger, Endre Hamvas Bishop of Szeged-Csanád and Kálmán Papp, Bishop of Győr. The discussions were followed by just slight progress for the church.⁶² At the same time there was no mention about the issue of the monks, the contact with the Vatican, the review of the judgments in the Mindszenty and the Grósz cases, neither was the fate of the hundreds of priests in the prisons mentioned during the meeting with Imre Nagy.

The fact is that the people of the country, including the Catholics could feel some kind of easing since June 1953, but that was only temporary and superficial. Figuratively speaking, although the

⁶⁰ Csaba Szabó, "A katolikus egyház elleni koncepciók perék Magyarországon (1946-1972)," p. 858.

⁶¹ Balogh and Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992*, p. 306.

⁶² Csaba Szabó, ed., *Egyházügyi hangulat-jelentések 1951, 1953*, p. 69.

wheelman was replaced, but the motor, the gears, the screws – the elements of the system – all remained unchanged. The informers who visited the churches were not recalled, so the extended network of agents, the army of investigators who prepared the show cases, wrote the “storyboards,” the prosecutors, judges etc. kept on working, too. The party-state offices, authorities and the whole system catalyzed itself till 1956.

The Catholic Church in 1956

Some months before the 1956 revolution changes took place in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. On 25 April 1956 Gyula Czapik, Bishop of Eger, the head of the episcopacy passed away. After taking all the factors from state security and church policy into consideration the house arrest of József Grósz, Archbishop of Kalocsa was eased, and then he was given permission to return to Kalocsa. He was reinstated as archbishop. But the security of the state was disappointed in him, as they could not recruit the prelate.⁶³

The spontaneity of the 1956 revolution surprised not only the holders of power, but – among others – also the leaders of the Catholic Church. They could also feel the uncertainty of the power, knew the population of the country well, the situation of the believers and their dissatisfaction. In the grip of the dictatorship the breaking out of the revolution on 23 October it seemed inconceivable for them, too. Due to the suddenness of the situation and the caution of the religious leaders, the bishops in their seats in the countryside could collect pieces of information only from the radio, the newspapers and hearsay, controversial news, they slowly spoke in public. They asked their believers to be calm, keep the peace and respect the laws and they assured the Imre Nagy cabinet about their support. They condemned killings, bloodshed, spoke about peace, forgiveness, spiritual renewal, some bishops even about laying down the weapons.⁶⁴ About issues concerning the church (e.g. monks and priests in prison, the situation of Cardinal Mindszenty) they did not speak of. Only Ferenc Virág, Bishop of Pécs, who was almost 90 years old, issued a rather firm circular on 29 October. He pointed out

⁶³ Csaba Szabó, ed., *A Grósz-per előkészítése 1951*, pp. 55-59.

⁶⁴ Konrád Szántó, *Az 1956-os forradalom és a katolikus egyház* [The revolution of 1956 and the church] (Miskolc: Szent Maximilian Lapés Könyvkiadó, 1993), pp. 30-31.

the severe grievances of the church and demanded solution to the problems from the cabinet. He also raised the question of the detained prelates and demanded their release, József Mindszenty in the first place, and also the restoration of the orders, ensuring the freedom of religion, the compulsory religious education at schools, the freedom of ecclesiastical institutions and the freedom of the press.⁶⁵ Before Mindszenty was released the bishop relieved of the duties of the peace priests assigned into offices by the ÁEH and they were replaced by reliable vicars as managers. First Sándor Kovács, Bishop of Szombathely gave notice to the compromised vicar and office manager on 29 October. The next day Gyula Dudás, Greek Catholic bishop, Lajos Shvoy, Bishop of Székesfehérvár, Bertalan Badalik, Bishop of Veszprém and József Grósz, Archbishop of Kalocsa did the same.⁶⁶ In the meantime Pope Pius XII encyclical letter, *Luctuosissimi eventus* of 28 October became known, in which he welcomed the uprising, but condemned the killings and spoke up for “peace based on justice, love and lawful freedom.”⁶⁷

Cardinal József Mindszenty spent just four days of freedom in revolutionary Budapest. He arrived in the capital on 31 October, and on 4 November he was forced to “internal” emigration in the heart of the country, in Budapest in the building of the embassy of the United States of America, in the Szabadság Square. During the four days he received people visiting him, numerous delegates of Hungarian and foreign journalists. He worked tirelessly on charity matters. He also met his fellow bishops and the representatives of the government.⁶⁸ At their request he undertook that he would address the nation. The cardinal read out his speech live on the radio at 8 p.m. on 3 November. The speech was later deeply misinterpreted in

⁶⁵ Margit Balogh, “A forradalom és a katolikus egyház [The revolution and the Catholic Church],” in Csaba Szabó, ed., *Magyar katolikus egyház 1956* [Hungarian Catholic Church 1956] (Budapest: Új Ember, 2007), pp. 42–44.

⁶⁶ Konrád Szántó, *Az 1956-os forradalom és a katolikus egyház*, pp. 100–101.

⁶⁷ Gábor Salacz, *A magyar katolikus egyház tizenhét esztendeje*, pp. 141–142.

⁶⁸ On the activity of the cardinal in 1956 see Csaba Szabó, “Mindszenty József szabadon töltött napjai 1956-ban [Free days of Mindszenty in 1956],” in *ÁVH–Politika–1956. Politikai helyzet és az állambiztonsági szervek Magyarországon, 1956* [ÁVH–Politics–1956. Political situation and State Security Services in Hungary, 1956] (Budapest: Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Levéltára, 2007), pp. 223–234.

communist propaganda, while each and every sentence was in favor of the nation and the church.⁶⁹

A number of priests took part in the revolutionary events. They did not undertake leading roles, but distributed food, gave consolation, looked after the wounded and buried the dead. They preached peace, forgiveness, mercy. To illustrate the above: in the morning of 24 October the revolutionists captured some members of the ÁVO at the siege of the building of the radio and escorted them to the chapterhouse of the Piarists in the Mikszáth Kálmán Square. All of them could leave freely at the intervention of the prior, László Szőnyi.⁷⁰ The superiors tried to withhold the novices of the Central Seminary from the events. In spite of it some of them helped in transporting the wounded to hospitals, tended them and gave them consolation. The revolutionary law students in the adjacent building of the seminary were supplied with food from the kitchen of the seminary. After the 4 November Soviet attack people escaped through the seminary. They also issued a leaflet. After the suppression of the revolution they were brought before the Court of Justice for their Christian behavior.⁷¹ Lajos Kenyeres, parish priest of Tiszavárkony was not even summoned to court. On 28 February 1957 he was tortured to death by members of the armed forces and his corpse was thrown in the River Tisza. His offence was that he was elected member of the revolutionary council of the village. He had always been reasonable and seeking some agreement.⁷²

The Period of the Passive Church

The division of the history of the Hungarian Catholic Church after 1945 into passive and active periods needs to be explained.

⁶⁹ Csaba Szabó, "Mindszenty József 'ismeretlen' rádiószózata [‘Unknown’ radiospeech of József Mindszenty]," in Csaba Szabó, ed., *Magyar Katolikus egyház 1956* [Hungarian Catholic Church 1956] (Budapest: Lénárd Ödön Közhasznú Alapítvány–Új Ember, 2007), pp. 99-114.

⁷⁰ Konrád Szántó, *Az 1956-os forradalom és a katolikus egyház*, p. 22.

⁷¹ Tibor Székely, *1948-1961. Magyar egyháztörténeti karcolatok a 20 század közepéről (BM és ÁEH dokumentumok tükrében)* [1948-1961. Hungarian Church Historical sketches from the middle of the 20th century (in light of BM and ÁEH documents)] (Manuscript, 2012), pp. 13-16.

⁷² Ferenc Tomka, *Halálra szántak, mégis élünk! Egyházüldözés 1945-1990 és az ügynökkérdés* [Intended to die, but we're still alive! Church prosecution 1945-1990 and the agent issue] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2005), p. 114.

Especially because in the previous chapter, there was evidence, that after 1951 and the establishment of the total dictatorship only a little room was left for the church. Thinking determines the existence of the church and its stand against the dictatorship. Between 1945 and 1956 the time was short, the international situation was always threatened by complicated and constant global conflict and in this situation even the underprivileged church seems active. Some of the priests, even prelates either for selfish reasons or in the interest of the church would rather cooperate with the communists, there were agents also among them (not yet characteristic among the prelates!), but the church would rather wait and see, though through gritted teeth and they were hoping for better times to come, than to give up.

The fall of the 1956 revolution and war of independence had extraordinary effect on the thinking of the church, the leaders of the one-party state and the whole society. The open confrontation lasted some years, but in the meantime the church policy of the one-party state had changed, as did the activity of the Catholic Church. The church was more and more characterized by peaceful cooperation, passivity; only deep under the surface was there some weak resistance. Although the goal of the regime had not been changed in the whole period, i.e. the liquidation of the church, the one-party state eased the conflicts (arrests, legal cases), only the methods softened. The situation changed influenced by the trauma of 1956 on the one hand, and the "Ostpolitik," the Eastern politics of the Holy See on the other hand.

The Survival of the Hard Dictatorship (1956–1958–1961/62)

1956 is a major milestone also in the history of the Hungarian Catholic Church, despite the fact that after the fall of the revolution and war of independence both the communist party and the Hungarian Catholic Church practically returned to the "role," which they played prior to 1956. The leaders of the party took a post-Stalinist, hard line, against the churches, and solved the issues mostly in an "administrative" way by force. The leaders of the Catholic Church chose moderate resistance, moderate cooperation, withdrawal, isolation and protest, just like before 1956. But in 1956 something changed irrevocably. The revolution and war of independence was decisive experience for every individual person, social group, and society. The single-party state and its

representatives were always reminded that their power depends fully on the support of the Soviet leadership. Right after 1956 the slogan which can be strongly linked to the Rákosi era did not change: *"who is not with us, is against us."* The deep trauma of 1956 gradually contributed to the change: the party leadership slowly approached, and opened up toward the society. Kádár's slogan *"who is not against us, is with us"* became acceptable only slowly, step by step, through internal struggles.

The Catholic Church and the whole Hungarian society needed the shock of 1956 to understand that parallel to the strengthening of the new, forced power: resistance was meaningless. The realization was born in disappointment. Notwithstanding any rhetoric, the Great Powers would not risk nuclear war or World War III, especially not for Central Eastern Europe and for a nation of just ten million people. From the end of the 1950s on the leaders of the Catholic Church and the members of the society felt more and more that they were left alone, than before. After 1956 people started to consider whether it was worth waiting for any changes or in order to survive it was better for everybody to cooperate keeping one's own values. This realization led slowly to resignation, continuous surrender and compromises. This turning point for the Catholics was strengthened by the change of the Vatican regarding their Eastern politics. Pope Pius XII (1958) and even more Cardinal Domenico Tardini, secretary of state of the Vatican after the death of the unforgiving opponent of the communism (1961) the Vatican slowly approached the Soviet Union and its satellite states. This opening was of good intention, there is no doubt about that, and served the churches and believers of the respective countries. It was assumed that the end of the power and domination of the Soviet Union and the communism cannot be foreseen or expected; therefore one must be equipped for survival, coexistence, accepting the given conditions, the challenges of the bipolar world.

After the revolution the peace priest movement was practically over, its existence became impossible for a while. The Congregation of the Holy Synod issued a decree in the beginning of 1957, under which those priests who did not get their posts under the canons, had to face suspension. A list of names showed those who had been appointed to vicars and office manager in different dioceses by the ÁEH. The Pope ordered their displacements from their posts, and

those who did not obey should face excommunication. In the summer of 1957 the Congregation of the Synod addressed all Catholic priests to withdraw entirely from all political activities within one month or they would be excommunicated. As some of the priests involved did not obey, the *Sacra Congregatio Concilii* on 2 February 1958 excommunicated Miklós Beresztóczy, Richárd Horváth and János Máté in consequence of their activity in the parliament and the peace priest movement.⁷³ The measures remained in force for 13 years until József Mindszenty left the country in 1971.

After the repression of the revolution and war of independence the work started very slowly in the state and party organizations. János Horváth, President of the *ÁEH* requested József Grósz, Archbishop of Kalocsa to visit him in Budapest three times in December 1956. As the archbishop did not accept the invitation, Horváth went to see him in person in Kalocsa on 18 December. János Horváth, President of the *ÁEH* informed the Archbishop of Kalocsa, that the office would be reorganized; its independence would terminate in the near future and would be subordinated under the Ministry of Culture. The commissioners for church affairs would be recalled in every diocese, their job would be carried on by the staff members of the county councils.⁷⁴ The restructuring of the *ÁEH* and the recall of the commissioners for church affairs were mere tactical moves. Seemingly the office was pushed to the background by being subordinated under the Ministry of Culture, but there was no change as far as the staff, the methods and the functions were concerned. The peace priests appointed by the *ÁEH* to the halls of the episcopal sees were so corrupted and unpopular, that their recall can be regarded as necessary. As early as in January 1958 the dioceses got new “controllers,” this time they were called ministerial commissioners, but their duties were identical to the commissioners of the *ÁEH*.⁷⁵

The arrogance of the single-party state had not been changed toward the Catholic Church.

⁷³ Gabriel Adriányi, “The Ostpolitik der Päpste Pius XII, Johannes XXIII und Paul VI (1939-1978) am Beispiel Ungarns,” in Gabriel Adriányi, ed., *Papsttum und Kirchenreform. Festschrift für Georg Schwaiger zum 65. Geburtstag* (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1990), p. 777.

⁷⁴ Gábor Salacz, *A magyar katolikus egyház tizenhét esztendeje*, pp. 150-152.

⁷⁵ Balogh and Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992*, p. 322.

At the meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) on 10 June 1958 the party considered the fight against the church as its primary task, but some alterations in methods were to be introduced in the future. János Kádár declared in the debate, *"we fight against clericalism also by fire and sword, with submachine-guns and prison, because we do not have clerical, that is, church rule, but the workers and the peasants rule here. [...] The fight against clericalism forms a unified system, for which we have the appropriate means including the Ministry for Home Affairs. The liquidation of the religious ideology and the spread of the scientific ideology also need systematic combat, which is multi-faceted. But the cultural institutions have the decisive role there. [...] Against clericalism another five year combat is needed, and against the religious ideology for two more generations."*⁷⁶

"Brainwashing, pressure" always had great importance in the church policy of the Hungarian communist party, but from 1958 on their meaning were advanced. Along with the administrative procedures ideological education and propaganda became more and more pronounced. The novelty was that when earlier the single-party state and the various institutions together with the police and the internal security dealt with the church, the illegal monks were regarded almost exclusively as reactionary and they were persecuted and arrested. From 1958 on according to the opinion of ÁEH and the MSZMP the reactionary basis of the church might as well be liquidated "by sword and fire" within five years. The emphasis shifted to brainwashing the mass, because if the mass can be changed into passivity toward the church, then the reaction will have no more bases; the ideology of the passive people is easier to change. In the 1950s the party elite heavily relied on the ÁVO/ÁVH in church matters, even as the ÁEH played a subordinate role. Kádár and his comrades raised the ÁEH and the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the MSZMP as equal to the internal security. After 1958 the fight against the church took place on two levels. Sometimes agit-prop, other times the internal security got the upper hand, many

⁷⁶ Csaba Szabó, "Magyarország és a Vatikán. Egyházpolitika a hatvanas években [Hungary and the Vatican. Church politics in the sixties]," in János M. Rainer, ed., *"Hatvanas évek" Magyarországon* ["Sixties" in Hungary] (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2004), p. 74.

times depending on the momentary balance of forces and power relations within the party.

The education of priests guaranteed the development and moreover, the existence of the Hungarian Catholic Church. The novices of the Budapest Central Seminary refused to attend the meeting of the peace priest movement on 23 January 1959, and therefore 14 deacons were dismissed. The other students made common cause with them, so seventy students gave up their studies in the 1960/61 academic year, and only seventeen of them remained in the seminary.⁷⁷

The action of the seminarists had serious consequences. The episcopacy discussed the events on 17 February and they had to accept all the conditions of the ÁEH. Some professors had to retire and the teaching of the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism was introduced at the Theological Academy. Among the bishops Lajos Shvoy, Bishop of Székesfehérvár raised his voice in favor of the barred novices. He proposed that the expelled students should be accepted by the seminaries still working in the countryside, but the proposal was opposed by Endre Hamvas, who had concerns about the placidity of the country seminaries. One expelled novice gathered his mates around him and they finished their studies successfully. Between December 1959 and March 1960 some bishops secretly consecrated about twenty expelled novices and most of them were appointed to service in various dioceses.⁷⁸

In the beginning of the sixties the internal security strictly controlled the members of the female and male orders, because they used to live in communities, but after 1951 they lived scattered around in the country, and were considered as the major enemies of the people's republic. They were considered as the "irregular troops" or illegal agitators of the Vatican.

⁷⁷ Gábor Adriányi, "Egy kispap élete Magyarországon, 1954-1960 [Life of a seminarist in Hungary 1954-1960]," in Salacz Gábor, ed., *A magyar katolikus egyház tizenhét esztendeje 1948-1964* [17 years of the Hungarian Catholic Church 1948-1964] (München: Görres Gesellschaft, 1988), pp. 222-225.

⁷⁸ Tibor Székely, 1957-1961. *A római katolikus püspöki kar és a Központi Szeminárium kispapjai naplója a forradalom bukásától a kispaplázadás felszámolásáig* [1957-1961. Diary of the Roman Catholic Episcopacy and the seminarists of the Central Seminar from the fall of the revolution to the seminar uprising] (Manuscript, 2011), pp. 113-122.

Ervin Hollós, the manager of the II/5 subdivision of the Ministry for Home Affairs was invited to the meeting to the Political Committee of the MSZMP on 21 June 1960, whose responsibility was averting internal reaction, including church reaction. The Political Committee gave full scope to the internal security in the fight “against the illegal clerical powers.” They had to explore the illegal hierarchy and foreign relations. They had to corrupt the illegal groups by operative means, if not liquidation; it was also its task that priests who served illegally should also have to face an inquiry by the episcopacy. The departments of the Ministry for Home Affairs had to cooperate with the ÁEH in these matters.⁷⁹

Some months later between November 1960 and February 1961 50 people were arrested by the police, and another 300-400 were affected by different police procedures (declared accused at large, police notice, 113 searches were organized), 50 priests were dismissed for disciplinary reasons from ecclesiastical positions, 70 non-ecclesiastical persons were released from their duties from universities, scientific posts and other areas. Based on the documents and investigations and with different Catholic groups for years they explored new information and the specialists of the internal security constructed a new concept. That is how the conspiracy of the “*White Ravens*” was born for overturning the People’s Republic of Hungary. The internal security linked matters and people completely independent from each other, just to prove how determined and dangerous the Catholic reaction was.⁸⁰

On 15 March 1961 before any conviction concerning the arrested priests, monks and believers the episcopacy issued the following declaration, “*Every clergyman or employee who takes part in organizing conspiracy against the state or supports an activity of this kind, shall be regarded as somebody who acts against the people and shall be condemned. It cannot be allowed that some irresponsible persons use the Catholic Church – in any form – for any purpose against the state.*”⁸¹

⁷⁹ Csaba Szabó, “Magyarország és a Vatikán. Egyházpolitika a hatvanas években,” pp. 77-78.

⁸⁰ Csaba Szabó, “A katolikus egyház elleni koncepciós perek Magyarországon (1946-1972),” pp. 860-861.

⁸¹ Margit Balogh, *A Magyar Katolikus Püspöki Kar tanácskozásai 1949-1965 között. Dokumentumok I-II* [Conferences of the Hungarian episcopacy between 1949-1965. Documents I-II] (Budapest: METEM, 2008), Vol. II, p. 1073.

The crackdown against the Catholic Church by the state and the internal security after 1956 is practically the continuation of the authoritarian methods of the Rákosi era, but also fits perfectly in the principles outlined in the church policy in June and July 1958. The ideological brainwashing of the masses went on, and the usual firm, Stalinist actions were taken by the internal security against those clergymen and believers who did not show any sign of at least neutrality towards the system.

The “Ostpolitik” and Its Influence in Hungary (1962-1971)

By the beginning of 1949 the communist People’s Republic of Hungary completely cut off its western borders, and practically all contacts were broken between the Hungarian Catholics and the Holy See. The leaders of the Hungarian Catholic Church tried to pass on pieces of information to Rome from time to time, but it was possible only indirectly, through the channels which were regarded illegal from the point of view of the single-party state. For example, letters played an important role in the legal case against József Grósz, Archbishop of Kalocsa, which had been passed to or from Rome with the help of the Italian and Belgian embassies.⁸²

The complete blocking of the Hungarian Catholic Church from the Vatican was lifted only for the short time of the 1956 revolution and war of independence. The exchange of information became possible again, as more Catholic emigrants arrived in Rome. But the prelates did not have any personal contacts even in that time. The borders were closed again and no contact was made with the Holy See till 1962.

Pope John XXIII announced first in the cathedral of St. Peter’s at Rome on 25 January 1959 that he wished to renew the Catholic Church by convening the diocese of Rome, then the “ecumenical synod.” The announcement of the 78-year-old pope, who was thought to be “temporary,” was a real surprise in the whole world.⁸³

For the Catholics of the world of the time the convening of the second Vatican synod must have been the greatest event of their

⁸² Szabó, ed., *A Grósz-per előkészítése 1951*, pp. 111, 161.

⁸³ András Fejérdy, *Magyarország és a II Vatikáni Zsinat 1959-1965* [Hungary and the II Vatican Synod 1959-1965] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 2011).

lives. The Catholics of the free Western world were looking forward the preparations and later the events with great interest. It was natural that the Catholics of the blocked East were also eager to get to St. Peter's throne. Let's just imagine the Hungarian prelates who have been living cut off for at least fourteen years, and were not allowed to travel to Rome since 1948. No matter how hard they wanted to get to Rome, their fates were decided by others.

Pursuant to the proposal of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party adopted at the 18 September 1962 meeting Endre Hamvas, Bishop of Csanád and Sándor Kovács, Bishop of Szombathely and Pál Brezanóczy, apostolic governor of Eger and their companions got permission to travel to the Vatican Council II.

Although neither the ÁEH nor the internal security was fully aware how important the appearance of the prelates at the synod was, they tried to make preparations meticulously. Out of the nine participants who travelled to the first session of the synod seven were agents of the internal security; Endre Hamvas and Polikárp Radó were not. They were moving all the force they could, as till the end of the session twenty agents worked on the issues of the synod.⁸⁴ It was characteristic of all the sessions that the internal security sent agents to Rome other than the delegation. Major machinery was involved in the synod. The residents, the control officers, the agents with various assignments were all interested in collecting, passing, controlling (mis)information in and to the Vatican.

When Pope John XXIII opened Vatican Synod II on 11 October 1962 he was happy to see that the Polish, Hungarian, Czechoslovak, East German and Yugoslav prelates were also present. Among the observers were the delegates of the Patriarch of Moscow. All this could happen with the approval of the leaders of the parties and state in Moscow and the East European countries. Since 1961/1962 a

⁸⁴ Gábor Kiszely, *Állambiztonság 1956-1990* [State Security 1956-1990] (Budapest: Korona, 2001), pp. 97-143 and Gábor Adriányi, *A Vatikán keleti politikája és Magyarország 1939-1978. A Mindszenty-ügy* [The Vatican's eastern politics and Hungary 1939-1978. The Mindszenty case] (Budapest: Kairosz, 2004), pp. 42-44 and 53-60.

very cautious diplomatic acceptance between Rome, Washington and Moscow started and later also Hungary joined it.⁸⁵

Both the Hungarian and the Hungarian party tried to find a way to establish contacts, for the time being only semi-officially in secret.⁸⁶

Agostino Casaroli, diplomat to the Vatican met József Prantner, President of ÁEH, leader of the Hungarian delegation on 7 May 1963 the first time. With this the bilateral secret meetings started between the Vatican and the People's Republic of Hungary. The first meetings in Budapest were followed by three additional ones alternating in Rome and Budapest. The negotiations lasted for one and a half years and as a result the delegates of the Holy See and the People's Republic of Hungary signed a document (atto) and the related minutes (protocollo) on 15 September 1964. Both parties agreed in the document that they were ready for further negotiations. The minutes contained all the issues, including those in which no conclusion was reached.⁸⁷

The discussions started in 1963 went on without interruption between the delegates of the Vatican and the People's Republic of Hungary in the sixties, then even later on.

*Issues raised during the negotiations:*⁸⁸ Several issues were also raised during the Hungarian–Vatican negotiations in the sixties, which needed urgent solution. They must be differentiated, because some were placed on the agenda by the Hungarian party, like the question of the excommunicated peace priests in 1958, whereas other issues were key for the Vatican, as the appointment of the prelates, the filling of vacancy of the prebends. Other issues, like sorting out of the situation of the archbishop, were subordinated to other issues

⁸⁵ Agostino Casaroli, *A türelem vértanúsága. A Szentszék és a kommunista államok (1963-1989)* [Martyrdom of patience. The Holy See and the communist countries (1963-1989)] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2001), p. 59.

⁸⁶ Csaba Szabó, *A Szentszék és a Magyar Népköztársaság kapcsolatai a hatvanas években* [Relations of the Holy See and Peoples Republic of Hungary in the sixties] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat–Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2005), p. 32.

⁸⁷ Csaba Szabó, "Magyarország és a Vatikán. Egyházpolitika a hatvanas években," p. 90.

⁸⁸ See in details: Csaba Szabó, *A Szentszék és a Magyar Népköztársaság kapcsolatai a hatvanas években*, pp. 32-47.

which seemed more important to both parties. Some issues were discussed only to reach a quick solution, to show results, one of them was the question of oaths.

The issue of the *excommunicated peace priests* – excommunicated because of their political activity – was raised by the Hungarian partner every time. The closing of the case is typical. Three days after József Mindszenty left the country, a letter dated 1 October 1971 written by Cardinal Villot, secretary of state informed József Íjjas, Archbishop of Kalocsa, the president of the Hungarian Catholic Episcopacy at the time, that the Holy See conferred the decision to the Hungarian episcopacy to decide whether a Catholic priest could take a position as a member of parliament or play any political role. On 13 October the 15 July resolution of the Council for Ecclesiastic Public Affairs of the Apostolic Holy See was published, which disengaged Miklós Beresztóczy, Richárd Horváth and Imre Várkonyi from excommunication. The only flaw was that the text was made public after Cardinal Mindszenty left the country, whereas it was formulated one year earlier, on 8 October 1970 in the Vatican.

A key function for the Vatican was at the discussions the settlement of the position of the *bishops appointed but not acknowledged by the Hungarian state* in the fifties. János Bárd and Mihály Endrey were appointed to suffragan bishops of Kalocsa, respectively Eger by Pope Pius XII in November 1950, but were banned by the state. The Holy See made another attempt to appoint prelates in 1959. Suffragan bishops were appointed to Pécs and Szombathely, Gellért Belon and József Winkler. The state was firmly opposed again. Thanks to the negotiations the position of József Winkler was settled in 1964. Mihály Erdély's was approved only in 1972, as suffragan bishop without acknowledging his appointment in Eger twenty-two years earlier. Pope Paul VI appointed him suffragan bishop of Pécs between 1972 and 1975, then as diocesan bishop of Vác until his death. The positions of János Bárd and Gellért Belon could not be settled at all, as it was no more than a formality that the then 71-year-old ill Belon was appointed as suffragan bishop to Pécs five years before his death (1982), twenty-three years after his assignment by the Holy See.

In the first phase of the negotiations the parties discussed the matters of the *emigrant Hungarian priests in Rome and the Papal Hungarian Institute in Rome*. After World War II numerous

Hungarian Catholic priests stayed abroad, some in Rome. They were well educated priests with deep knowledge, who could have got important assignments in the home country in other circumstances. The delegates of the Hungarian government had expressed their views about them in critical terms from the very beginning and demanded several times that the Vatican should not give any credit to the emigrant priests. The Hungarian government was not interested in the Papal Hungarian Institute in Rome because of the vocational training of the priests, but the institute was regarded as the “headquarters” of the emigration. They wanted to simply liquidate it. After having acquired the Hungarian Institute in Rome in 1964, reluctantly they provided it with money, supplies and chose who could study there.

Before signing the detailed agreement the question of *state oath* was one of the recurring issues during the Hungarian–Vatican talks. Both parties regarded it as a question which required a quick solution. It was put on the agenda, because both parties hoped for an agreement. The common viewpoint was formed by October 1963. The state oath means that they took it by concluding with the following line “as it suits to a bishop or priest,” as it was in order from a moral point of view.

The issue of the *arrested Catholics* was also raised during the Hungarian–Vatican discussion. 22 legal cases on church policy are known between January 1961 and January 1972, in which priests, former monks and nuns were charged. Some priests were convicted several times in the sixties. The Piarist Ödön Lénárd was found guilty twice (in 1948 and also in 1961 and 1966) for political reasons spent the longest time in prison, 18 and a half years; the Regnum fathers were found guilty three times (1961, 1965, 1971). After 1972 the courts in Hungary did not find anybody guilty because of his or her religious belief, including the conscientious objectors.

It was important to settle the position of Mindszenty for both parties, but they wanted to link it with other issues, and it was considered subject to bargaining. It seemed that the Hungarian party reached a better position in the matter. The requirements of the People’s Republic of Hungary were met, when on 18 December 1973 the Pope declared “*sede vacante*” of the archbishopric of Esztergom, then the provision was published on 5 February 1974.

Summary: the question might be raised about the meaning of the “Ostpolitik” of the Vatican or rather the “Vatican politics” of the People’s Republic of Hungary. The Vatican had, of course, an Eastern policy, as the Holy See had a firm, decisive concept concerning the socialist countries, including Hungary. At the same time the People’s Republic of Hungary had also firm requirements toward the Holy See. The merit of the case was taken up and there were continuing negotiations for both parties. Each of the two parties could initiate a new meeting if they wanted to dispute any issue. Until September 1971 when Cardinal József, Archbishop of Esztergom left Hungary, the delegates of the Vatican and the People’s Republic of Hungary negotiated twelve times either in Rome or in Budapest. The intensity of the mutual and bilateral talks did not decrease even in the seventies. The negotiators met from Casaroli’s first meetings in Hungary 36 times till the end of 1979, in twenty-five years till the change of the regime more than fifty times, i.e. they met semiannually. As a result of the intensive discussions both parties set out terms for long-term cooperation. They wanted to achieve their requirements by “small steps,” they mutually tried to reach small allowances.

The Period of “Small Steps” (1972-1989)

After the death of Cardinal József Mindszenty (6 May 1975) Pope Paul VI appointed a new Archbishop of Esztergom, László Lékai (10 February 1976). In the first time since World War II all the eleven dioceses had diocesan bishops.

The new Archbishop of Esztergom led the Catholic Church on a new path: the point of the policy of the “small steps” was that within the frame of fidelity to the socialist state to broaden the possibilities of the church step by step in pastoral work. László Lékai was able to accept this policy by Imre Miklós, president of the ÁEH, who adjusted the “small steps” policy to the church politics of the party. The detente in global politics as a consequence of the “Helsinki process” and the “soft” dictatorship of the Kádár era from the second half of the 1970s the “small steps” created illusions as if the relationship between the Hungarian state and the Catholic Church had been entirely harmonious and consistent. The Kádár regime became “presentable.” Christian, Protestant and Catholic prelates visited Hungary and the leaders of the Hungarian churches were

allowed to travel to the West freely. On 14 April 1977 – for the first time after some thirty years – all the diocesans were allowed to travel to Rome for an *ad limina* visit. They met the Pope in person and reported on the condition of their bishopric.

Those high-level visits fit also in the process when, for example, the Pope received György Lázár, President of the Cabinet Council in a private audience (13 November 1975) or when he met János Kádár, the first secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' party (MSZMP) and his wife in person, and also Frigyes Puja, Minister for Foreign Affairs (9 June 1977).⁸⁹

Some even spoke about that the "Hungarian model" could be applied in other socialist countries. On the other hand, some critical sounds were also formulated. Cardinal Franz König, Archbishop of Vienna said in an interview, "*Among all the churches of Eastern Europe the one in Hungary is in the most difficult situation because the majority of the priests resigned.*"⁹⁰

The Hungarian Catholic Church became "double track." One track meant the official church, which constituted the present situation as a result, of the policy of constant compromises and deals. The other, "underground" track meant the critical Catholics, who were dissatisfied with the policy of the Holy See and the ecclesiastical leadership.⁹¹ The larger part of the religious orders had been forced into illegality after 1950, so they lived their spiritual and social lives of their orders and also taught the young secretly. The small communities, i.e., base communities had existed since the fifties. Since the seventies the groups were formed around parish priests and priests. They were independent from the church conventions and they also backed away from state control (under the name of hiking, football some priests collected the believers).⁹² The state and

⁸⁹ György T. Varga, "Nemzetközi enyhülés és egyházpolitika [International détente and church politics]," *História* 1991, Vol. 13, No. 5-6, pp. 27-28.

⁹⁰ Margit Balogh, "Egyház és egyházpolitika a Kádár rendszerben [Church and church policy in the Kádár system]," *Eszmélet* 1997, Vol. 34, p.76.

⁹¹ Miklós Tomka, *Magyar katolicizmus 1991* [Hungarian Catholicism 1991] (Budapest: Országos Lelkipásztori Intézet–Katolikus Társadalomtudományi Akadémia, 1991), p. 74.

⁹² András Mezey, *Katolikus kisközösségek Csongrád megyében 1946 és 1980 közt, a pártállam és a hivatalos egyház vonatkozási keretében* [Catholic small and base communities in Csongrád county between 1946 and 1980, in relation with the

the internal security had been controlling and corrupting the small communities, but changes came when the issue was placed within the scope of the episcopacy. The bishops declared the base communities as “sects.” This resulted in a deep spiritual crisis for the priests who led those communities. Some left Hungary or the religious order, but unfortunately some committed suicide. The leader of the Bulányi-community, György Bulányi, Piarist monk was deprived of his right to celebrate mass, preaching and the administration of sacraments in June 1982.⁹³

The episcopacy led by László Lékai had to face the issue of conscientious objections. From 1979 to 1989 twenty-four young men were convicted for conscientious objection. The issue was regularly dealt with also in the samizdat periodical “*Beszélő*.” The conscientious objectors organized a demonstration in Budapest on 5 October 1988. In their petition they demanded the introduction of an alternative military service. Twenty social organizations supported the initiative in an open letter. The leaders of the church met Károly Grósz, Prime Minister on 14 March 1988. László Paskai requested the introduction of the alternative service. The parliament passed on the bill on it in March 1989.⁹⁴

Even “small steps” brought some results: In 1981 the John XXIII Nursing Home was opened with 120 residents; on 31 July 1983 on the memorial day of St. Ignatius Cardinal Joseph Höffner, Archbishop of Cologne consecrated the St. Gellért Retreat House in Leányfalu; on 15 April 1986 the latest female order was established *Societas Magna Domina Hungarorum* as the society of apostolic life with diocesan rights.⁹⁵

The episcopacy could not solve such problems like the permanent decrease in the number of the clergy and the number who applied for catechism and the lack of religious literature. By 1980 Hungarian

single-party state and the official church relations] (Piliscsaba/Budapest: Dissertation (PhD), 2013).

⁹³ András Máté-Tóth, *Bulányi und die Bokor-Bewegung. Eine pastoraltheologische Würdigung* (Wien: Ungarisches Kirchensoziologisches Institut, 1996), p. 43.

⁹⁴ Károly Kiszely, “A katolikus katonai szolgálatmegtagadók Magyarországon. Kronológia” [Catholic conscientious objectors in Hungary. Chronology], *Egyházforum* 1988, Vol. 2, No. 1-2, and András Mezey, *Katolikus kisközösségek Csongrád megyében 1946 és 1980 közt, a pártállam és a hivatalos egyház vonatkozási keretében*, p. 25.

⁹⁵ Balogh and Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon 1790-1992*, p. 368.

Catholicism entered into a very deep internal crisis. Bishops broke away from the believers, but from a part of the clergy, too. The Religion strongly receded, the number of churchgoers decreased.

The Change of Regime (1989–1990)

With regard to the churches one of the main tasks of the regime change was to ensure their independence from the state. This meant developing the neutrality of the state toward religion, separating the state from churches. This was thwarted by the legal boundaries established in during the single-party state era, and by organizations designed to monitor and restrict the churches. These had to be demolished, and new legal regulations established ensuring freedom of religion in the social institution of democracy. The first act countermanded the laws restricting the churches (e.g. the obligation of public contribution towards holding a church position; monitoring of the publishing activity and media of the church was discontinued).⁹⁶ On 30 June 1989 the Presidential Council ordered the dismissal of the National Church Bureau with no successor.⁹⁷ National matters concerning the churches first went to the ministry of culture, then to the *Secretariat of Church Relations* (1996) established in the frame of prime ministership. At the time of the regime change, the joint state-church council-table functioned as a symbol of transition (from 20 October 1989 until 13 June 1990), the *National Religion Council*. Its chairman was Miklós Németh Prime Minister, with Vice-chairman Ferenc Glatz cultural minister, and Secretary Barna Sarkadi Nagy, former vice-chairman of NCB. Almost all churches and sects were represented. The Council debated and commented on ministerial proposals and statements concerning the churches.⁹⁸

The Catholic peace priest movement died off during the regime change as if it never existed. At the same time the convents regained

⁹⁶ Margit Balogh, "Egyházak a rendszerváltozás után [Churches after the regime change]," in István Kollega-Tarsoly, ed., *Magyarország a XX. században* [Hungary in the 20th century] (Szekszárd: Babits Kiadó, 1997).

⁹⁷ Csaba Fazekas, "Dokumentumok Miklós Imre lemondásának történetéhez (1989-1990) [Documents to the resignation if Imre Miklós (1898-1990)]," *Egyháztörténeti Szemle* 2004, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 120-144.

⁹⁸ Csaba Fazekas, *Az Országos Vallásügyi Tanács 1989-1990* [National Council of religious affairs 1989-1990] (Budapest: METEM, 2011).

their freedom of operation in the 17-law regulation coming into force on 30 August 1989. The convents that lost their freedom of operation in 1950 quickly reorganized while new ones formed. In 1991 21 male and 47 female, in 1995 21 male and 50 female congregations were operating.⁹⁹

During the regime change, the diplomatic connection of the People's Republic of Hungary and the Vatican was redefined. Prime Minister Miklós Németh invited cardinal, Under-secretary Agostino Casaroli to a discussion on 5 September 1989. The agreement was signed on 9 February 1990 that reinstated the diplomatic connections that had been severed in 1945 between the Hungarian Republic and the Apostolic See on the ambassador and nuncio level. The Budapest nuncio of the Apostolic See was Angelo Acerbi, and the Hungarian ambassador to the Vatican was Sándor Keresztes.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile on the 23 October 1989 the Hungarian Republic was announced, and its constitution declared. As basic conditions of freedom of thought, conscience and religion the relationship of church and state was incorporated into the constitution, declaring that churches must function separate from the state. The state will guarantee independence for the churches, but at the same time they have to cooperate mutually for the interest of the public. Religious freedom and the relationship of church and state were also constituted by the 1990-IV-law, approved on the 4 January 1990, which was of legal force for two decades.¹⁰¹ With the separation of church and state, a neutral ideology, not meaning indifference, of the state became possible. The state has to ensure the conditions and protection of religious freedom.

The president of the cabinet formed a committee of lawyers and historians in the spring of 1989, to evaluate the illegitimate criminal

⁹⁹ See the Hungarian database of the convents (<http://uj.katolikus.hu/adattar.php?h=13>. Downloaded: August 11, 2014).

¹⁰⁰ Jenő Gergely, "Magyar-szentszéki diplomáciai kapcsolatok (1920-2000) [Hungarian-Holy See diplomatic connections (1920-2000)]," in István Zombori, ed., *Magyarország és a Szentszék diplomáciai kapcsolata 1920-2000* [Diplomatic connections of Hungary and the Holy See 1920-2000] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat–METEM, 2001), p. 99.

¹⁰¹ 1990-IV-law and Ferenc Glatz, "Egyház és kormányzati politika, 1989. A szovjet típusú egyházigazgatás felszámolása. 1989. június-1990 június. Adattár [Church and governmental politics, 1989. The elimination of Soviet style church administration. June 1989-June 1990. Database]," *História* 1991, Vol. 13, No. 5-6.

cases between 1945 and 1962. The committee was tasked with historical and legal assessment as well as preparing suggestions for remedies. Professional inquires have dealt with cases against the church for the first time since the infringements. On the 31 of March 1990 the nullity law came to legal force (1990. annual XXVI), declaring void illegitimate convictions between 1945 and 1963, and on the 9 March 1992 the third nullity law (1992. annual XI), declaring void crimes against the state and public order between 1963 and 1989. The Supreme Court declared void the case of József Mindszenty archbishop of Esztergom on 18 May 1990, and on 22 May in the case of József Grósz archbishop of Kalocsa. This legislative framework laid the foundation for political rehabilitation and restitution.¹⁰² At the same time, it has to be pointed out that these actions had a serious deficiency. Some feel that while they have been financially compensated for their prison time, the base for forgiveness can only be an apology. This has not mainly happened.

In case of churchmen pursued, convicted and imprisoned during communism, a political question arises reaching to the regime change and present days. The Hungarian liberal opposition was the only social coalition in 1988-1990, that could forge a political position mainly from their roots reaching back to 1956, in expressing their dissenting thought, undergoing surveillance and arrest, and in their promotion of samizdat literature. In reality, the spiritual resistance against the dictatorial political power had existed from 1945 until the regime change. After the 1948 arrest and 1949 conviction of József Mindszenty archbishop and cardinal, the resistance against the political dictatorship did not subside, but continued even after the Catholic Church was forced to sign an agreement with Rákosi in the summer of 1950. Proof of this are the hundreds of cases in which Catholic priests, monks, nuns and thousands of believers were convicted. In the inquiry materials or evidence for these cases included hundreds of samizdat brochures, poems, illegally multiplied documents of different thinking.

¹⁰² Zsuzsanna Mikó, "Az 1963-as közkegyelemtől a kárpótlási törvényekig [From the general pardon of 1963 to the compensation laws]," in Zoltán Ólmosi and Csaba Szabó, eds., *Amikor "fellezult tételben fogalmazódott meg a világ" Magyarország a hatvanas években* [When "the world was formed in a loose doctrine" Hungary in the 1960s] (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára–L'Harmattan, 2013), pp. 185-188.

The regime change created the opportunity and the new democratic state the frame for the development of churches and the Catholic Church. The heritage was not light, but a healthy evolution slowly developed. The Hungarian catholic reformation was greatly helped by the visit of Pope John Paul II on 16-20 August 1991.¹⁰³

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¹⁰³ Konrád Szántó, *Várjuk a Szentatyát* [We await the Holy Father] (Budapest: Vigilia, 1990).

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Relations between the Historically Established Churches and the New Protestant Entities in Hungary in the 19th-20th Centuries

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The emergence of new Protestant entities brought novel challenges for the historically established churches.¹ Earlier, the people who posed a challenge for the historically established churches in the 19th-20th centuries were those who either turned from the traditional Christian faith, or interpreted it differently because they were under the influence of the Enlightenment and new political and scientific ideas (e.g. evolutionism, Biblical criticism). Though these seekers criticised traditional faith, they nominally remained within the institutional framework of the church. Others considered church life as hollow. However, they did not officially leave their church, either. What's more, until the introduction of the state registry offices (1894), they paid respect to the traditional ceremonies prescribed by the law, but they neglected attendance at church worship². Until the Communist takeover or Socialist secularisation, the people (seekers) who primarily (apart from devoted Marxists) crossed denominational boundaries, were ones who joined the new Protestant entities.³ The difference is that the

¹ The historically established churches were in Hungary in our present terminology are the following churches: Catholic, Reformed, Unitarian, Evangelical-Lutheran, Orthodox, and Jewish churches. In my paper, I am going to pay attention especially to Catholic, Reformed and Evangelical-Lutheran Churches.

² According to the 1949 census, only 0.1% of the population was non-denominational.

³ See the Catholic context during the Communist era Zsuzsanna Bögre, "Religion and Identity," in Andrew Blasko, Taras Dobko, Pham Van Duc and George Pattery, eds., *Globalization and Identity* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), Series 7, Vol. 25, pp. 180-191, Zsuzsanna Bögre, *Vallásosság és identitás, Élettörténetek a diktatúrában 1948-1964*

majority of the seekers who joined the new Protestant entities were religious church-goers. Decades before, their piety was the dominant one in the Protestant churches. In other words, the former dwellers became “seekers” abandoning their church, which then became an important social basis for the emerging new Protestant entities before 1950. Therefore, the complex system of relations between historically established churches and the classic new Protestant entities is to be reconsidered in a way that bears in mind not only the contemporary socio-historical and church-historical conditions, but also the “seekers-dwellers” concept, and we also utilise Peter Berger’s religious market approach and the church-sect-denomination-cult system of concepts.⁴

Relations between the Historically Established Churches and New Protestant Churches before 1919

The first followers of new Protestant entities appeared in Hungary before the 1848 revolution (the Nazarenes in the summer of 1839 and the Baptists in 1846). In the beginning, their followers were craftsmen from Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed families who had been to West-Europe and who, after being introduced to their new religion abroad and coming home again, spread their new faith in their environment during their everyday work. This meant some dozens of God-seeking and Bible-reading men who held gatherings to read the Bible and to sing Reformed psalms. Due to their small number, they did not attract the attention of neither the historically established churches nor the authorities before 1849. But the case of Lajos Hencsei, a Nazarene convert from a Catholic family, shows the kind of church reaction that could be anticipated by a contemporary

[Religiosity and Identity. Life Histories in Dictatorship 1948-1964] (Budapest: Dialóg Campus Kiadó, 2004).

⁴ Utilised approaches: typological approach to religious entities, Péter Török, *Magyarországi vallási kalauz* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2004), pp. 17-39; Robert Wuthnow’s ‘Religious Dwellers – Religious Seekers’ typology; Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven. Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1998); Peter Berger’s ‘religious market’ approach, Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967); and the Theological interpretation of the sect-church typology, Jenő Szigeti, “A közös keresztyén tradíció szektás elszíneződései,” in Jenő Szigeti “*És emlékezzél meg az útról...*”: *Tanulmányok a magyarországi szabadegyházak történetéből* (Budapest: Szabadegyházak Tanácsa, 1981), pp. 235-251.

religious seeker. He was reported to Dean Ferenc Bertalan for Bible-reading. Once he learnt about his new faith, the Dean summoned him, and “his plentiful curses were also supported by smacks as well”⁵ His talks with the Franciscan preacher Kilit Gasparich had an altogether different atmosphere, who welcomed him in a friendly manner. Though their talk concluded without their agreement regarding the matter of believer’s baptism (adult baptism), they shared the same views on many issues. In addition, Gasparich appreciated Hencsei’s knowledge of the Scripture in his report: “I do not advise any priest to engage in dispute with him, for it would be to no avail.... This poor young man and his knowledge and unshakable faith are not for us to condemn.”⁶

After the suppression of the 1848/1849 war of independence, the authorities addressed them first, as they thought them to be communistic associations. As it is presented in Lajos Hencsei’s confession and official reports, the basis for their identity was in teachings and practices that were different from the historically established churches. Therefore, they indeed constituted a sect in both the sociological and theological senses of the word. According to Hencsei, church attendance is not compatible with the faith of a person who was baptised on the basis of profession of faith. However, he called his followers to loyal behaviour toward the state.⁷ As opposed to the Nazarenes, the Baptist mission featured denominational characteristics from its “germinal phase” on. Its founder in Hungary, János Rottmayer, was actively seeking contact with Protestant home mission movements from the outset.⁸ What’s more, the Scottish mission sent him in 1865 to Kolozsvár as a Bible distributor.⁹ Afterwards, several Baptists were active *colporteurs* at the ecumenically minded British and Foreign Bible Society that strictly prohibited denominational missionary activities.

⁵ László Kardos and Jenő Szigeti, *Boldog emberek közössége: A magyarországi nazarénusok* (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1988), p. 56.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-59.

⁸ Kálmán Mészáros, “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846-1873),” in *“Krisztusért járva követségben”: Tanulmányok a magyar baptista misszió 150 éves történetéből*, Lajos Bereczki, ed. (Budapest: Baptista Kiadó, 1996), p. 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

The appearance of Nazarenes and Baptists also marks the beginning of the transformation of the “religious market” in Hungary. Since the era of Reformation, no new religious entity had appeared in the country, and after the end of the 18th century, power relations between the religious entities had not really changed, either. The previous expansion of historically established churches should be attributed to decisions of monarchs, feudal lords or magistrates rather than to the free will of the joining believers. In the 16th-18th centuries, however, a new phenomenon became more and more frequent: opposing the Habsburg monarchs’ efforts toward *recatholisation* or religious unification, communities and ethnicities insisted on keeping their old faiths. Churches had not been engaged in faith-propagation for decades or even centuries. Their followers basically entered the church by being born into it. Their “financial duties” toward their church were prescribed by law. Church taxes could be collected by governmental coercive means as well, thus priests/pastors were not forced to care for and nurture their church members spiritually. Conversions and the religion of children from mixed marriages were strictly regulated. For those who might “vote by foot,” the lack of state registry offices and secular wedding meant that participating in formal church rituals was prescribed by law. Thus until the Act XLIII of 1895 on the free practice of religion, “seekers” of the churches faced difficulties in leaving their churches, and, of course, becoming “non-denominational” or belonging to an un-recognised denomination were legally out of question. The relation of the historically established churches and the emergent Nazarene and Baptist mission was basically nothing but their relation to those “Bible-reading seekers” who legally belonged to them. Even if they identified themselves as Nazarene or Baptist, the law considered them to be Reformed, Lutheran or Catholic. It is evident that they gained their new followers from among the seekers of the historically established churches, which caused tensions within the denomination involved. Most probably the motivations of those who actually crossed denominational boundaries included the inadequacy of the historically established churches in their spiritual support from their clergy/pastors.

It is interesting that it was the state authority that first reacted to the new phenomenon of the Hungarian religious life. In a post-feudalist society, the absolutistic state establishment (quite

understandably) made efforts to protect the monopolistic situation of the churches that were in a close symbiosis with it (primarily the Catholic and Protestant churches). Even on such a small scale, the existence of these entities was not tolerated, as they were democratically functioning and built on the free will of men and communities, latently adhering to the principle of the “free religious market.” For this reason, the authorities initiated procedures against them. Arrests were made. Thus in 1852, the more important members of the Nazarene congregation were sentenced to prison and they had to attend religious education. This proved to be fruitless, as they constantly disputed with the priest that was appointed for the “execution of the punishment,” and the latter was surprised to see their Biblical and dogmatic competence.¹⁰ Therefore, state authorities transferred the problem to the churches and recommended the education of the populace at the church.¹¹

Due to their insignificant number, they rarely confronted historically established churches until the mid-1850s. The practice of new Protestant churches, abolishing child baptism and disregarding the services of the church (to which they belonged only nominally) at weddings and burials, led to conflicts with both the historically established churches and authorities, until the introduction of secular marriage and state registry offices in 1894. Until these laws took effect, pastors of historically established churches baptised Nazarene/Baptist children by force and with the help of the authorities – at first only sporadically, then more and more often as the number of Nazarenes and Baptists increased. The first confrontation known to us happened in 1844 in Zala county.¹²

The Nazarenes’ image of the Catholic Church is well represented by the 1850, April 20 report of the town police department of Pest, according to which Nazarenes considered the Catholic faith as a false religion and thought that damnation awaits every Catholic person. They boldly declared that there is no need for priests, because the Holy Spirit enables all to interpret God’s Word. According to their claim, their regular gatherings were held “distancing themselves from false mundane friends, to sing holy songs and, in congregation,

¹⁰ Zoltán Rajki and Jenő Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig* (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2012), p. 50.

¹¹ Kardos and Szigeti, *Boldog emberek közössége*, p. 107.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 80.

to worship God worthily.”¹³ A good example is the case of Nazarene leader József Bella. Efforts were made to reconvert him and one of his fellows to the Roman Catholic Church. In his opinion, this was “just like hearing Potifar’s lustful and wanton wife persuading Joseph to commit adultery with her.”¹⁴

Nazarene ideas reached the peasantry in the mid-1850’s, while the Baptist faith did so in the late 1860s. More and more joined them from the ranks of poor peasantry and the agrarian proletariat. In addition to their *Bible-centred* piety, the key to their success was that they treated their members as brothers, regardless of social rank or ethnicity. Peasants who had been “nobodies” in their former church could have positions of office in these congregations.¹⁵

Their expansion had differing effects on the historically established churches. According to our data, from 10 thousand Reformed people, 34 left the denomination between 1895 and 1913. From the same amount, the Lutheran dropout was 38. The same ratio was 5 in the case of Catholics and 6 in the case of Greek Catholics.¹⁶ Thus, being “unaffected,” the Catholic Church did not really address the issue before 1918, while the problem had quite significant effect on the lives of the Reformed and Evangelical-Lutheran churches.

At the time when the Nazarene and Baptist churches appeared in Hungary, the historical Protestant churches were struggling with an internal crisis. Protestant theology, preaching and practice were transformed by the Enlightenment, which resulted in the emptying of churches. The people’s traditional piety, based on Puritanism, was marginalised within congregational life. Local potentates became members of the presbytery. It was the members of historical Protestant churches with a traditionally experienced, Bible-centred Christianity who were religious seekers living their religious life in fraternal communities, referred to as peasant-ecclesiola in the literature of cultural anthropology. Therefore, as the effect of changes within the church, former “Bible-reading dwellers” became “Bible-reading seekers” within their own church, without any change in their piety. But the official church was hostile to their activity, and as they became alienated from the official congregation, the attraction

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252.

of the free Church entities practicing a piety that was basically identical with their own grew.¹⁷ As a result, Nazarene and Baptist congregations kept forming in the country.

The up to this point monopolistic establishment of the “religious market” in Hungary was subverted by the evangelisation activity of the two denominations. The “new actors in the market” conducted their activity after the fashion of the American-style “free competition” and, basically, reached the “Bible-reading seekers” of the historically established churches. They had marginal influence in society (the proportion of their followers reached 0.1-0.2 per cent of the population around 1910), but pastors and the public opinion of the historically established churches were more preoccupied with this issue than with the increasing number of those who were only formally members and respected formal church rituals (child baptism, confirmation, church wedding, funeral) only for the sake of custom or the legal consequences.

Historical Protestant churches presented two ways of reaction to the challenges of the “sectarian menace.”¹⁸ The official church urged the use of polemic and administrative means. In contrast, the ecumenical (home mission) branch considered the emergence of “sects” as an internal crisis symptom in the church. As a defence against them, they proposed adapting their methods. They established good relations with the pastors of the free churches, both at home and abroad. Representatives of this approach also supported the case of free Baptist religious practice in the Parliament as well. A good example is Gábor (Kovács) Papp’s Parliament speech in 1876; he was against state intervention and basically urged the “liberalisation of the religious market.” “Ideas have apostles. According to his own conviction, Henrik Meyer¹⁹ proclaims the truth and strives to gather believers for the religion which is true according to his own conviction. It is not the propagators who do the conversion, but the ideas.... He, who wants to spread the truth, with the weapons of knowledge, is obliged to enter the field of ideas.

¹⁷ Jenő Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak,” in Jenő Szigeti “*És emlékezzél meg az útról...*”: *Tanulmányok a magyarországi szabadegyházak történetéből* (Budapest: Szabadegyházak Tanácsa, 1981), pp. 16-17.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁹ The leader of the Hungarian Baptist community in the period.

When, in the struggle of ideas, truth takes form, everyone wins by it. The church that fights against arguments not by arguments but the oppressive weapon of power admits that it has no truth and is weak.”²⁰ Followers of this approach found themselves in crossfire within their church. Because of their modern methods, they were attacked by the church leadership, while the strengthening free churches integrated those believers into their ranks who could have supported them in the realisation of their home mission methods.

Besides the urging of state intervention, historically established churches also employed church methods in their internal debates. For example in 1858, to counterbalance the Nazarenes’ successes in Pacsér they sent evangelists to the region. To no avail, as the Nazarenes never even went to the church. They opined that the devil speaks from the priest.²¹ At other places, they trusted themselves to the utilisation of authority. For example, in order to prevent the Nazarene mission, the Reformed presbytery of Hódmezővásárhely reported the leaders of the movement to the authorities in 1863.²² Afterwards, the missionary and his two helpers were arrested. But the action further alienated those who had abandoned the Reformed church.²³ What’s more, the Reformed church leaders were ridiculed and the church was mocked as “stone coffin” in the Nazarene congregation of Hódmezővásár-hely.²⁴

After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the Hungarian government showed a more flexible behaviour on the Nazarene (and Baptist) issue than did the historically established churches. In 1868, József Eötvös permitted them to create their own registry records for births and deaths. The Nazarenes were open to this. But carrying out the decree was obstructed by the churches, as they did not acknowledge the existence of Nazarenes, who were legally non-existent but actually present in society. And they were assisted by authorities in this. Thus the practice of coercive baptism and the penalties for shunning church funerals continued.²⁵

²⁰ Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, p. 90.

²¹ Kardos and Szigeti, *Boldog emberek közössége*, pp. 115-116.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 151.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

Finally, some of the problems around the free churches were solved in 1894, with the introduction of civil weddings and civil registry records. By declaring the basic tenets of freedom of conscience and the tacit introduction of the category “non-denominational,” the Act XLIII of 1895 enabled dissidents to quit the established churches. Yet, their liberty was only partial as they had to educate their children according to a recognised religion. And as this was, in many cases, the former or merely nominal religion of their parents, the treatment of these children at school also reflected the attitude toward the seekers of the particular piety. Due to the character of the social and political system, the liberalisation of the religious market was also ambiguous. Unrecognised religious denominations (they were called sects at that time), where the new Protestant entities (except for the Baptists who were recognised in 1905) belonged until 1945, faced several difficulties. Their gatherings were subjected to the kindness of the local authorities. These legal resolutions, the decrease in the missionary activity of the Nazarene and Baptist denominations and their integration in the life of the village or town also reduced the tensions between them and the historically established churches.

In the late 1890’s, however, two new Protestant entities (Adventists and Methodists) began their operation in the country. Despite the many similarities, there were important differences in the operation of the two newer entities, as these denominations started their activity with the transfer of missionaries and pastors from abroad to Hungary.

With the arrival of the Volga-German John Frederick Huenergardt from the USA, Adventism (formerly present as a religious “exotica” at most) meant competition to the historically established churches in the struggle for the religious seekers that belonged to them. In a sociological and theological sense, the central element of the “sectarian” character of the Adventist missionary activity was the preaching of those teachings that were different from other denominations. Obviously, this led to dogmatic debates.²⁶ Beside spiritual methods, reactions of the Western-type historically established churches against them were local in nature. For example,

²⁶ Zoltán Rajki, *Egy amerikai lelkész magyarországi missziója. John Friedrich Huenergardt élete és korának adventizmusa* (Budapest: Lucidus, 2004), p. 88.

they agitated against Adventist preachers and against the literature published and distributed by that entity. They usually employed authority to ban their gatherings or their missionary workers from the settlement.²⁷

The appearance of Methodism²⁸ in Hungary can be related to the Protestant anti-alcoholic Hungarian Blue Cross Association. Robert Möllner travelled to them at the invitation of the Blue Cross members in Újverbász, Bácska, and preached in three settlements in Bácska. Soon after, the Methodist conference in Germany received a request from Bácska that asked for a resident preacher. The Hungarian activity of the Methodists tried to avoid any confrontation with other denominations, and they even strove to have good relations. Another reason for the fact that they did not have any serious conflict with the historically established churches was that the Methodist church had only a few hundred members in the country, and until WW1, they were present only in Budapest and Bácska.

The sect issue did not entail any significant problem for the Catholic Church. But some cases clearly show that, in case of "danger," "Bible-reading seekers" or missionaries of the new faiths had to expect strong Catholic countermeasures. For example at a home gathering in Óbecse, the village priest wrenched the Károli-Bible from the hand of the Nazarene János Fehér, claiming the heresy of its translator. Fehér then fetched the Káldi-translation and with its help, he disputed with the priest. As there was nothing else to do, the young Nazarene was taken to confinement with the help of the village magistrate.²⁹ The Baptist Henrik Meyer and some of his associates were attacked by women and youngsters in Budafok on February 2, 1883. Upon arriving to Buda, Meyer and his fellows immediately sought the deputy-lieutenant; as a result, the village judge was removed and the priest who had been scheming from the background was given a warning.³⁰ An article titled *Az adventisták és*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²⁸ For more details on the history of the Hungarian Methodist Church, see: *Keskeny utak. Tanulmányok a Magyarországi Metodista Egyház történetéről*, Judit Lakatos, ed. (Budapest: Magyarországi Metodista Egyház, 2005).

²⁹ Kardos and Szigeti, *Boldog emberek közössége*, pp. 138-139.

³⁰ Géza Kovács, "A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873-1894)," in *"Krisztusért járva követségben": Tanulmányok a magyar baptista misszió*

a *kassai vigéc* (*The Adventists and the Hotshot from Kassa*) in the Socialist newspaper *Kassai Munkás* reports about a Catholic-Adventist conflict. This presents the anti-Catholic features of the Adventist mission as positive, because “they enlighten the people about the detrimental work of the clerics, who present the Bible in a false manner, reporting their errors and the historical atrocities in their lectures.” On the Catholic side, the challenge of the Adventists was met by the Volksbund led by father Frisnyák. At one of the lectures, Frisnyák entered an open dispute with the speaker, despite the “constant booing and jeering” of his former followers, but he only got himself ridiculed.³¹

The religious market in Hungary was temporarily reshaped by the lost war and the 1918-19 revolutions. Having risen to power in November of 1918, the Károlyi government asked the help of Protestant pastors in order to negotiate for more favourable peace conditions, and Baptist pastors also took their part in this.³² Even the Adventist John Huenergardt had a diplomatic mission when he returned to the USA, at the request of several Protestant pastors including István Kováts, government commissioner of Protestant affairs.³³ Of course, some of the Protestant pastors were not glad that they could not use the authorities against the new Protestant “missionaries.”³⁴ In other words, they continued the practice of attempting to keep those with a Puritan-Scripturist piety away from the new Protestant entities by administrative measures.

In the Horthy-Era

The first decade of the Horthy-era was characterised by the restorative politics of a conservative-liberal elite of large-scale landowners and capitalists, followed by right-wing radicalism in the 1930s. In the ‘monarchy without a king’, a so-called *controlled*

150 éves történetéből, Lajos Bereczki, ed. (Budapest: Baptista Kiadó, 1996), pp. 60-61.

³¹ Rajki, *Egy amerikai lelkész magyarországi missziója*, p. 69.

³² Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, pp. 155-157.

³³ Rajki, *Egy amerikai lelkész magyarországi missziója*, pp. 125-126.

³⁴ Jenő Szigeti, “A református egyház kapcsolatai a protestáns kisegyházakkal a két világháború között,” in Jenő Szigeti, *“És emlékezzél meg az útról...”: Tanulmányok a magyarországi szabadegyházak történetéből* (Budapest: Szabadegyházak Tanácsa, 1981), p. 152.

democracy was operating instead of the parliamentary democracy prevalent throughout Europe, with the result that less than 30% of the total population had elective suffrage.³⁵

Regarding church policy, the new rule wished to follow the church politics of the Dualist era, but abandoned the more liberal aspects of the latter. Thus, it was the state authority that initiated actions to push back new Protestant entities. Their activities were taken under “operative supervision” and the Interior Ministry was responsible for their affairs. It was the VKF-2 that addressed their issue, just as in the case of the illegal Communist movement. Their gaining of followers was considered a violation of public morals and a threat to “denominational peace.” Despite this, the headcount of the already operating free churches kept increasing. What’s more, additional new Protestant churches emerged, such as the Pentecostal movements. Their increase in number is well shown in the fact that, for example, the number of Adventists grew from 611 (1920) to 3608 (1945). The majority of their new followers came from the historically established churches. Only 4-10% per cent of those who joined them were from Adventist families. They arrived from the Catholic Church in the greatest proportions (about 35-42%), but the loss of Protestant churches was far greater in proportion to their share in society (Reformed: 32-38%, Evangelicals: 8-15%). Thus the character of the historically established churches’ struggle against “sects” was fundamentally influenced by their attitudes toward the “seeker paths” of the involved followers. Census data of the time show that the larger part of those who joined an unrecognised new Protestant entity remained, nominally, a member of their former church. They had to educate their children according to the teachings of an established or recognised church. And this proved to be an additional source of conflict in everyday life.

Just as before, the new Protestant entities uniformly criticised the worship and political practices of the Catholic Church at the time. In sociological and theological terms, there were entities of both denominational (Methodists, Baptists, the Salvation Army, Christian

³⁵ Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2003), pp. 153-154, 223.

Brethren Assembly) and sectarian (Adventists, Pentecostal, Nazarene) orientation among them.³⁶

Contrary to the era of Dualism, in the Horthy-era it was the state authorities who initiated the “solution” of the sect issue. In his letter to the historically established churches, the minister of religion and education, József Vass, inquired in December of 1921 about the faith-propagating efforts of small churches and he also asked about the views of the historically established churches.³⁷ His successor Kunó Klebelsberg asked the leaders of historically established churches to watch out for the activity of “sects.” But he considered general pious activity and the intensification of spiritual fostering as crucial to solving the “sectarian issue.”³⁸

Contrary to the past, the Catholic Church in the Horthy-era also showed interest in the problem. In 1921, István Á. Hanauer, bishop of Vác, blamed the insufficiency of religious education and the lack of priests for the situation and he requested help from the state. At the 1922 March session of the Roman Catholic bishops, the issue of sects gaining strength was also addressed. Bishops called on the priests and authorities for vigilance, enlightening activity and a suppression of abuses. In the following year, they were already having extensive correspondence with the Ministry of Religion and Education about the restraining of small churches. In the 1925 March resolution of the episcopacy, they intended to mobilise public opinion to a larger extent, apart from employing authority. The Szent István Társulat³⁹ and other Catholic publishing companies were ordered to publish papers against the sects in a popular style. Additionally, they intended to fight the sects through encyclicals, preachings and association speeches.⁴⁰ In the mid-1920's, the bishop of Esztergom, János Csernoch asked state authorities to intervene in

³⁶ Zoltán Rajki, “Az adventista misszió társadalmi bázisának alakulása Magyarországon 1945 és 1989 között,” *Egyháztörténeti Szemle*, Vol. 9 (2008) no. 2, 2008, pp. 69-85.

³⁷ Csaba Fazekas, *Kisegyházak és szektakérdés a Horthy-korszakban* (Budapest: Teljes Evangéliumi Diák és Ifjúsági Szövetség–Szent Pál Akadémia, 1996), p. 19.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁹ The name of the Catholic publishing house in Hungary.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

order to prevent “sectarian propaganda,” to deal strictly with wandering preachers, and to ban or closely supervise gatherings.⁴¹

Ottokár Prohászka’s encyclical letter clearly shows that Hungarian Catholicism of the time, functioning as a church in the sociological sense as well, was against the American-type liberal (“free market”) interpretation of religious freedom and against the idea of religious pluralism. They criticised those who, “separating from the Holy Mother Church, form small congregations and interpret the Gospel as they like. (...) There are some who possess American money and distribute milk and clothes and maintain orphanages, which would be a nice thing to do if they did not bring American whimsies along with American money, and did not wish to turn our followers from their faiths.” He saw the small churches as a single enemy whose primary goal is to rob the Catholics of their faith.⁴²

Along with the decree of the episcopate, Zoltán Nyisztor, a renowned publicist of the period, propagated the Catholic standpoint about the most important small churches of the time (Baptists, Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Nazarenes, Salvation Army) in several articles between 1925 and 1928. He traced the “sectarian threat” back to the tragic Hungarian fate and to the negative moral, cultural and ideological effects of the West. He especially blamed Protestantism for the formation of sects, because it enabled people to freely interpret the Bible. He noted that war, poverty, suffering and unemployment, but also the charm of novelty, had their parts in their spread in Hungary. What’s more, he also listed the (false) public notion of the time, the spell of the “dollar,” as a cause of the sectarian expansion. But no matter what the causes are, Catholics, in his opinion, had to defend themselves before the “sect danger” becomes a real threat.⁴³ The Catholic ecclesiastical press also addressed the issue of small churches. In the newspaper of the Óbuda parish, for example, the Adventist congregation residing at the near Margit Boulevard was depicted as “wolves in sheep’s skin.”

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

⁴³ Zoltán Nyisztor, *A szekták Magyarországon* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1926).

In addition, the paper states that whoever goes there, despite the warnings, commits a serious sin against God and his own soul.⁴⁴

Catholics paid less attention to the sect issue in the 1930's, which did not mean a change in opinion. Officials of the Catholic Church kept monitoring the expansion of small churches. For example, István Á. Hanauer, bishop of Vác, had his proxies monitor the "Baptist scheming" (though they were a legally recognised denomination) in Ladánybene. He requested the under-secretary to order the prefecture of Ladánybene to deny the Baptists residence permits.⁴⁵

In the 1920s, the Lutheran behaviour about small churches was similar to that of the Catholics. They intended to maintain their religious position with the help of authorities rather than by methods of apologetics. The general meeting of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in November, 1926, gave its pastors an order similar to that of the Roman Catholic episcopate, to call their followers' attention to the activity of the sects from the pulpit. In order to counterbalance them, the pastors should also engage in distributing the Bible and other religious readings. But, if it is needed, they should turn to the authorities.⁴⁶ Lutheran public opinion changed in the 1930's, inasmuch as their behaviour urging a strong state intervention was complemented with the apologetic aspects that were present in the Reformed church.⁴⁷

At the beginning, the Reformed church articulated a more tolerant attitude. In their 1923 reply to Klebelsberg, they admitted that Methodists and Adventists did not have any anti-state goals. Their social activity could even serve as an example. They thought the state's intervention in the sectarian issue was impractical, as long as these communities did not confront the laws of the country and common morality. They intended to use ecclesiastic means in the struggle against them. By 1926, the atmosphere within the church had changed. In 1926, the Faculty of Reformed Theology in Debrecen declared about the Adventists that in the future they should rather operate within an existing, tolerated, established or legally recognised church. In their newer 1927 proposal, the Calvinists still

⁴⁴ Fazekas, *Kisegyházak és szektakérdés a Horthy-korszakban*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-106.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-67.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

considered the struggle against sects as a spiritual and moral ecclesiastical duty, but they already supported police supervision and police measures as well. However, they also thought adherence to the national law on religious freedom to be important. In their opinion, more severe actions are needed only if there was evidence that sectarian distribution of readings was against the state or if it was incompatible with common morality. Reformed leaders on the local levels, by the way, often turned to state authorities.⁴⁸

In his treatise of religious philosophy published in 1923, Sándor Makkai devoted a separate chapter to the sectarian issue. He attributed negative aspects to the sects: they were against progress, culture and church, uneducated, ignorant and illegal. He considered it an abomination to be exterminated. He noted that the most important element of the anti-sectarian struggle is the Reformed "rousing of ardent personal piety, urged by a historical sense of identity"⁴⁹ Sándor Csikesz considered the sects to be a challenge that pushes the church toward internal renewal, internal reformation.⁵⁰

In the 1930's, the Reformed church followed the progress of the sectarian issue with great interest, but considered it as mainly an ecclesiastical problem. Theological writings in the church press considered methods of apologetics as employable, but those documents that were not meant for the eyes the general public suggest that certain leaders of the Reformed church chose the alternative of close cooperation with the state (police authorities, to be more precise). The material of the 1933 pastors' annual general meeting in Sárospatak was made public in writing. Free churches were thought to be a disease brought and funded from abroad. Imre Somogyi reacted to the book's paper about Baptists, and he thought that the view claiming these small Protestant churches to be sects is unacceptable. However, he noted that Baptists were not hostile to the Reformed church, despite the offending remarks in the booklet. He assured his readers that Baptists would pay respect to the Reformed denomination and acknowledge its spiritual virtues in the future too.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-60.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵¹ Jenő Szigeti, "A református egyház kapcsolatai a protestáns kisegyházakkal a két világháború között," pp. 161-162.

On the level of everyday life, it is a common feature of historically established churches that they regarded the converted as lost, often “dead” to their own denominations. Catholic and Reformed priests and pastors spoke about “the funeral of their church” in the case when one of their followers joined a small church, and they called the attention of the whole village to the case.⁵²

Free churches had differing relations to historically established churches. Due to dogmatic reasons, they univocally distanced themselves from the Roman Catholic Church. But they had different attitudes toward Protestant churches. Denominationally oriented, the Baptist and Methodist churches and the Christian Brethren Assembly were open to inter-denominational dialogue. Thus, their followers prayed on the 1921 Evangelical Alliance week of prayer in Budapest together with the Reformed believers. In addition, in that year the mentioned churches kept Evangelical Alliance gatherings in every quarterly season.⁵³ It was a progressive initiative in the cooperation of historical Protestant churches and new Protestant entities that, from 1927 on, the Hungarian work of the Evangelical Alliance involved a greater and greater participation of the free churches. In the elected committee of the Magyar Evangéliumi Szövetség (Hungarian Evangelical Alliance), founded in 1936, Baptist and Methodist pastors had a significant role. According to the statutes accepted on November 19, 1937, the goals of the association included the protection of religious freedom and doing all that is possible to prevent religious persecution.⁵⁴ The ecumenical attitude of these free churches is well reflected in the greeting speech that Blake Methodist bishop delivered in 1925, at the Annual Conference opening: “God does not want to be a loving Father of the Methodists, or Catholics, or Reformed, or Lutheran or Baptists, but of everyone.”⁵⁵ But of course, the spreading of these denominations also meant a source for conflict.

⁵² Fazekas, *Kisegyházak és szektakérdés a Horthy-korszakban*, pp. 64-65.

⁵³ László Khaled A., *A magyarországi metodizmus története 1920 és 1948 között. Egy vallási alternatíva esélyei Trianontól a fordulat évéig* (PhD Thesis) (Pécs: Pécsi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2011), p. 131.

⁵⁴ Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, pp. 215-216.

⁵⁵ Khaled, *A magyarországi metodizmus története 1920 és 1948 között*, pp. 134-135.

Free churches with a sectarian orientation, such as the Nazarene, Adventist or Pentecostal movements, behaved differently. Nazarene congregations operated in isolation from every other religious entity. Their missionary momentum had stopped, so, as they did not threaten the position of historically established churches, no significant conflict arose between them. The Adventist mission kept the emphasis on propagating their teachings that were different from the other churches. They especially criticised the teachings of the Catholic Church. Leaders and pastors of the denomination did not participate in ecumenical and Evangelical Alliance events, but during WWII they were open to certain leading personalities of the other small churches and the historical Protestant churches in the matters of religious freedom. Due to the over-emphasising of the so-called charismatic gifts, Pentecostal movements were at that time in conflict with both the historically established churches and those free churches that were affected by their faith-propagating activities. A change was brought by their banning during WWII.

During the years of the war, the country moved in an autocratic direction not only in the political and social life, but there were similar tendencies in religious matters as well. State authority attempted to suppress the small churches with administrative tools. The decree of the Interior Minister, issued on December 2, 1939, banned the undesirable entities (Nazarenes, Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Assemblies of God and Pentecostals) on the grounds of threatening homeland defence interests, despite the fact that only Nazarenes and Jehovah's Witnesses prohibited the taking of arms. Later on, other entities met a similar fate.

Reformed bishop László Ravasz disagreed with the ministerial decree and urged the restoration of the pre-1939 conditions. Apart from this, Ravasz had a great part in the re-legalisation of Adventist activities and also supported the dissolution of the ban on the Salvation Army, as both denominations had significant Anglo-Saxon connections. But he was against the discriminated communities' receiving a permit of congress within the framework of the Reformed church. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church came into contact with the Pentecostals in this regard. Finally, the Pentecostals were able to agree with the Bányai diocese of Evangelical-Lutheran Church. Using their legally ensured monopolistic situation, the Lutherans requested full integration. Of course, the Pentecostals did

not wish to abandon their beliefs, only to have opportunity for undisturbed gathering. Evangelical-Lutheran leaders may have been aware of that, but they hoped the “taming” of the “sect.” However, the agreement did not come up to the expectations, as most of the rural Lutheran congregations did not identify with the agreement.⁵⁶

After the World War II between 1945 and 1949

The political changes at the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945 affected churches in Hungary differently. Political and social positions of historically established churches were weakened, while new Protestant entities had the opportunity to fight for the improvement of their legal situation. To this end, in 1944 they formed their organisation to defend their interests, the Magyarországi Szabadegyházak Szövetsége (MSZSZ – Alliance of Free Churches in Hungary, from 1953 on known as Magyarországi Szabadegyházak Tanácsa, SZET – Council of Free Churches in Hungary). In the beginning, it seemed that the country would develop in a democratic direction and an American-type “religious market” might be formed.

The MSZSZ summarised its ideas of religious policy in the memorandum titled *Szabad államban, Szabad Egyházak (In a free state, free churches)*, published in 1945. As the title shows, their views on the relation of state and churches were radically different from those of the historically established churches and they struggled to abolish the prerogatives of the latter. In their opinion, the new law on religion must be based on the separation of church and state. According to this, everyone obeys the state authorities in civil matters, but the authority ensures the right for free practice of religion and faith propagation to every citizen. And authorities do not possess the right to interfere in matters of conscience. They also demanded that certain churches should not have a say in the state’s life, and that state authorities should not serve the interests of certain denominations’ ministers. Moreover, the possibility to harass and attack people for purely religious reasons through the intervention of state authority must be eliminated. They were also against supporting churches through state aid.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, pp. 198-199, 202-203.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-221.

The aims of the political powers that came to dominance were identical with the most important demands of the free churches. The leftists regarded them as a temporary ally in the struggle against political Catholicism (and against the other historically established churches). The MSZSZ was also against compulsory religious education, because in their opinion, the Gospel states that no one can be forced to engage in religious studies. Parallel with the introduction of optional religious education, they urged that parents in free churches could decide about the religious education of their children.⁵⁸ Facultative religious education was finally introduced in 1949, which eliminated a serious source of conflict between historically established churches and new Protestant entities, as the latter were no longer forced to have their children attend the religious lessons of an established or recognised church.

In the second half of the 1940's, some of the new Protestant entities made use of the religious freedom and began a busy missionary activity, resulting in an increase of their numbers. The headcount of Adventists, for example, grew by 70% in some years (from 3608 to 6107). In their case, at least 80% of the newly joined came from a non-Adventist background. Almost half (44%) of the new members had been Reformed, a third of them (circa 30-38%) had been Roman Catholic and around 7% had been Lutheran. The character of their evangelisation did not change, which put the historically established churches on the defensive. The latter could not even employ state power against them. Moreover, the strengthening of the leftist side caused a significant part of public opinion turn against them. In addition, a large fraction of their energies was engaged in the adaptation to the changes caused by the new political system. But, as their options permitted, they made efforts to defend their previously seized "market positions." So the struggle for their seekers went on, now without using the means of state authorities. Thus, the Catholic periodical *Új Ember* discussed the social effect of the free churches in its 1948 article *Van-e szektaveszély? (Is there a sectarian menace?)*, and delineated the options of defending against them. In one of his commentaries, Evangelical-Lutheran bishop Lajos Vető expressed his concerns about the strengthening Adventist and Methodist spirituality sentiment in his

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

church. Moreover, articles and books were published that discussed certain denominations separately. Thus the Reformed and Lutheran leaders wrote against political Adventism, which is nothing but, according to Albert Bereczky's interpretation, reaction in political terms and infidelity in Biblical terms.⁵⁹

The settling of their relations with the Reformed church was supported by the change of opinions about the previously despised small churches in certain circles of the historically established churches. In their June 14-15, 1946 session, the National Reformed Free Council was repentant about its unloving and seclusive behaviour toward smaller Protestant churches and communities and about the slights committed.⁶⁰ Parallel to this, a more tolerant denominational approach was adapted by the official new church leadership within the historical Protestant churches, and thus in the whole church there was a change of attitude toward dissidents. Thus the view that those persons or groups who think differently could and should pursue their activities outside the church, also became accepted. At least in part, it was this that led to the formation of the Free Christian Congregation at the end of the 1940's.⁶¹

During the Decades of the Communist Dictatorship

However, as it turned out in the summer of 1950, the new Protestant entities were given as a gift what the historically established churches were given as a punishment. In theory, the separation of church and state happened, but in effect churches "were nationalised" by the state. Ecclesiastical life was limited to within the walls of the congregation/church and religious entities were banished from most of the social sphere, or they could have a representative function only. Religious life in the church/congregation and the foreign and internal relations of churches were supervised and manipulated through state and ecclesiastical means. Their pastors and their few publication products had to convey a message identical to the Socialist gospel. The formerly established churches not only lost their old

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁶⁰ Jenő Szigeti, "A kisebb magyarországi egyházak," in *A magyar protestantizmus 1918-1948: Tanulmányok*, Ferenc Lendvai L. ed. (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1987), p. 252.

⁶¹ Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, p. 267.

prerogatives and most of their institutions, but they also faced an opponent much more dangerous than the sectarian menace of the past: the Communist ideology, also known as scientific socialism. The party state that came to power intended to monopolise the market of religions and ideas as well, for itself. The new religious power, even if it did not ban churches in the Rákosi-era, used its administrative options for a quick elimination of its competition. In the Kádár-era, leaders of the party state already perceived that on the long run they have to anticipate the social presence of traditional religions. Therefore, they acted against the so-called “ecclesiastic reaction” with administrative tools, but they fought the religious worldview on an ideological level. The conditions were unfair, though. While the state party (“state church”)⁶² could advertise its ideas at every forum (education, media, etc.) and attack the religious worldview, the churches could defend their views only with limited assets. What is more, in order to restrain church ceremonies, the state party introduced new customs to the society (name-giving celebration, social funeral, etc.). Due to the Socialist secularisation in the 1960’s and 1970’s, churches lost the larger part of their followers. The proportion of church-going believers decreased to around 10%, as most of the population was content with participating in the formal ceremonies (baptism, confirmation, wedding, burial), but even the number of these dropped. The state party began to actually leave its “state church” attitude in the 1970’s or 1980’s; by starting the Christian-Marxist dialogue, they slowly moved to the “denominational” character. During the decades of Communist era, being religious meant evident disadvantages in every field of life. In the allegedly Socialist society, the historically established churches lost their ecclesiastic character in the sociological sense and they, too, evolved toward a denominational character.

New Protestant entities could operate legally in the country, but their worship and mission options were reduced to a minimum, similarly to the historically established churches. The church policy of the party state would rather avoid that the multitude of Protestant churches, wishing to listen to a clear gospel, enter them. The state authority not only “collectivised” the free churches, but also strove

⁶² In a sense of Sociology of Religion, the MDP and MSZMP can be regarded as “state churches,” if we interpret Communism as a religion (pseudo-religion).

to make them ecclesiastical. This meant not only a (more) centralised and (more) transparent church organisation, but in the lives of entities with a sectarian character in the sociological and theological sense, the importance of the so-called distinctive teachings decreased and their pan-Christian character strengthened. Communities that underwent an organisational, liturgical and dogmatically institutionalisation lost their movement character, which led to a loss or stagnation in numbers. The majority of their followers already came from within. For example in the case of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, only 18% of those joining the church between 1945 and 1950 came from an Adventist family. This ratio was above 60% between 1965 and 1983. Thus it was no longer a serious danger for the historically established churches that their "Biblically oriented seekers" joined them. On the other hand, a part of those who joined the small churches only nominally belonged to the historically established churches. Therefore, losing them did not cause as much tension as had the previous denominational change of "Bible-reading seekers" who lived an active ecclesiastic life. In addition to the church's political situation in the country, this was also a significant factor in the historically established churches' attitude change toward new Protestant entities. Then again, the members of the latter also underwent a slow change, with the result that past offences (like using authority) provided fewer and fewer obstacles in the normalisation of the relations between the two parties.

The situation of the market actors in religious life changed considerably after 1950. Representatively, leaders of the historically established churches were considered as of higher rank, but from the 1960's on, the state party consciously treated small churches and their leaders, especially the chairman of SZET, as equal to the leaders of historically established churches. Though not tolerating bottom-up ecumenical activity, the state party permitted the operation of those inter-denominational organisations that it used as tools. Already in 1954, negotiations for the extension of cooperation started between the SZET and the Magyarországi Egyházak Ökumenikus Tanácsa (MEÖT – Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary). Baptists were taking part in the work of the MEÖT from 1957 on and Methodists from 1943 on, but the SZET also participated in the organisation's life. The SZET cooperated in editing the Hungarian Church Press or in the work of the Christian Peace Conference, and

its representatives were present in the Hungarian Bible Council as before. The SZET officially joined the MEÖT in 1965. By the MEÖT membership, free Church theologians could have an active part in the activity of the *Theologiai Szemle* (*Theological Review*) as well. In the international scene, representatives of the free churches were present among the Protestant emissaries on the programmes of the World Council of Churches. As a result of the balanced relations, the free churches did not consider followers of the Reformed and Evangelical-Lutheran churches a target audience for their missionary activities, while leaders of the Protestant churches gave positive comments about them to state officials.⁶³

The sides were also brought closer by the shared experience of oppression and their participation in the common aspects of church politics (e.g. Christian peace movement, Patriotic People's Front). For historical, dogmatic and church political reasons, new Protestant entities advanced their relations with the historical Protestant churches primarily, but their relations with the Catholic Church also improved. As to the latter, it can be said that the previous hostilities decreased gradually. What's more, in the second half of the 1970's some free church events (concerts) could be organised in Catholic churches, and in the 1980's an Adventist student could do his doctorate at the Roman Catholic Central Theological Academy in Budapest.

Closer relations with historical Protestant churches were formed primarily in the field of pastoral training. As a first result, Jenő Szigeti and Zsuzsanna Vankó of the Adventist church had the opportunity to study at the Evangelical-Lutheran Academy.⁶⁴ Afterwards, those students who excelled at the Hungarian Baptist Theological Seminary and the Theological Seminary of the SZET could graduate with a university degree from 1972 at the Reformed Theological Academy in Debrecen and from 1980 on at the Evangelical-Lutheran Theological Academy in Budapest. What's more, they could even get doctorates from 1976 on. The Protestant churches considered the cooperation useful because this way they could influence the pastoral training of small churches and thus

⁶³ Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, pp. 294-295.

⁶⁴ A. H. N. Zoltán Rajki, *Adventista Egyház története 1945 és 1989 között Magyarországon* (Budapest: Advent Kiadó, 2003), p. 88.

mitigate the threat of their missionary activity.⁶⁵ Relations were normalised on local levels as well. Thus, for example, the Reformed church provided a temporary gathering opportunity for the Adventist congregation in Gyöngyös, or in 1984 the unified choir of Nemesvámos and Veszprém served at the Reformed churches in Balatonkenese and Várpalota at a church musical event.⁶⁶

Of course, temporary conflicts of interest could happen as well. The news of Billy Graham's 1977 visit to Hungary was welcomed with reservations by the leaders of the Hungarian Reformed and Evangelical-Lutheran churches, because of the American evangelist's political past and evangelisation methods. Due to pressure from the ÁEH (Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal – State Office for Church Affairs), leaders of the MEÖT member churches finally met Billy Graham, but Reformed bishop Dr Tibor Bartha did not allow him to use the Reformed Great Church in Debrecen. But those followers of the major Protestant churches with a Pietist orientation awaited his service in Hungary with great anticipation.⁶⁷ A temporary tension was probably caused also by the fact that the free church communities took in some of the groups (religious seekers) who seceded from the Protestant churches, with a similar piety, for example the Methodist church did so with the group that left the Evangelical church led by Ferenc Sréter or the Evangelical Pentecostal Community integrated the charismatic community that seceded from the Reformed led by Sándor Berecki.⁶⁸

Prospects after the Regime Change in Hungary

Without historical perspective, we are not in a situation to process the post-transitional phase of the relations between historically established churches and the new Protestant entities. However, some characteristic trends can be highlighted.

⁶⁵ Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, p. 302.

⁶⁶ A. H. N. Zoltán Rajki, *Adventista Egyház története 1945 és 1989 között Magyarországon*, p. 160.

⁶⁷ Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, pp. 324–326, 372–373; Zoltán Rajki, "Billy Graham 1977. évi magyarországi látogatásának politikai háttere," *Egyháztörténeti Szemle*, Vol. 14 (2013) No. 1, 2013, pp. 69–85, 77–95.

⁶⁸ Rajki and Szigeti, *Szabadegyházak története Magyarországon 1989-ig*, p. 359, 376.

The fall of the Communist regime transformed the religious market in Hungary. The former “state religion,” scientific socialism, became marginalised. Regarding religious ideology, basically the American-type “free market” came into existence,⁶⁹ which resulted in the emergence of a multitude of Christian and non-Christian religious entities. As to the institutional network (of schools, charities and mass media), the historically established churches strengthened considerably, compared to the state party period, but this was not accompanied by any serious expansion of their social basis. According to various surveys in religious sociology, the ratio of church-going believers remained around 10-12%.⁷⁰ In addition, census data show that the proportion of those who consider themselves belonging to these denominations decreased significantly.⁷¹ The number of followers of “historical new Protestant” entities increased insignificantly,⁷² while Jehovah’s Witnesses and new Protestant groups that emerged in the 1980’s and 1990’s (e.g. Faith Church, Calvary Chapel or Bible Speaks Church) strengthened, in addition to other non-Christian groups.⁷³ The

⁶⁹ This process lasted until the end of 2011, when the Parliament passed a new ecclesiastic law, recognising only 27 churches from 2012 on, instead of the more than 300 churches in the past. The other religious entities, unrecognised by the state, can operate in Hungary as associations, but with considerably less financial liberty than the recognised churches.

⁷⁰ Robert Manchin, *Religion in Europe: Trust Not Filling the Pews* (2004), <http://www.gallup.com/poll/13117/religion-europe-trust-filling-pews.aspx>; Santiago Perez-Nievas and Guillerno Cordero, *Religious Change in Europe (1980-2008)* (2010). <http://www.sisp.it/files/papers/2010/santiago-perez-nievas-e-guilermo-cordero-726.pdf>; Miklós Tomka, “Európa változó értékrendje,” *Mérleg*, no. 3. 1995, p. 34.

⁷¹ In the 2001 census, 54.5% reported themselves as Catholic, 15.9% as Reformed and 3% as Lutheran. Regarding those who gave answers, the numbers are 61.2%, 17.8% and 3.4%. The 2011 census brought the following results: 38.9% Catholic, 11.6% Reformed and 2.2% Lutheran. The proportions among those who gave answers were 53.5%, 15.9% and 3%.

⁷² According to the data sets of the two census, the headcount of Baptists increased between 2001 and 2011 from 17705 to 18211, that of Methodists from 1484 to 2416, the Adventists from 5840 to 6213, and Pentecostals from 8424 to 9326.

⁷³ According to the data from the two census, the headcount of Jehovah’s Witnesses rose from 21688 to 31727, the Buddhists from 5223 to 9768 and Muslim 3201 to 5579 between 2001 and 2011.

proportion of those who reported themselves without denomination kept increasing swiftly.⁷⁴ Active Christians are slowly realising that they failed to use the liberty after the change of regime to re-Christianise Hungary. And in the church-going Christian subculture (apart from followers of some denominations of sectarian orientation), denominational boundaries are becoming more and more irrelevant for the simple believers. Thus it causes less and less tension if a seeker finds his/her spiritual home in another denomination.

In essence, historically established churches and classic free churches maintained their previous denominational characters, though either the introvert tendencies of the sectarian direction or the denominationally inclined trends of the ecclesiastic orientation have been present everywhere.⁷⁵ And this facilitated the possibility of further deepening the former relations. The dialogue has been fostered by the fact that the “seekers” who had long ago (before the 1950’s) arrived from the historically established churches had died out in the classic new Protestant entities and these now gain their new members from within (children of their members) or from the nominal members of historically established churches. Thus the seekers-dwellers paradigm is less and less suitable for describing the dialogue between the two sides.

A wide spectrum of cooperation can be observed. Regarding institutional matters, the role of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary (Protestant churches, the Orthodox, Methodist, Baptist and Pentecostal churches), of the Evangelical Alliance (certain new Protestant entities, Reformed, Evangelical, the New Jerusalem Catholic Charismatic Community) and of the Hungarian Christian-Jewish Society (Jews, Reformed, Evangelical-Lutheran, new Protestant entities, Catholics) can be mentioned. Apart from the

⁷⁴ In the 2001 census, 14.5% of the population and 16.3% of the answerers reported themselves as belonging to none of the denominations. By 2011, this ratio increased to 16.7% and 22.9%. If we include Atheists as well into the relevant data of the 2011 census, the results are 18.2% and 24.9%.

⁷⁵ For example, the life of small churches also included Anti-Catholic voices or the criticism of other historically established churches, and other evangelisation events that attacked these. In a parallel way, some historically established churches criticised the teachings of certain new Protestant entities, on the basis of apologetics (e.g. see parokia.hu).

usual occasions such as the prayer week, several inter-denominational events can be listed, such as Ez az a Nap (This is the Day) or the Franklin Graham evangelisation. And in the various church-funded educational institutions of different levels, there are both employees and students of differing denominations.

At the beginning of the regime change, the public opinion of the free churches supported the liberal orientation, due to reasons of religious freedom and being concerned about the restoration of the historically established churches that recalled the "Horthy-era." These concerns were strengthened by the "sect-calling" commentaries from persons associated with the historically established churches. But the followers of the latter orientation were marginalised in their churches. At the end of the 1990's, however, right-wing parties (FIDESZ, KDNP) became more open toward the free churches. Among the leading personalities of the latter, more and more are known for their right-wing connections (just as there are leftists among them). It is also a curiosity that during the "society discussion" of the law on churches, leaders of the historical Protestant churches also contributed to the recognition of several new Protestant entities. This can (also) be due in part the fact that the more significant free churches gained state recognition in 2011/12, according to the Act CCVI of 2011.

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Part III
Media Representation of the Church in the
Hungarian Media

Church, People and Media in Hungary

MÓNIKA ANDOK

On the first meeting of our forming Hungarian research group at Loyola Café in Budapest on 13th March 2013 at 6 p.m. we did not even suspect that in the Vatican at 7.06 p.m. a South-American Jesuit priest would be elected the Pope who needed less than a year to put the questions raised by the Church and People Project into a new perspective. It is not a coincidence that Pope Francis, who was selected the man of the year in 2013,¹ was reckoned among the 100 leading thinkers by *Foreign Policy* mentioning: “Much is expected of this pope: serious reform of the Vatican, a substantial decentralization of authority.” and they also quote Pope Francis himself:

Tradition and memory of the past must help us to have the courage to open up new areas to God. Those who today always look for disciplinarian solutions, those who long for an exaggerated doctrinal security, those who stubbornly try to recover a past that no longer exists – they have a static and inward-directed view of things. In this way, faith becomes an ideology among other ideologies. I have a dogmatic certainty: God is in every person's life.²

In the fact that his attitude to authority, spirituality, trust in church and authenticity quickly became known globally the media played an evident role. These included, among others, the global

¹ In the evaluation among others it can be read: “But what makes this Pope so important is the speed with which he has captured the imaginations of millions who had given up on hoping for the church at all. People weary of the endless parsing of sexual ethics, the buck-passing infighting over lines of authority when all the while (to borrow from Milton), “the hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed.” In a matter of months, Francis has elevated the healing mission of the church-the church as servant and comforter of hurting people in an often harsh world-above the doctrinal police work so important to his recent predecessors.” TIME's Person of the Year 2013 Pope Francis, The People's Pope | TIME.com.

² *Foreign Policy*, December 2013, p. 89.

media and the related national ones, the traditional means of mass communication as well as web 2.0 and also the thematic, public and commercial channels.

The meaning created by the media is polysemic, the actual meaning is created in the recipient. It builds upon the freedom of choice of modernity in which the choice is autonomous but is not necessarily led by rationality and does not primarily mean the choice of the message but rather its interpretation. At this point I would like to refer to the theories that describe the media as religion³ arguing that the church has already reached the majority of society; just like today's means of mass communication, it has used message systems by which it has cultivated values and presented a normative way of life for the people.⁴ In my view the analogy goes wrong at a point: until the age of modernism the church could not only define the message but also the interpretation and the process of giving meaning. And this is the main aspect from which the media work in a different way by providing pluralism from an aspect of creating meaning that is contrary to that employed by the church. The unsuccessful communicational strategy of the church can be attributed to the way it keeps repeating its message and does not see why the message that it conveys is not understood or not perceived correctly. It concentrates on the repetition of the message (answer) instead of reactualizing the meaning of the message. If we assume that the meaning of the message is constant, we put ourselves in a

³ See András Máté-Tóth and Mónika Andok, "Az egyházi médiakritika teológiai kritikája," in *Médiakritika* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó-MTA ELTE Kommunikációelméleti Kutatócsoport, 1997), pp. 115-132. Also the theoretical frame is interesting that can be described by Peter L. Wilson as "Every technology is religious." consequently the media are as well (quoted by József Tillman, "Kibernetikus katedrálisok," *Távkeretek. A Nyugalom tengerén túl* (Budapest: Kijarat Kiadó, 1997).

⁴ George Gerbner, "Communication and Social Environment," *Scientific American*, Vol. 57. No. 3, pp. 153-160. Daniel A. Stout, *Media and Religion. Foundations of an Emerging Field* (New York/London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2012), pp. 9-10, Stout mentions other references as well concerning media as religion: "In many cases, religious activity emanates from media events and experiences. Through time, audiences for recorded music, movies, and other media form communities, develop belief systems, and engage in rituals."

world before modernism and we neglect the notion of the audience as an interpreting community.⁵

There is one more reason for this that needs further consideration, which also stems from the features of the functioning of media: When media puts an event in its own program, it decontextualizes the event first and takes it out of the original flow of events. Then it recontextualizes it by presenting the event in a particular place in its own program thus endowing it with new interpretational possibilities. For example the report about the election of the pope is presented in the way that a report is inserted before it showing that the church is the oldest multinational organization⁶ in the world and it is followed by a report about the chances of adoption for homosexual couples.⁷ In such a context the election of the pope can have several interpretations. If the context is not only interpreted within the flow of programs but as the context of media consumption as well, it should be emphasized that the global media culture has highly transformed the context of local cultural and religious events at the expense of localities in every case as it may appear more modest, simple and less professional. In a word the importance, the rank, the authenticity and consequences of the local event are not only interpreted within the framework of the local context but that of the global media as well.⁸ On the religious level, global media also means that the surface of the global church has become more visible as opposed to the national ones. It has brought something closer virtually (the papacy, the mission) while it has taken us away from our own present.

The Church and People Project

It is difficult to think initially of the seeker-dweller pair (since we all bear the metaphor of "being on the way" in our own faith) until we complete it with the concept of the immanent frame. That is

⁵ Daniel A. Stout, *Media and Religion. Foundations of an Emerging Field* (New York/London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2012), p. 21.

⁶ http://hvg.hu/kkv/20130313_A_katolikus_egyhazi_a_vilag_legre_gibb_mult.Az_eredeti_forras_pedig:http://www.bloomberg.com/video/the-catholic-church-by-the-numbers-slooRoltTP~7bDt3rrdu_A.html.

⁷ http://hvg.hu/vilag/20130313_13_dolog_amit_kevesen_tudnak_az_uj_paparo.

⁸ In this case local events are either uninterpretable for the participants or neutralize or become negative (Zsuzsanna Bögre's comment).

dwellers, even if they seek, they do so in the dimension of the transcendent while seekers temporarily stay within the immanent framework. They suspect, feel and think that there is something beyond it but within the immanent framework what will show authentically and indicate the thing that they seek, but which is outside the system? Nevertheless, I would like to apply semiotic reductionism as it oversimplifies the question.

As regards the notion of the seeker I would like to mention a feature that is probably not just a Hungarian (media) phenomenon. Besides answers to faith, religion and church, seekers can find several esoterical ideas in media content in regard to spirituality (EZO TV, oracle on TV, etc.). Seekers who have grown up on today's media content usually look for specific answers, specific solutions and predestinations in many cases. Esoterical media answers rather fit this phenomenon when they use slogans like "find your destiny purpose, what your destiny task is, recognize your destiny task" emphasizing the existence of a specific thing that should be found. It may go together with a God image by Rondet typical of the western world and from deism

...God is almighty, can see everything, knows everything, human history takes place for him as a performance without any surprises and he expects us to take and act our roles that are envisaged for us from eternity.⁹

As opposed to all these, the answer of the church full of faith and its offer to the seeker is not so specific; it is rather a kind of pattern, a behavioural sample, about how the person of faith behaves in a particular situation (struggle, helping, joy). According to Rondet

God does not expect you to choose this or that way envisaged for you from eternity but to find your answer to his presence and calling inventively.... God, who created us for his own image calls us to give the resemblance to this image.¹⁰

⁹ Michael Rondet, "Akar-e tőlem valamit Isten?" *A Szív* 2012, No. 3-4. Christus 144 (Octobre 1989), p. 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

In the mainstream media a similar religious pattern full of faith cannot be outlined because of the fragmentation of the content. It is not because of the genuinely good or bad nature of the media but because it works this way.

In the earlier publications and research the inadequate communication of the church has been analyzed or referred to in many cases and these have also posed the question of why the speech of the church is not attractive or acceptable for seekers.¹¹ Charles Taylor's ideas often appear:

Charles Taylor articulated as follows: ...Seekers ask question, but the official church seems largely concerned with pushing certain already worked-out answers. It seems to have little capacity to listen.¹²

...It comes from two reactions: (1) not seeing/feeling the necessity of the disciplines, and (2) feeling that answers given by the churches are just too quick, too pat, that they do not reflect a search.¹³

The analysis in Hungary shows that all these statements are relevant to the Hungarian Catholic Church as well as the Global Church. They mention worked-out answers, a particular language that needs to be acquired by those intending to join etc.

Other followers can also be found besides them, the following was articulated by a Catholic priest who has recently gained enormous popularity in Hungary with his presentations (each visited by a thousand people), books and website.¹⁴ As Ferenc Pál has a qualification of mental health as well, he leads the seekers to

¹¹ In the case of seekers I follow the definition from András Máté-Tóth's concept clarifying writing.

¹² George F. McLean, "Disjunctions in the 21st Century," *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age. Christian Philosophical Studies, I* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), p. 5.

¹³ Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," in Ch. Taylor, J. Casanova and G. F. McLean, eds., *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age. Christian Philosophical Studies, I* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), p. 18.

¹⁴ www.palferi.hu.

the answers of faith through the answers of psychology.¹⁵ As he declares: "I collected a lot of experience on face to face discussions and in self-knowledge groups to know: I need to learn to speak their language if I want to find the way to them."¹⁶ Left-side media also speak of his character and role in high terms¹⁷ while from the Catholic side he happens to get criticism (a tabloid psychologist).¹⁸

A more thoughtful attitude is reflected in Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation proclaimed in *Evangelii Gaudium* on 26 November 2013.¹⁹ The main points are summarized by the most significant conservative weekly paper as follows: 1. Evangelize joyfully. 2. Reform your language. 3. Sermonize shortly and vividly. 4. Do not be too gracious. 5. Do not fear of dialogues. 6. Convert papacy. 7. Break up with clericalism. 8. Give opportunity to the secular. 9. Strengthen women's role. 10. Turn to the poor.²⁰ The first five points relate to the reformation of communication according to the paper. Of course other media with different orientation interpret the document in another way; they mention mainly the capitalism criticism on the first place that gets put forth in the international press as well.²¹ Maybe it is not a coincidence that it is a conservative paper that emphasizes the need for change in the communication of the church.

The communication failure of the Catholic Church can be presented in media historic perspectives as well:

The Reformation contextualized the Gospel for the print era, but there has been no corresponding information to bring the gospel to our image based era. The church

¹⁵ An interesting fact is that Ferenc Pál got the audience award of a really notable award in Hungary called Prima Primiissima in Dec 2013. When saying thank he did it on behalf of the mental health profession.

¹⁶ Pál Ferenc, *Nők Lapja*, 27. Nov. 2013.

¹⁷ Sándor Révész. See: *Népszabadság* 26-01-2013, nol.hu/belfold/20130126-isten_tervez__ember_valiky.

¹⁸ From the blog entry we can learn about the author – qualified as a psychologist, religious woman, translating the book of Avilai Szent Teréz. He writes about Ferenc Pál (Father Ferenc Pál – or how does tabloid psychology get on the altar) with great condemnation.

¹⁹http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.html.

²⁰ *Heti Válasz*, December 2013, p. 19.

²¹ <http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1004533-elbocsatasok-a-szentszeknel>.

continues to communicate a verbal, linear and abstract message to a culture whose primary language consist of sound, visual images, and experience, in addition to words.²²

Media system in Hungary, Representation of the Church in the Media

The most important features of the Hungarian media system derive from the historical background that, until the change of regime in 1990, it was controlled by a dictatorial system with state and author censorship. However, besides the official publication outlets there existed a second outlet with samizdat publications and western broadcasting channels like *Szabad Európa* or *Amerika Hangja*. After 1990 the formation of the democratic media system was not very smooth, both the old and the new authority knew exactly what kind of power the media would mean and there were serious political cut and thrusts for the control of public media. This era became known in standard Hungarian and media history as the era of media war. Two laws have come into force recently concerning the media, Law I, 1996 and Law CLXXXV, 2010, which received quite a lot of international criticism.

The Hungarian media system can be classified primarily within the Mediterranean or polarized pluralist model on the basis of the well-known media researchers Hallin and Mancini's division, though some of its elements are rather typical of the democratic corporate model. The authors categorized according to an empirical study of four fields: the features of publishing, political parallels in the world of the media, journalistic professionalism, and the role of the state in the media system. In the Hungarian instance it can be stated that an average number of copies is characteristic in publishing and the elite press is politically orientated. Political parallels are common and the external pluralism is typical, i.e., different views can be detected, though not within one paper or medium but in different mediums. There is a right-leaning and a left-leaning daily paper, radio and television and the recipient reads, listens to and watches the one adequate to his or her own attitude. Journalism is comment centred, politics influence public media.

²² Gibbs Bolger quoted by Stout, *Media and Religion. Foundations of an Emerging Field*, p. 57.

Journalistic professionalism is characterized by a lower standard than in the west, in virtue of economic dependency and political instrumentalism. However, it is beneficial that self-regulating systems also work. Furthermore, although state intervention is fairly intensive, the freedom of press and speech is constitutionally protected.²³ The way representatives and colleagues of the media judge the role of the media (including their own roles as journalists as well) and what kind of media image they share highly inhere in a nation's and a country's media image. McQuail together with co-authors²⁴ was occupied with the differentiation of normative²⁵ media theories and categorized the operation of the media into four larger normative roles. The normative nature of the roles is based on his identification of journalism with the support of democratic social order in every role conception and interpretation. Of course they acknowledge the actual or possible presence of other institutions in social communication but it does not change the fact that the media are in a central position. The established roles for the normative operation of the media are: a monitorial role, a facilitative role, a radical role and a collaborative role.

The media in the monitorial role have been present for a long time in relation to power and society. McQuail and his co-authors do not limit the monitorial role to keeping an eye on politics and the government but they also include the function of the media according to which they filter out, collect and present any information and news that is significant to people's everyday life. It is also present and noticeable in the conception of the role of the Hungarian media but in a political respect it is rather side that is controlled. As far as the seeker is concerned it can be stated that this role conception is not so appropriate. First of all it is extremely rational, does not convey feelings, and presents the church as an institutional system. Occasionally it is positive and authentic (charity

²³ Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems. Three models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge: University Press, 2004), p. 84.

²⁴ C. G. Christians, Th. L. Glasser, D. McQuail, K. Nordenstreng and R. A. White, *Normative Theories of the Media. Journalism in Democratic Societies* (Urbana-Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

²⁵ That is normative roles are not included in the typology (though they exist in reality) not normative roles: persuasion, manipulation, etc.

work), in other cases it is negative and unauthentic (economic abuse in the Diocese of Pécs).

The media appear in the facilitative role when they help balanced, sensible, social and political decision-making, help with the presentation of social processes, and possibly act as indicators as well. "The facilitative role of the news media is rooted in the democratic tradition of civic republicanism. The media reflect the political order in which they are situated, and the logic and rationale for their facilitating public life is primarily that of civic democracy."²⁶ In my view the facilitative role would be more than suitable for the seekers though it is only slightly typical of the Hungarian media. I can reckon only one example of the topic from the recent past: in connection with artificial insemination the media dealt with the undefined legal status and fate of the embryos. It was a case that was themed by the media and not by politics, including fairly complex moral aspects, and public opinion was in sympathy with the Catholic idea.

The third possible role is the radical conception of the operation of the media that primarily suits the tradition of the left. It will be characterized by a radical-critical posture towards political, economic or cultural hegemony. Its aim is to redistribute authority and ascendancy (through reforms or in the form of a revolution) in which journalism gains an important role in the transformation and change of the economic and/or political system. In Hungary it is present only in the extremely left-leaning organs and it is probably indifferent from the point of view of seekers since this kind of journalism is very much ideological.

The fourth role in McQuail's description will be the cooperative one. It can be read to some extent as the criticism of the monitorial role since it is not the type of media that constantly keeps an eye on and can call the authority to account but on the other hand it assumes its own authority as unquestionable and absolute. The model of cooperating journalism includes the accountability and transparency of the media itself. In this role it is the developing type of journalism that is analyzed and considered to be normative: "Collaboration in the tradition of development journalism usually

²⁶ C. G. Christians, Th. L. Glasser, D. McQuail, K. Nordenstreng and R. A. White, *Normative Theories of the Media. Journalism in Democratic Societies*. p. 158.

involves a partnership with the state, though not always a formal one, a relationship premised on a commitment by the press to play a positive role in the processes of development."²⁷ I believe that it is appropriate to reach the seekers, though in Hungary this role can be rather identified with the non-Christian, secularized psychologically orientated media. It is important to note that from the documents of the church dealing with media it is *Communio et Progressio* that refers to the importance of cooperation in paragraphs 85-100. It mentions the collaboration between citizens and the state power, internationally and within Christianity.²⁸ The approach to the media of the church and its documents treating media – on the theoretical level – can not be regarded as outdated at all. The greatest problem lies in the fact that the operationalisation of the theory has come to a halt.

In relation to the church a lot of prejudices exist in Hungarian society: the church is politically committed, wants to place its hand upon education, is full of economic and sexual abuses. They cover up the deficiencies of the clergy and the institution, etc. It all means that in respect of seekers we must reckon with very strong presuppositions when interpreting messages of the church, religion and faith.

A participant of the Hungarian project, Gergely Rosta²⁹ published a remarkable study about the faith and religious practice of young people aged 15-29.³⁰ From research involving 8000 samples it turned out that in this generation there is an incredible loss of confidence in the democratic institutions: the government shows 40 percent of loss confidence, banks 35, the Parliament 33, the President of the Republic 18 while the churches possess 14 percent of loss of

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

²⁸ *Egyházi megnyilatkozások a médiáról* [Religious utterances about the media] (Budapest: A Magyar katolikus Püspöki Kar Tömegkommunikációs Irodája, 1997), pp. 47-51.

²⁹ Gergely Rosta, "Hit és vallásgyakorlat," in Levente Székely, ed., *Magyar Ifjúság 2012* (Budapest: Kutatópont Kiadó, 2013), pp. 316-330.

³⁰ From the aspect of religiosity and spiritual health another new research: András Székely and Imre Lázár, *Vallásosság és kötődés*, 2013; Éva Susánszky and Zsuzsa Szántó, eds., *Magyar lelkiállapot 2013* (Budapest: Semmelweis Kiadó, 2013), pp. 63-77.

confidence.³¹ From the viewpoint of the church it is of such a great importance since most of the seekers probably come from this age group. From the point of view of some of our topics here are some important data concerning their use of the media: 80% of the households where these youngsters live have a computer and in 74% there is Internet connection, too, 93% have a mobile phone. 69% visit community sites, mostly Facebook, that they mainly use for sharing private information, making comments but they mention asking for help among the functions, too. Counting in minutes they spend the most time in front of the television, 120 minutes on weekdays, 209 at weekends while on the Internet they spend 111 minutes on weekdays and 185 at weekends. They listen to the radio for 59 minutes on weekdays and 66 at weekends while they read newspapers only for 17 and 22 minutes. It is important from the point of view of the seeker project because it indicates not only what but also where and on which media platform people and youngsters seek. It is no use writing excellent articles for the seekers in Catholic papers if they do not really use the print media in their media consumption. The effect of media convergence can be detected in case of the Hungarian youngsters as well. Fortunately it has now become obvious for the church that if they want to reach the seekers, they need to open towards social media. From the research about young people's media use I would like to highlight – because I consider it important data concerning the seeker group – the extent to which they regard it as significant and how much they trust particular media.

	Family, relatives	Internet	TV	Book	Radio	Newspaper
Important	4.3	3.9	3.4	3.1	2.8	2.7
Trustworthy	4.4	3.6	3.2	3.4	3	2.8

It is apparent from the above data that authentic interpersonal communication still plays the main role in terms of orientation but it

³¹ Dániel Oross, "Társadalmi közérzet, politikához való viszony," *Magyar Ifjúság 2012* (Budapest: Kutatópont Kiadó, 2013), p. 294.

is the Internet that comes the second.³² It must be added to the results of this research that the operational principle of social media is embedded into the conception and practice of participatory culture and is averse to a passive attitude.³³

Printed Press

On the Hungarian newspaper market there are four public daily papers, each representing a politically defined direction: Magyar Hírlap is strongly right-leaning, Magyar Nemzet is conservative, Népszabadság is moderate left-leaning and Népszava is heavily left-leaning. Their number of copies has now fallen to 35-40 thousands daily. Népszabadság is the most widely read, then comes Magyar Nemzet, Magyar Hírlap and finally Népszava. Tabloids like Blikk and Bors sell in hundreds of thousand of copies and the free Metropol is also available in Hungary but only in big cities. The choice from weekly magazines is really wide, international mutations can occur as well as particularly Hungarian ones. There are public (HVG, Heti Válasz), family (Képmás), women (Nők Lapja) thematic, hobby and of course tabloid magazines as well. In terms of news-based objective genres the papers can make an effect with selection, framing and headlines while in the opinion-based genres they can openly comment as well.

Within Catholic papers several weeklies like Új ember, Keresztény élet and many monthly magazines can be enumerated: Vigilia, A Szív, and there are also quarterly papers: Pannonhalmi Szemle. The publishers of monthly and quarterly papers are not only churches but also religious orders. There is almost a kind of

³² Gergely Kitta, "Médiahasználat a magyar ifjúság körében," in *Magyar Ifjúság 2012* (Budapest: Kutatópont Kiadó, 2013), pp. 250-283.

³³ In more details Jenkins 2008 "This book is about the relationship between three concepts – media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence. By convergence I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. Convergence is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural and social changes depending on who's speaking and what they think they are talking about." Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: University Press, 2008), pp. 6-7.

oversupply on the market.³⁴ The readership of Catholic, Christian papers is small. A self-critical comment from the March 2013 issue of *A Szív*:

A Hit / The Faith themed issue, the words of Török Csaba:
 ...from the one hand there are a lot of boring, conference organizing, talking a lot, smarty (or smartly agonizing) religious events already. Church press products are laden with them. Should somebody wish to reconstruct what our life consists of, he just saw mere memorial meetings, conferences, lectures, discussions, round tables and many others. I think the II Vatican Council was a nicer story than making it this boring.

As far as classical printed press is concerned public serious papers and magazines represent the normative or festive. All these were explained by Ferenc Pál mentioned earlier:

I regard cultural Christianity if there is more culture in something than Christianity while the insight into the phenomenon does not actualize. Consequently it advertises things as part of Christianity that are possible, transitory cultural features.³⁵

In Hungary cultural Christianity has a powerful political overtone, too. During the years since the change of regime conservative governments supported the cultural-artistic strata with Christian traditions and national commitment while the left-liberal governments neglected them and vice versa. This way politics adjusted the area of culture to its own battlefield and its own pursued/victorious rhetoric. The so-called culture war is part of everyday life. The other strand of Christian cultural resistance can be tied to media critics: in some cases it occurred in Hungary, too, that certain media products were boycotted because of their anti-religious content. (The Last Temptation of Christ, some Harry Potter opponents) However, this kind of opposition – maybe given to provocation – can be encountered mainly in the area of creative arts and not that of the media.

³⁴ See, <http://egyhazi.sajtó.lap.hu> and <http://uj.katolikus.hu/adattar.php?h=17>.

³⁵ *Heti Válasz*, 20. Dec. 2012, p. 76.

Normative Catholicism is interesting because as I see it the media present and can present religious normativity only and specifically as something that breaks the normativity of the immanent frame. So what is normative from the Catholic aspect, can take only the not normative position according to the mainstream media. See the questions of euthanasia, abortion and the marriage of the same sexes. Moreover, it can be observed that these questions, either in the world of secularized society or that of the media, shift to the aspect of not to be discussed or presented due to their extremely norm violating nature and sometimes are characterized by the notion of hate speech. (It will be referred to later concerning the John Milton project.) In the mediated introduction of the normative view it must be mentioned that a view can be made authentic by its representatives in the media. The Hungarian Catholic Church is not overwhelmed with religious representatives who are authentic in the way of the media. One part of the clergy definitely stays off any media coverage either for personal habitual reasons or because in the world of media they can often become the victims of character assassination as it is fashionably put. There are some who use the option of media appearance but unfortunately they do not break down but rather confirm the stereotypes that live in the Hungarian audience: they appear to be distant in the better case and condescending and lofty in the worse case. As far as authenticity is concerned it must be added that since Pope Francis is so popular and authentic, where does the Hungarian Church position itself as it affects its own authenticity, too. On the basis of media representation we can say that they are slightly distant from Pope Francis' reforms. It shows that for the time being Hungarian speakers do not benefit from the authenticity turn marked by Pope Francis.

The clergymen presented authentically in Hungarian media can be found in areas where secular society approves of the operation of the church: in case of charity activities. In Hungary the leaders of the Caritas and Baptist Charity Service and Csaba Bőjte,³⁶ a Franciscan monk, belong to the most authentic figures.

³⁶ Csaba Bőjte, a Franciscan, started to collect ragamuffins in Déva from the 1990s. He established orphanages where thousands of children live today. The odd thing about it is that it is not about a motherland monk but a Transylvanian, which regarding Hungarian history bears special sympathy.

Normative Catholicism could be introduced the most authentically with the non-religious representatives who really realize the ecclesiastical norms in their everyday life. What can be found in this area? Hungarian media also adopt and present the writings of global media in which everyday people are illustrated who (perhaps for real commitment or for the sake of adventure) make programs come true like: "One of my years according to the writing." The outcome of the writing is generally that you can not live like this in the 21st century. That is the media again showed something in the unusual, not normal category. In my opinion it is not what a real seeker longs for.

The presentation of festive Catholicism can also be found in the Hungarian papers, all of them gave an account of the election of the pope, the serious ones of the *Evangelium Gaudii* as well. The conservative, right-leaning papers work with their own material, and send out correspondents and specialist commentators. Their audience is the dweller anyway. Left-leaning or liberal papers adopt the news material from international news agencies or that of western left-leaning or liberal papers – so they do not leave their ideological frame. The difference is in the practice of framing, what kind of news are edited before and after by the conservative and left-leaning papers and how they apply counterpointing. It can be observed that if the festive is shown from the side of the event (or institution), it is closer to the cultural Christian, the patrimonial type. On the other hand, if the festive is shown from the side of feelings, it will not be included in the narrative Catholicism noted by Hervieu-Leger but can be described by the notion of the numinous. It can be noted that in Hungarian circumstances a seeker will choose more and more popular psychological or esoteric magazines that have been on the printed press market for about five years and perfectly fit the description of the numinous. (*Mindennapi pszichológia*, *Nők Lapja Pszicho*, *Ezo*, *HVG Pszichológia*) The market of these papers is constantly getting broader. It can be pointedly stated that the group defined as seekers appeared or is noticeable even on the Hungarian press market, it can be identified in reference to the numinous that can be fitted into the immanent frame and in many everyday psychological papers in which it appears. From this direction two-

three religious participants can be perceived, and their appearance and utterances do not remain ineffective.³⁷

Radio. Hungarian radio broadcasting is characterized by the multi-channel model. Beside a significant public service radio there is a big national commercial one and several regional or thematic ones. From a Catholic perspective it must be mentioned that the public service radio devotes certain airtime to let the Church be heard: Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran and Jewish churches get the chance. The public service radio is appropriate for the presentation of patrimonial type culture Christianity and mediates festive religious events. It can also be observed that programs either appear in a ghetto or removed from the daily life. In commercial radio a minimal amount of religious content can be heard and if any, it usually gets a presentation that is rather funny but close to tasteless. For instance in the morning program of the most popular national commercial radio the topic titled “The Vatican launches an exorcist course” was dealt with in a humorous segment.³⁸ After the 2010 media law Christian radio could not get a national frequency, which meant splitting up of the dweller type audience they had already had.³⁹

Television. In the Hungarian multi-channel model besides the public service and commercial channels there are hundreds of thematic channels as well. A significant difference is that the public service media model always thinks in terms of a national frame while commercial television thinks in terms of global frames. As for the audience rating in the prime-time the public service TV obtains an average 10 percent while commercial TV gets 30-35 percent each, the rest is divided among the thematic channels.⁴⁰ The situation

³⁷ I think of Ferenc Pál's, Emőke Bagdy's and the late Mária Kopp's achievements on the basis of their reputation and acknowledgement.

³⁸ Class FF Morning Show–09. 01. 2014 from 7.15 a.m.

³⁹ Magyar Katolikus Rádió, Szent István Rádió, Mária Rádió.

⁴⁰ I would like to add to the data that in Hungary there were no national broadcasting commercial channels before 1996. I. TV (only satellite European channels) so the public television dominated the market. When in 1997 commercial channels started, public service channels had 71% of viewers compared to the 13% of commercial channels. The change took place dramatically, by the end of 1998 commercial channels increased to 69% and

provides food for thought on national and religious holidays, when the public service channel gets 5%, while commercial channels get 40-45%.⁴¹

Public service channels are bound by the so-called public service code. The approach is positive in terms of religion: "We must take every effort for an authentic presentation of religious questions in a way that it can form an integral image of society." Nonetheless, in reality religious programs are no more than rarely watched niche programs. The self-presentation of the church does not address or favour the seekers but rather the dwellers. The church can get into news programs but mainly due to a political agenda (see in connection with the acceptance of the new church law). Otherwise in Hungary the timetable of the media only follows the political timetable but does not form it.

Commercial television broadcasting is operated by economic logic. Hungarian commercial channels follow international patterns, tastes and formats. Religion, church and spirituality can appear here in many forms. The Church as an institution can get in the news, though rarely, because in the infotainment type news service church news lacks the entertainment component. Infotainment magazines can report on miracles and miracle workers on the basis of the notion of the numinous.

In commercial media spirituality is thematized as part of the mental health. But it is the smaller part. The bigger part is the spirituality and mysticism that is embedded in popular culture. According to the international trend mystic series and films have appeared in Hungary as well (*The Mentalist*, *Castle*, *Grimm*, *Haven*, *True Calling*). From the year 2000 there have been an unprecedented flow of them but they obviously belong to the entertaining, popular part of the media. In my view this kind of mysticism embedded in popular culture does not show spirituality, but (just as in many other things) sells it down the river. In the case of Hungarian talk-shows it is untypical for any everyday or public figures to display or present

public service ones reduced to 22%. Commercial channels have been above 70% since then, public service channels are between 10-15%. (J. Bayer, Sz. Koppányi, L. Nyakas and G. Tényi, *A közszolgálati médiumok és az európai versenyjog. Köszolgálatosság a változó világban* [Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2010], p. 32. Used the data of AGB Nielsen as a source.)

⁴¹ adattar.nmhh.hu.

openly their religiosity. (What happened in Italy, when one of the competitors and the winner in The Voice series in 2014 was Christina Scuccia, 25, an Ursuline nun, has not happened in Hungary.)

The logic of commercial media make it possible to sell whole program broadcasts and under the name of EZO TV, etc. to carry out commercial activity that is questionable with respect to consumer protection.

Thematic channels – Some interesting facts can be encountered here. ATV channel is an enterprise of one of the churches; on Sundays they broadcast their service (Vidám Vasárnap/Joyful Sunday) and also Pat Robertson's program, The 700 Club. We know that liturgy is one religious coping strategies, and as such, its broadcast may be successfully convincing for the seeker but on condition that the genre that frames it is appropriate as well – neither boring/meaningless nor a show-like the presentation. In terms of the genre the program mentioned above is a typical show (scene, dramaturgy, showman, music, active studio audience, etc.) Thus it touches the dwellers of Hit Gyülekezete/The Congregation of Faith and not the real seekers. However, this element raises the question in what ways such coping strategies can be mediated and visualized so that they would be acceptable and appealing to the seekers, too. Or as Stout sees it: "In the current age of numinous experience, it's important to ask how media facilitate religious ritual, interaction, and behaviour in ways that transcend individual messages."⁴² In my own opinion this can be shown the most authentically in the genres of pilgrimage, prayer, community, film and web.

Televangelisation is characteristic of some other channels (Pax TV, hatos csatorna) as well but except for Sándor Németh, the leader of The Congregation of Faith, there is no other televangelisational star or preacher in Hungary. In many cases the programs contain American materials or they present American preachers dubbed or subtitled.

Internet, social media. Church communication also benefits from the opportunities of network communication, in a way that it makes it available for seekers. As regards the data, in December 2013, searches on Catholic websites on global scales the Web Search gave

⁴² Stout, *Media and Religion. Foundations of an Emerging Field*, p. 13.

337.000.000 hits; the 356.000 Hungarian ones were extremely varied. We can find official and civil ones, evangelizing and apologist as well. The election of the Pope was followed by 7 million people on Twitter. Major Hungarian Catholic media have a Facebook profile,⁴³ Hungarian Catholic bloggers have their own group, they have organized workshops and conferences many times for themselves.⁴⁴ Online churches are not characteristic in Hungary so far; however, the operation of some American *cyberchurches* and online ceremonies have been introduced but they have not been adopted in Hungary yet. Advantages of the web are mentioned by the classical mass communication theory in connection with the network are important – multimedia, interactive, hypertextually organizing,⁴⁵ but from the seekers' point of view these not the most significant. What is important has been formulated by Silverstone: The Internet is not a strictly speaking plural medium and possibly it will never be. The Internet is singular since it relies on mainly identity thus it strengthens identity and not plurality. It has real problems to which narratives belong.⁴⁶ That is the introduction of the narrative Catholicism defined in the typology by Hervieu-Leger – which I consider to be the most important from the seeker's point of view – has a significant place here. We can encounter nice, touching examples, too: Hungarian users' attention has been drawn to some of the confessions uploaded to the global media screen. (See, for instance, Abby's story,⁴⁷ in which a beautiful young girl records the last days of her life and meanwhile she professes her faith. However, it must be added that confession as a communicational genre is strange for Hungarian recipients, even for dwellers.)

Some features make it difficult even on the digital screen for the church and seekers to find each other. One of them is that either in the case of a person or an organization the culture of network communication will be characterized by selective self-representation inasmuch as approval is an aim as well. As I see it on the network

⁴³ <https://hu-hu.facebook.com/pages/Magyar-Kur%C3%ADr/259082760809775>; <https://hu-hu.facebook.com/pages/%C3%9Aj-Ember/287363221320883>; <https://www.facebook.com/asziv?ref=search>.

⁴⁴ <http://kereszttyenblogok.blogspot.hu/> or <http://jezsuita.blog.hu/>.

⁴⁵ McQuail, McQuail's Mass Communication Theory, pp. 109-128.

⁴⁶ Silverstone, *Media and Morality. On the Rise of Mediapolis*, p. 62.

⁴⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WByNfeOyb8Y>.

platform a phenomenon has gained momentum again that was described by the American historian Daniel Boorstin in 1961 as a pseudo-event. Pseudo-events do not occur spontaneously but they are conceived and created by someone. They are more dramatic than spontaneous events, in their case it is not reality that is important, but being communicable. This kind of event is created so that it can be reported on, recalled, that is why they are planned to be extremely comprehensible.⁴⁸ Besides these, internet communication is not only characterized by rational discourse but also by a culture of ridicule, caricature and meme.

The most important problem still does not derive from these features but is fundamental in nature. On the digital platforms profit orientated companies restrict real freedom of speech; this was highlighted by NRB, the American Catholic journalism organization in its John Milton project.

The American National Religious Broadcasters⁴⁹ published a study in 2011: True Liberty in a New Media Age – John Milton Project for Free Speech.⁵⁰ The research investigated privately owned companies which influence and dominate network communication. It is important to emphasize that they did not investigate the state's intervention and role but privately owned companies like Apple, Facebook, Google, MySpace, Comcast, Twitter (this is the only one where they did not find any discrimination), Verizon and AT&T.

On the basis of its investigation NRB thinks that such profit orientated companies restrict Christian free speech in cases in which the American Constitution would allow it. That is, speech permitted by the law cannot get to the community media platform because the particular principles of the company interpret the concept of free speech more narrowly than the first amendment of the American Constitution. Some specific examples from the NRB study: Apple removed two applications with Christian content two times. One of the contents supported the traditional biblical marriage as opposed to the marriage of the same sexes and the other was also related to the topic of homosexuality. The company classified this Christian point of view as “offensive” and attacking, and for this reason

⁴⁸ Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1961).

⁴⁹ Available at nrb.org.

⁵⁰ <http://nrb.org/legal/john-milton-project/>.

removed it. By comparison, as the study claims, Apple Store offers 425 thousand applications – and on the basis of offensiveness only removed these two ones. Google refuses all kinds of commercial that advertise life (pro-life), speak up for life (against abortion). Besides all these Google provided free material for non-profit organizations (Google for Non Profits – a special web tool program), every non-profit organization can get it except for religious non-profit organizations. Facebook removes every content that is against homosexuality. Except for Twitter all the other companies classify contents expressing orthodox Christian convictions as hate speeches. For this reason the final conclusion of the John Milton project was that certain religious content is obviously and directly endangered since it is removed from the Internet unlawfully.

Why is the American example important for us? Because Hungarian users nod their assent to the same policy, they accept the same when contracting with the same service as in the USA so they are exposed to the possibility of restriction.

And what the most saddening is the phrase: religious hate speech. Such a discourse field has been created where normative based religious speeches (homosexuality, marriage and parenthood of the same sexes, abortion) are interpreted as hate speeches. Earlier it was referred to as the category of “impossible to be discussed or represented” in social communication. Pope Francis’ communication is of great importance because it makes it possible for the Church to become “capable for communication” again. This new communicational style that can not be stigmatized as “offensive” can help the Catholic point of view become representable in the global media world again.

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Part IV
Empirical Research on
'Seekers and Dwellers'

Individual Religiosity, Secularization and Seekers among Hungarien Youth

ZSUZSANNA BÖGRE

In this study I have followed the problems raised in Charles Taylor's studies, "The Ethics of Authenticity" and "The Church Speaks – to Whom?".¹ I would like to investigate the problems they raise with the help of statistical research, surveys and qualitative research in Hungary. The central point of the study is whether the seeker attitude typical of a modern age can be shown from the data of Hungarian sociology of religion research, and how the seeker attitude can be described, especially among young people.

To answer these questions I have examined data from the 2012 Hungarian Census, then will examine nearly 30 years of religious self classification data, the possible meanings of its categories and, finally, I will describe the attitude typical of a seeker.

Framework

The term "seekers" from the title refers to an attitude in which an individual is searching for oneself. Finding oneself lies in the recognition of the meaning of life. Modern contemporary persons want to find for themselves answers to questions like "Why do I exist?" and "What is expected of me in this world?" They must, since every interpretive framework once available to them has collapsed. Those meta-narratives that signalled the role of an individual in society and in local communities are no longer self-evident. They are to be discovered by the individual according to his or her own taste or disposition. This gives us freedom but it is a burden at the same time.

"Who am I?" and "What is expected of me in this world?" type questions have always existed, so this is not a new phenomenon.

¹ Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," in Charles Taylor, José Casanova and George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People. Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), pp. 17-25. Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge/Massachusetts/London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

What is new is the feeling that we can rely only on ourselves, that we must find the answers by ourselves. It's not just that society does not prescribe how we can be ourselves, but also that the only way we accept as personally authentic is the one that we ourselves have actively been involved in finding. We do not want the traditional solutions, if we do not feel that they suit us, we do not need the patterns from our parents, unless we had consciously chosen them. We expect the meaning of our lives and our own happiness from the road we have chosen for ourselves. We find something authentic if we discover it ourselves. A characteristic of the modern era is that our happiness, our fulfilment is directed at ourselves, in the here and now. Long gone are the days of Max Weber's protestant ethics, (in very general terms) when gaining wealth resulted in gaining salvation in the afterlife.² It was supposed man put eternal life before this mortal life. And instead of a focus on the afterlife, people today focus on the here and now. And as Taylor warns us, this frame of reference is not present as a fleeting whim. This attitude can be regarded as the ethics of authenticity, which can have diversions (and it does), but we have to accept that we lead our lives within this frame of reference. And we have to recognise that, in an age when focusing on oneself is a virtue, the question is how can we direct this ethic to serve a noble purpose.³

Finding your identity is not a new thing for people, the above mentioned content and method, however, is new. According to Taylor the ethic of authenticity became commonplace in the western world in the '60s. In the most western part of the western world, we might add, because the situation is not the same in the post communist countries. Albeit Eastern-Central Europe stuck between east and west has established its own particular social history since the middle ages, the communist era just increased this difference. I claim that in Hungary at a societal level the ethic of authenticity has become commonplace in a generation after the change of regime. In Hungary, before the change of regime, there was a lopsided

² Max Weber, "The Protestant ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism and Other Writings" (London, Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics: 2002).

³ See Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," pp. 17-18, and Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, p. 12.

modernization, if you like a socialist modernization.⁴ While in the west of Europe individualisation, rational thinking, and their consequences shaped modern society,⁵ until then the shaping of Hungarian society was defined by communist ideology. That is a significant difference.

Hungarian society after the change of regime suddenly met with new opportunities such as democracy, pluralism, market economy, tolerance, and last but not least the question of freedom of religion. These phenomena were new for the whole of society, and affected the older and the younger generations alike. Each generation had to learn about the new framework for society simultaneously, and there were hardly any one who could pass on the new schema for adaptation authentically. The whole of social life was transforming, and naturally individuals were increasingly left on their own. People born during the change of regime make up the majority of today's youth. Specifically it is the age group 15-29.

If western modernization has reached Hungary in a flash, then we can safely assume that the schema of adapting to modernization, with ethics of authenticity as one of them, is the most influential amongst young people. This also means that young people react to the challenges of modern life differently than do the older generations. It follows that in Hungary we have to account for a large generation gap, the consequences of which we cannot foresee.

Before we move onto the explanation of term from the title, let us look at the data on the religiosity of Hungarian society.

Shocking Census Data on Religiosity 2001-2011

It is important to know that in a Census the data relating to religiosity is measured by asking a question about denominational affiliation; this is also the case in Hungary. This is how it has been done up to 1949, for the Census which happened every 10 years. However, the question about denomination was left out of the Census between 1950 and 2000 and was only reintroduced in the 2001 and 2011 questionnaires. Moreover, while this question was mandatory up to 1949, from 2001 the question relating to religion was only optional.

⁴ More leading Hungarian sociologists are of the same opinion, e.g., Rudolf Andorka, Elemér Hankiss, Miklós Tomka, etc.

⁵ Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, p. 10.

Even the reintroduction of the question in the Census led to debate amongst the populace. What is more important, the results have shocked the people, both those belonging to the particular denominations and social scientists. On the one hand, statistical data can easily be used for their advantage economically or politically, on the other hand based on the results, the identity of each denomination can become stronger or weaker. Therefore, the results of the Census are very important. Furthermore, looking at the results of the two Census in question, they have differed so much that many received it with doubt. I am not going to describe the different sides of the argument, I will only show the process along with the presentation of the census data.

Table I. % of belonging to each denomination – based on 2001 and 2011 census data, referring to the whole of the population.⁶

Year	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Reformed Church	Evangelist	Israelite	Does not belong to any denomination	No answer
2001	51.9	2.6	15.9	3	0.1	14.5	10.8
2011	37.1	1.8	11.6	2.2	0.1	16.7	27.2

The data in the table was collected by the author based on data from the census.

The data in the table speaks for itself. The data has come as a shock for the representatives of the so-called historical Churches (see in the Table I.) as they have shown a dramatic decline in all cases (except one Israelite Church) in the number of denominational

⁶ Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2013) Census 2011. 1.1.7.1. Population – by religion, denomination and sex. See an excellent interpretation on this topic by András Máté-Tóth, Dániel and Gergely Nagy, “A 2011-es népszámlálás vallási adatairól,” in *Egyház és társadalom*, Vol. April 4, 2013. <http://www.egyhazestarsadalom.hu/a-szemhataron-innen/egyeb-irasok/mate-toth-andras-nagy-gabor-daniel-a-2011-es-nepszamlalas-vallasi-adatairol/>.

memberships. Only in the number of those who "do not belong to any denomination" can we speak of an increase. It was also a real surprise to the social researchers that the rate of "no answer" has nearly trebled. The question is then what could have happened in Hungary in the 10 years in society in relation to religion? To the question "which denomination do you belong to?" a total of 2.699.025 did not provide an answer in 2011 (it was 1.034.767 to the same question in 2001). Many assumptions have been made about the results, e.g.: the question was misinterpreted, or the questions were ambiguous, or the Church has not promoted the necessity of responding, etc. Let's face it, we do not know the precise reasons behind it. However, the main thing is that in 2011 three times as many people chose not to answer this question.

In my interpretation, such an increase in the number of respondents choosing "no answer" does not only mean that there is a growing tendency of individualization within society, distrust towards institutions, and the privatization of religious questions. I don't even interpret it as another sign of secularization. Let's look at the results generously. Let's assume that the "no answer" responses mean that I have no "certain answer" to that question. There was no option that reflected the respondents' situation close enough, and there was no opportunity to comment why they have not responded. In short they have not responded as they had no response. Let's assume it is not a position of opposition, but the answer is much simpler. There is no answer. In other words, if we assume that the respondents are not guided by fear, or that they have not responded because of certain opposition to the question, then we shouldn't be contemplating the reasons for refusal to answer. We have to think about why people cannot answer that question. Inspecting the data of a different questionnaire will take us closer to the answer.

Data for Religious Self-categorization between 1978 and 2008

As I mentioned above, in the communist era there were no questions relation to religiosity in the Census questionnaires. Despite that, we do have representative data on religiosity, thanks to Miklós Tomka, a sociologist of religion. This data has been based on the self categorization of individuals, which means that the respondents had to position themselves in the five-category typology suggested Miklós Tomka. The categories of this typology are: 1. religious

according to the teachings of the Church, 2. religious in his/her own way, 3. I can not decide weather I am religious or not, 4. I am not religious, 5. I have different beliefs, I am definitely non religious.

This five-category typology is used in the Hungarian sociology of religion when asking questions about religious self classification. The meaning of each group in a traditional sense is the following: the first group is church related religiosity, the second group is individual religiosity, the third group contains people who are uncertain, the fourth group contains people who are not religious, and the fifth group is the atheists. The sixth group initially meant that the person cannot answer, therefore there is no answer. Initially there were so few belonging to this last group that there were no interpretations of this group.

In 1977/78, Miklós Tomka started publishing about the fact that the previously used dichotomous category in relation to religiosity cannot be upheld. Whereas the dichotomous category contained two opposing groups: "religious" and "not religious," the author claimed even then that society is more complex than that. This dichotomous category only served the political ideology of the communist party, but did not fit the reality of society. The author stated that if the five-category typology suggested by him is used for describing religiosity, we can then clearly show that two third of Hungarian society is religious. He based this conclusion on the data from the statements, he has combined the numbers from his first two categories, "religious according to the teachings of the Church" and "religious in his/her own way." This statement, during the political conditions of the period, ideologically carried a lot of weight. We can clearly see in the table below, how the percentage in the self-classification has changed during the decades.

Table II. Categories of self classification, 1980-2008 data is in percentage.⁷

Year	Religious according to the teachings of the Church	Religious in their own way	Undecided/ I am unsure whether I believe or not	Not religious	Different convictions	No answer	Total
1980	10.6	40.9	8.2	19.3	19	2	100
1988	12.3	45.8	5.2	26.6	8.7	1.4	100
1991	16	52.8	5.4	20.8	4.5	0.5	100
2000	13.5	56.9	3.3	25.7	-	0.6	100
2008	17.8	48.3	5.7	27.9	-	0.2	100

We can clearly see in the table that, according to the categories of religious self classification in Hungary, the religiosity of the population after the change of regime has increased. If we add the

⁷ I have examined the shift of meaning in the categories based on the research and study of Miklós Tomka. Miklós Tomka, "A vallásosság mérése," *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle*, 1973. Vol. 1-2, pp. 122-135; Miklós Tomka, "The Beginning of Sociology of Religion in Hungary," *Vienna UKI-reports 1977* (No. 1-2-3, 1979), pp. 5-95; Miklós Tomka, "Coping with Persecution. Religious Change in Communism and in Post-Communist Reconstruction in Central Europe." *International Sociology* (No.13.2, 1998), pp. 229-248; Miklós Tomka, "Vallási helyzetkép – 2009. A vallásosság elterjedésének, társadalmi bázisának és az életben betöltött szerepének változásai az utóbbi évtizedekben Magyarországon," in Gergely Rosta and Miklós Tomka, eds., *Mit értékelnek a magyarok?*, Agóra IX (Budapest: OCIPE Magyarország–Faludi Ferenc Akadémia, 2010.); Miklós Tomka, *Expanding Religion. Religious revival in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 218-228,

I also take into consideration other terms of religiosity for instance Grace Davie, "Believing without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain?," *Social Compass* 1990, Vol. 37 (December), and Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945. Believing without Belonging* (Oxford/Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1994.)

two groups, “according to the teachings of the Church” and “religious in his/her own way,” (which is customary in sociology of religion in Hungary) then we can see that in 1991 68.8% of the population, in 2000 70% and in 2008 66.2% considered themselves religious. We can also see in the table that the religiosity of the Hungarian population is mostly individualistic, increasingly belonging to the “religious in his/her own way” group. Moreover the growing number of “not religious” means that there is a growing secularization. As the data covers nearly 30 years, I have examined how other authors dealing with the same topic have interpreted these categories from the table.⁸

In the papers Miklós Tomka published in the ‘70s and ‘80s the typology of religiosity was defined in accordance with the Catholic Church. At the time, the emphasis was on how accepted were the Christian, traditional, and institutional Churches. Those who kept themselves away from the expectations of institution, but interpreted their own religiosity according to the Christian values, fell in the group of “religious in his/her own way.”

In the early 90s, the typology started to become less clear-cut or one-dimensional.⁹ The authors (Miklós Tomka and his disciples) started to talk about the fact that a church-related religiosity means something similar to what the western sociologists of religion call a “committed” or “confessor” behaviour. They had started to regard those in the category, “religious in their own way,” as cultural Christians. Cultural Christianity did not assume a commitment to follow the teaching of the Church, and meant a looser relationship with the Church than for the committed. Cultural Christianity in the ‘90s described those who expected religious services from the Church, but did not seriously commit themselves. It included those who wanted christening, First Communion, Confirmation, wedding

⁸ Based on studies Gergely Rosta, “Vallásosság a mai Magyarországon,” *Vigilia* (No. 10, 2011), pp. 741-750; Rita Hegedűs, “Tomka Miklós a vallás rétegződés kapcsolatáról,” in *Vallás a keresztény társadalom után*, Mónika Földvári and Dániel Gábor Nagy, eds. (Szeged: Belverede Meridionale 2012), pp. 81-93; Mónika Földvári, “Az egyház mibenléte és társadalmi szerepe Tomka Miklós munkásságában,” in *Vallás a keresztény társadalom után*, Mónika Földvári and Dániel Gábor Nagy, eds. (Szeged: Belverede Meridionale 2012), pp. 67-81.

⁹ Based on data from 1991 EVS (European Value Study).

ceremonies and funerals, but the expectations of the historical Churches did not define their everyday lives.

By the end of the '90s, in Hungary, the number of people who were "religious in their own way" had further increased, and the meaning of the term had changed again. The tendency of further departing from organized religion had remained, together with the utilitarian approach toward the Christian Church. As a new feature superstition, occultism, as well as different pseudo-religious elements had appeared. The spread of non-religious elements had become apparent.

Ten years later, in 2008, at the time of interpreting the results of the next large scale representative research, in the "religious in their own way" category there was more emphasis on the continuous change of the religious content and an increase of non-catholic content. What's more, the researchers felt that in this category there was more emphasis on turning away from catholic traditions towards those of eastern religions. It is apparent from this short summary that between 1980 and 2008 the five-category typology had gone through significant change, especially the "religious in their own way" category. The most important changes were:

(1) Individual religiosity had increased at the expense of church-related religiosity. (2) Along with Christian-oriented subject matter, esoteric and eastern religious elements had appeared. (3) The previously one dimensional category had turned into a multi-dimensional category.

The change of connotation of the typology (especially the category "religious in his/her own way") had several explanations. Firstly, nearly thirty years had passed between the origin of the typology and the last of the data collected. Secondly, half way through the political regime changed totally, thirdly, the international relations of sociologists of religion had broadened, so that as a result of new information the usage of terms could change. Considering all this, we can state that the meaning of the categories of the typology based on self classification has transformed, and it is increasingly difficult to define what they mean. The respondents by the method of self-determination, turn the images of themselves into the possible answers, the content of which has become increasingly complex and uncertain.

After this short summary of the transformation of meaning of the categories, I now return to the interpretation of the data from table II. I have explained above the extent of change the category, "religious in his/her own way," has gone through in the last thirty years. We can pose the question like this: Why couldn't we now presume that the other categories have also changed? What did it mean in the 1980, in a socialist country to declare that one is not religious? And what does the same category mean in a newly forming democracy (after 1990)? Do respondents mean the same as the researchers when they put themselves into the group "I am not religious"? For researchers the growing number in that group means a spread of secularization. It is clear that this statement can be interpreted this way as well. However we cannot eliminate the possibility that the respondent could "only" say "I am not religious" but could not specify what else. It seems logical to examine this group (especially in Europe) as part of the reasons behind secularisation. But I personally believe that the increase in this category alerts us to a different social phenomena. Over time this category has approached the undecided group, "I am not sure if I am religious or not."

I must emphasise again, the statement "I am not religious" can not only mean that the person rejects religion but it can mean that the respondent is only sure of the fact that he or she is not religious. What can we say then? This category can include a seeker or someone in transition, or a static final position. In my opinion the members of this group are searching for an authentic interpretative framework that fits their lives. In other words I suppose the growth in these latter two categories means a growing number of seekers rather than a growing secularisation.

For now we can only state that if the category "religious in his/her own way" has continuously changed over the last 30 years, (as we have seen above) then the same change is expected of the other categories as well. The change is not accidental: all frameworks for interpretation had changed in Hungary after the change of regime, and there was an increase in the number of people seeking their place, and interpretations.

Hereunder I will examine what we can see when looking at young people's religious self classification.

Religious Self Classification of Young People (2000-2012)

People have learnt about the self classification of young people's faith based on the 2012 research of Hungarian Youth.¹⁰

Table III. Religious self classification of young people, percentage (2000-2012).¹¹

Year	Religious according to the teachings of the Church	Religious in his/her own way	Undecided/I am unsure whether I believe or not	Not religious	Different convictions	No answer
2000	10	46	6	28	8	2
2004	10	48	4	24	13	1
2008	7	43	6	35	8	1
2012	7	31	8	40	7	7

Based on the table, if we interpret the figures in a "traditional" way, we can see that there are clear trends. We can see that among young people, there is a decline in the number of those who believe according to the teachings of the Church as well as in the number of those who believes in his/her own way. Moreover, there was an increase in the number of not religious. We could see the same trend in Table II, in the total population data. The "only" difference is that among young people there was a drastic increase in the number of the latter group (not-religious). If we interpret the data in a "traditional" way, we can see not a trend of individualization among young people, but a trend of secularization.¹² (It is also interesting

¹⁰ Gergely Rosta, "Hit és vallás," in *Magyar Ifjúság 2012* (Budapest: Új Nemzedék, 2013), pp. 316-330.

¹¹ See Rosta, "Hit és vallás," p. 319.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 329.

that according to the 2012 data the number of people not responding had increased. We had come across the same trend in the 2011 census.) According to the “traditional interpretation” the process of secularization is spreading among the young, at the expense of religious individualism.

However, if we take into consideration that the content of the categories had changed over time then we can add the following. It seems reasonable to assume that in young people’s case also, those who chose the category “not religious,” can also be regarded to know more what is not characteristic of them rather than what is. Faith is uncharacteristic of them. In 2012, the vast majority of young people chose this category, pushing the category “religious in his/her own way” to second place. We can draw the conclusion that there were only a few who could not specify their convictions if not religious. And from this it follows that the group “not religious” is a diverse group.

On the one hand, this category could mean that someone is not religious, and they do not think about religion at all. On the other hand, it could also mean that they are seeking their conviction, (even if not necessarily religion) but have not yet found it. In other words the category “not religious” used in the questionnaire for young people, includes people who later on may or may not become believers. The question is what, how, where and when are they looking? Who are they asking for a favour and what help might they accept, or whom can they count on? Do they expect external help in search of their identity?

To sum up, I believe that part of the “not religious” group are those who are still in search of their true identity. Next I will investigate what is characteristic of a seeker attitude.

Characterization of Seekers – Based on Life Story Interviews

We have been conducting qualitative research on religiosity and identity, based on life story interviews.¹³ I will summarise below what we have learnt from the interviews with young people. What I

¹³ I have been teaching qualitative methods and seminars on religious communities to my students. On these lessons we conduct interviews on religiosity of young people as practice. I would like to thank the sociology students of Pazmany Peter Catholic University who get involved in this work with enthusiasm. We have been collecting such research data from 2010 on.

have collected from the texts is how the respondents describe being a seeker.

First of all, we have to realise that young people interviewed can describe what they are seeking only in very general terms. At first it seems that the question is unexpected. They are searching for the right words, the right terms, they start their responses several times, as if they had to dig down for things buried deeply. The range of responses is wide. From "I am seeking what I am seeking," to "I am seeking to experience God." Many stated that they were seeking "the harmony of their lives," "peace," "their own way," "order in their lives," "justice" and "honesty." In other words, they are listing post-materialistic values. The search is directed to their inner self and focuses on their personal world.

The interviewees talk about being a seeker, like a mission, and the target audience is themselves. Seeking is like a pilgrimage, of which they expect a lot, but if the long awaited answer does not come, they need to continue on the road and try again. This attitude appears as a duty or "life program." If we want to uncover the deepest layers of the question we come to the term "authenticity." They continue on this road until they feel that they had arrived at "harmony," "justice," "the finding themselves." The emphasis is on "they feel." We can see with all the interview subjects that they have a sense of what is authentic. Authenticity is not confirmed by reasons from external feedback, but rather internally, by the individual's emotions.

We can come to interesting conclusions if we want to discover the process of seeking. We can talk about its different stages. These stages can be very active or equally they can be very passive. As one of these subjects has put it, "currently I am not actively seeking. I am focusing on other things. I feel that I am in harmony." The search only intensifies when they need support, for instance, when the individual's life changes, and the previous order breaks. Another subject said that during her studies abroad she felt compared to her classmates and it was enough for her to consider suicide. Others wanted to get rid of their drug addiction, and became active seekers. Seeking is therefore a conscious process that is initiated by the lack of balance. My data indicate that the process starts when for some reason the order of everyday life comes into question.

It is worth mentioning what it is that the seekers are looking for. In relation to the content I have found it is a wide circle that young

people search through to find the meaning of life, order, a frame that will support their lives. The content can be considered liquid: they are typically very open-minded. We can see them following the rule of being open towards the external world and closed internally. Evidently they only accept the interpretative frameworks they deem authentic. The range of search is wide in that respect as well. From convictions like "I believe in myself, I believe everyone is god," from sports through philosophy all the way through to historic Churches. So seeking is not necessarily religious and not limited culturally.

And yet it seems as if there was a "prohibited" content. Everything that might cost the seeker his or her dignity must be avoided. The question is how can we recognise such content? As we have discovered, it is quite easy. They turn away from those values or code of conduct that try to prescribe how to live their lives without their acceptance. For that reason they avoid places and people who can "tell them the answers." It is a threat, because they feel their dignity is in jeopardy. Perhaps it is not difficult to see behind this that they consider seeking to be a state and they think that people around them should accept that. They go through questioning claims that are considered the truth by others. The purpose of this is to form their own convictions, which is why they ask questions.

Places that pose a threat to their dignity could be the parental home, where their parents want to tell them what the key to happiness is. It could be the school system, where a teacher wants to tell them what to do. And still most people mentioned historic Churches, especially the structures and traditions of the Catholic Church. So those places that they get an answer to the questions how to live their lives they deem a danger zone that needs to be avoided. But they are not to be avoided if the young person feels that his or her parents or teachers or the Church is supportive, which we could also call accepting. Clearly, feeling accepted is a basis for authenticity. It is difficult to ascertain further criteria to authenticity, so we can only sense that it is no less than our dignity that is at stake.

We have to also mention the seekers' opinion of the Catholic Church. It is often that they have a low opinion of priests, the past of the Church, mass etc. Together with this we can see a lack of knowledge in regards to the topic. And so they form negative opinions without any personal experience or any knowledge. Most

will have a pejorative opinion on the grounds of the historic role of the Church, or because of the rules and regulations of the Church. "No one tells me what to do!" It should be emphasized, however, that negative opinion is not related to personal experience. One of the interview subjects thought it disgraceful that for example, in the Catholic Church they still say the mass in Latin. (This practice does not exist anymore in Hungary since the Vatican Synod II. It seems that they want to explain to themselves as well why they are not searching for the meaning of life within catholic traditions.)

After that we could justifiably ask who is deemed authentic, a person with what characteristics within the Catholic Church? It seems that even within the Church the so-called "star" priests can be the most accepted. Such personalities stick out from the crowds for some reason, because they have personality traits missing from many others. Just think of the Milanese nun that won "The Voice" in 2014. How could this Milanese nun suddenly become so popular among the young generation? Partly because she found her own identity, and is not ashamed of it in front of the world, and partly, because she appeared in a highly unusual setting in front of the general public. Extraordinary religious people exist in all countries, in Hungary too.¹⁴ Seekers speak highly of those whom they find extraordinary. Authenticity of a person within the Church seems to be related to their exceptional personality.

Summary

In the study I have drawn up the data of the Hungarian religious self classification and categories. I have specifically detailed the change of meaning of the categories "religious in his/her own way" and "non-believer." The transformation of the above mentioned two categories suggest that the other self classification categories could have gone through a similar change of meaning throughout the last 30 years. The clarification of this requires further investigation.

"Religious in his/her own way" is the largest category in Hungary, which suggests a religious individualism. A new phenomena however, is that among young people the "not

¹⁴ Peter Török, "What Should We Pay Attention to Some Preliminary Information on the Value System of the Students in the Network of Church-Run Roma Special Colleges," *HERJ – Hungarian Educational Research Journal* (No. 4: (2) 2014), pp. 1-14

religious” category is the largest, taking over the “religious in his/her own way” group. Moreover I have found that we cannot be certain in the interpretation of what we mean by the “not religious” category. I strongly suspect that the reason for the increase of this group is the stronger seeker sensation of life in recent years, especially among young people. Based on the description of the seeker attitude we can state that young people continuously adjust their relation to the world, looking for an authentic framework for interpretation. This means in relation to religious self determination that this attitude is typical, in other words it is present in each category. Which in turns means that the lines are getting blurred for the categories used in the self classification of sociology of religion. The topic of another study could be to ascertain the difference between social attitudes of young people in the group “religious in his/her own way,” and “not religious.”

The conclusions of the study confirm that young people are searching for themselves, want to react to change, while they want to maintain harmony with themselves. For that reason they are looking for authentic frameworks for interpretation. And what they find depends on what they deem authentic in the solutions offered.¹⁵

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¹⁵ This aspect is dealt with Peter Török, “Megfontolások Tomka Miklós a ‘keresztény társadalom’ vége...” c. gondolataihoz *Vallás a keresztény társadalom után*, Mónika Földvári and Dániel Gábor Nagy, eds. (Szeged: Belverede Meridionale 2012), pp. 313-323.

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Seekers and Dwellers in the Light of Empirical Social Research¹

GERGELY ROSTA & RITA HEGEDŰS

Introduction

When they started measuring religiosity by means of a questionnaire, sociologists of religion initially had a concept of religiosity that was closely linked to traditional churches. Thus, the first empirical studies concentrated mainly on measuring belief in God and in other faith issues based on the teaching of one specific religious tradition as well as church-related religious praxis. At most they distinguished stages of the intensity of religiosity (very religious, less religious, etc.). Multi-dimensional concepts of religiosity, such as the five-dimensional model by Glock and Stark² came into an empirical use only with the beginning of larger-scale surveys and multivariate analyses. These measurements indicate that the processes of religious change in the Western world could not be described merely as a decline of (church-related) religiosity, since religious change did not necessarily happen in the same way in different dimensions, and despite downward tendencies in some religious indicators, a considerable part of Western societies remained religious in some way.

This was also the era when the development of other typologies of religiosity started, taking more aspects into account. One of them is Zulehner's five types, identified on the basis of the 1990 European Values Study. He differentiated the categories of church religiosity, cultural churchliness, religiosity, cultural religiosity and non-religiosity.³ Another well-known typology is the trichotomy of Yves

¹ We would like to express our gratitude to Ferenc Moksony and Ervin J. Szabó for their help in translating and proofreading parts of this text.

² Charles Glock and Rodney Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965).

³ Paul M. Zulehner, "Az egyházak és a vallás Európában," *Mérleg* (No. 3, 1995), pp. 323–332.

Lambert.⁴ His categories are confessing Christianity, secular humanism and cultural Christianity. This typology emphasises the long-term existence of two independent types of religious orientations.

The typology of seekers and dwellers, proposed by Wuthnow and Taylor⁵ puts emphasis in the first place on the difference between an open-minded and a narrow-minded interest in spirituality and in the supernatural. Thus, the seeker-dweller dichotomy cannot be identified explicitly either as the dichotomy of a church-related versus an individual type of religiosity, or the dichotomy of born-into religiosity versus converts.

It is important for us to try to make use of this approach of seekers and dwellers for the empirical research, in order to gain a fresh and more nuanced picture on the religious change in today's Hungary. In this paper we make an attempt to identify these two religious types by using large-scale survey data and by applying two different approaches:

1. Using a simple logical approach that took a number of variables into account, we created the following four groups and established their main characteristics: "seeker only," dweller only," "both seeker and dweller" and "neither seeker, nor dweller."

2. Using basically the same variables as in the first procedure, we employed cluster analysis, rather than a "manual method," in order to identify "real" groups based on their similarity on religious issues. Unlike in the first approach, this method does not ensure by default the empirical reproduction of the typology of Wuthnow and Taylor. Therefore, one of our main questions here is, whether an exploratory empirical classification leads to groups that are similar to or even identical with those created in the first stage of our analysis.

⁴ Yves Lambert, "La religion: un paysage en pleine évolution," *Les Valeurs de Français*, H. Riffault, ed. (Paris: P.U.F., 1994), pp. 123-162.

⁵ Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom," *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, Ch. Taylor, J. Casanova and G. F. McLean, eds. (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), pp. 17-24.

The Four Groups and Their Characteristics

Although we expected, given the situation in Hungary, the “neither seeker, nor dweller” group being the largest, we were still surprised how difficult it was to get sufficient sample size for “seekers.” We faced two constraints: first, the data available to us were not specifically tailored to our research questions; second, the samples applied were drawn to be representative of the total adult population and thus the various religion-related subgroups typically were of relatively small size. We eventually decided for the 2008 wave of ISSP, which included 1010 Hungarian respondents. We selected several questions and used them to assign people to two groups, “dwellers” and “seekers.”⁶ In accordance with the theses of Taylor we believed the two groups are not completely separated, thus, we had to find criteria that were not mutually exclusive. This means we used different questions for “seekers” and “dwellers” and assigned people giving the required answers to both group of questions to the category “both seekers and dwellers,” while respondents belonging to none of these groups were relegated to the group are labelled as “neither seeker, nor dweller.” The criteria for the classification into the categories were the following:

- There was one condition required of both “seekers” and “dwellers”: to believe in God, since we think this is a necessary minimum for a religious approach in a Western context.
- We classified as “seekers” those religious persons who said they were interested in sacred and spiritual matters (“I am a spiritual person”) and did not refuse the statement that they had their own way of connecting with God.
- “Dwellers” were those believers who reported themselves to be religious at least to some degree (scored at least 3 on a 7-point scale of religiousness), trusted in the church (two highest scores on a 5-point scale) and had no doubt about the existence of God.

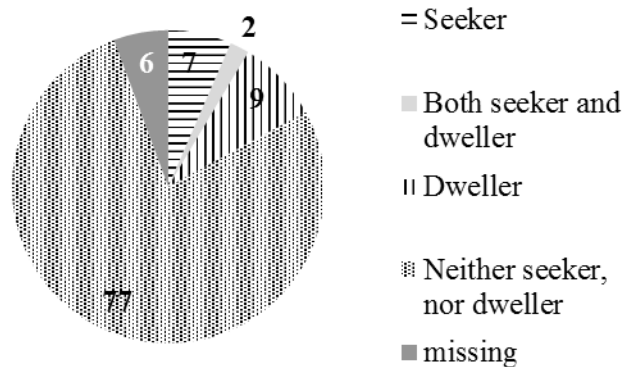
Although we are aware of the fact that typologies different from ours could also have been created from the data set used in our

⁶ We tried a number of different questions and settled on these because we realized that if we include more items in constructing our typology, then the resulting groups, while more refined theoretically, will be so small that no sensible analysis could be done.

study, we still hope that the groups to be described below will contribute to our understanding of “seekers” and “dwellers.”

Conforming to our expectations, the greatest part (about three-quarter) of our sample belonged to the group “neither seeker, nor dweller” (see *Figure 1*). As for the two other groups, “dwellers” and “seekers,” the former is larger, which may seem surprising, given the high share in the population, in both Europe and Hungary, of those who say they are religious “in their own way” (*à la carte* religiosity).⁷ Although “seekers” are clearly different from those who are religious “in their own way,” the large difference in the size of the two categories is interesting and also indicates that we managed to create a typology that deviates from the customary dichotomy of “churchly” vs. “unchurchly.”

Graph 1: Distribution of groups with different religious approaches (%)



The examination of the relationship between our typology and the frequency of church attendance shows that “seekers” and “dwellers” are not the only ones with close contact to church (as measured by church attendance). Some 7 percent of the respondents falling outside the groups of “seekers” and “dwellers” reported that they went to church at least monthly. And conversely, a considerable

⁷ Mónika Földvári and Gergely Rosta, “A modern vallásosság megközelítési lehetőségei,” *Szociológiai Szemle* (No. 1, 1995), pp. 127-139; Mónika Földvári and Gergely Rosta, “Exploring Types of Religiosity,” *Sociology of Religion in Hungary*, M. Tomka, ed. (Budapest/Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2004), pp. 8-24.

portion of frequent church goers are neither “seekers,” nor “dwellers.”

It is, further, interesting to note that as much as 40 percent of weekly church goers are not “dwellers” and about the same proportion of “dwellers” do not go to church weekly. This means that a sizable portion of those who are customarily regarded as religious based on their frequency of church attendance do not actually belong to “core believers” using our criteria; on the other hand, many of “core believers” do not regularly go to church (*Table 1*).

Turning to the group of “seekers,” their frequency of church attendance is about average, but a subgroup of them – those overlapping with “dwellers” – go to church rather frequently. It is not surprising that only a relatively small minority (16%) of active church goers belong among the “seekers.”

All in all, we can say that by applying the dichotomy dweller/seeker we can capture both a smaller and a larger share of respondents rather than using the more traditional dichotomies.

Thus far, we have seen that our typology enables us to measure not merely churchliness but a broader kind of religious attitude. Comparing the two groups, dwellers and seekers, we can see that they have the other’s features one by one to a relatively great degree (48.2% of dwellers say they are spiritual people, while 51.5% of seekers state they are religious and 47% of them believe in God without doubt), but in each group, we find important characteristics that are almost absent in the other. In the case of “dwellers,” this is the trust in the church, while in the case of “seekers,” it is a special relationship with God (only 18.8 percent of dwellers say they have an own way of connecting with God and only 23.4 percent of seekers say they have confidence in the church). *Table 2* gives us a picture of the content of our three groups by naming the main categories of variables used in constructing the groups of dweller and seeker (and of the mixed one).

If we now look at other variables related to religiosity but not used in creating our typology, we find that on almost all variables, the group “both dweller and seeker” is the “most religious,” but indicators capturing traditional religiosity generally have higher values for dwellers than for seekers, and indicators concerning new

religious phenomena show the opposite results.⁸ The largest differences between the two types were observed on the following variables: seekers believe more likely than dwellers in reincarnation and Nirvana (33.9 vs.10.5% and 25.9 vs. 4.8%, respectively), while dwellers are much more likely to believe in hell (20.6 vs. 41.2%). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the figures in *Table 3* where we summarized the results of a logistic regression modelling that shows the odds ratios instead of relative frequency.

Table 1: Groups of the religious approach and frequency of church attendance (%)

Group	Frequency of church attendance				Total
	Weekly	Monthly	Less frequently	Never	
Seeker	6.1%	3.0%	54.5%	36.4%	100.0%
	5.7%	3.7%	8.4%	6.1%	7.0%
Both seeker and dweller	35.0%	30.0%	25.0%	10.0%	100.0%
	10.0%	11.1%	1.2%	.5%	2.1%
Dweller	39.5%	19.8%	31.4%	9.3%	100.0%
	48.6%	31.5%	6.3%	2.0%	9.1%
Neither seeker, nor dweller	3.2%	3.7%	46.4%	46.6%	100.0%
	35.7%	53.7%	84.1%	91.4%	81.9%
Total	7.4%	5.7%	45.1%	41.8%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: ISSP 2008

⁸ See Table A1 and A2 in the Annex.

Table 2: Categories that are over-represented⁹ in the three examined groups

Groups	Underlying variables					
	Confidence in churches	Belief about God	Religious self-description	Own way of connecting with God	Religiosity vs. spirituality	Belief in God before and now
Seeker	great deal of + not at all	no doubts + doubts but believes	very + somewhat religious + neither nor	(strongly agree + agree)	(I follow a religion, I am a spiritual person + I don't follow a religion, I am a spiritual person)	(I believe in God now and I always have + I believe in God now but I didn't used to)
Both seeker and dweller	(complete+ great deal of)	(no doubts)	(extremely + very + somewhat religious)	(strongly agree + agree)	(I follow a religion, I am a spiritual person + I don't follow a religion, I am a spiritual person)	(I believe in God now and I always have)
Dweller	(complete+ great deal of)	(no doubts)	(extremely + very + somewhat religious)	disagree	I follow a religion, I am a spiritual person + I follow a religion, I am not a spiritual person	(I believe in God now and I always have)

Source: ISSP 2008

⁹ By at least 5 percent. Categories in the brackets represent selection criteria.

Table 3: Odds ratios indicating the effect of belonging to various religious groups on the probability definite belief in some religious-related matters.¹⁰

	Seeker	Both seeker and dweller	Dweller
Life after death	7.344	57.301	7.498
Heaven	7.201	63.710	14.507
Hell	5.133	57.152	13.532
Religious miracles	10.786	52.759	9.412
Reincarnation	16.965	47.267	3.839
Nirvana	20.159	47.998	(2.919)*
Supernatural powers of deceased ancestors	8.015	35.483	3.870

Source: ISSP 2008

Table 4: Some socio-demographical characteristics of the for types in Hungary

	Average age	Proportion of women	Average number of years in education	Proportion of those living in Budapest	Proportion of those living in villages
Seekers	46.5 years	61.2%	12.0 years	18.2%	34.8%
Both seekers and dwellers	53.8 years	80.0%	10.0 years	4.8%	47.6%
Dwellers	57.6 years	68.6%	11.0 years	10.3%	43.7%
Neither seekers, nor dwellers	45.7 years	50.8%	12.0 years	17.2%	26.1%

Source: ISSP 2008

Our groups are different not only in their beliefs and attitudes toward religion but in their socio-demographic background as well. As could be seen, the dwellers and the mixed dweller group (dwellers and seekers at the same time) were more traditional with

¹⁰ Reference category is always the group “neither seekers nor dwellers”; when no indication is shown than $p = .00$; * $p = .1$.

regard to their religious beliefs and attitudes. The same is true for their socio-demographic background, too. They are typically older, live in smaller settlements, have lower levels of education and the proportion of women is greater in their group, than in the whole sample. The seekers are much closer to the average population. The order of the four groups on a “traditional–modern” scale is as follows: both seekers and dwellers; dwellers; seekers; neither seekers, nor dwellers. Some data can demonstrate their status.

Cluster Analysis

After making an attempt to create exactly those categories in Hungary proposed by Taylor, the goal of this second part of the paper is the identification of groups based on the similarities of their answers to various questions about religiosity. There is a basic difference between the two approaches, since in this part of the paper we do not assume the existence of the group of “seekers” and “dwellers,” but we try to identify existing grouping structures based on their homogeneity concerning religiosity. After finding more or less homogeneous groups, we can label them by looking at their common characteristics.

The database is the same as in the first part of the paper, ISSP 2008 Hungarian data. The method used to identify religiously homogeneous groups is TwoStep cluster analysis as a multivariate exploratory tool.¹¹

The underlying variables¹² mainly measure attitudes towards God and other supernatural issues of both Christian and non-Christian nature, combined with religious self-assessment, the way of connecting with God as well as confidence in churches. Such a

¹¹ TwoStep cluster analysis is a special case of cluster analysis used to discover homogeneous groups in large datasets based on categorical and/or continuous variables. Unlike hierarchical clustering methods, TwoStep algorithm automatically determines the ideal number of clusters as well as the assignment of the cases to the clusters.

¹² See Appendix. The deviation between the circle of variables used in part one and part two has mainly methodological reasons. Some of the variables used in part one had to be excluded from the cluster analyses because the cluster analysis did not result in a stable solution. On the other hand, we involved here more variables on faith in different things as indicators of supernatural orientation because the cluster analysis did not have the same restrictions like the fist method, i.e. having more variables resulting in smaller groups.

combination of religious indicators allows for a measurement of religiosity that is not necessarily connected to church teachings and embedded in church communities. Just like in the first part, we consciously abstained from using classical measures of church-related religious practice such as frequency of church attendance or prayer in order to focus on the individual relation to the different forms of Divine and to the Supernatural. However, in a second step after creating the clusters, we will also take a closer look at the relationship between groups based on common attitudes towards supernatural issues on the one hand, and traditional church religiosity on the other.

As was already noted in the first part of the paper, the questions available in the questionnaires of the study used by us do not perfectly fit the typology of Wuthnow and Taylor. The main difference is that questions related to the activity or attitude of 'seeking' were not raised in any of the large-scale quantitative empirical sociological studies known to us. Therefore, it cannot be our goal to exactly reproduce the category of the 'seekers' as defined by Taylor, i.e. those who "are looking for meaning, and often see themselves as looking for more than this, for some form of life which will bring them in contact with the spiritual, however they define this."¹³ On the other hand, unlike in part one, in this second analysis we do not exclusively focus on different types of a positive attitude to religion or religiosity. Our goal is to cover the entire Hungarian society with the clusters of religiosity (and non-religiosity). However, this methodological approach obviously does not rule out the possibility of identifying several types of religiosity. In fact, an important question for us is, whether the three poles of the religious field, suggested by Yves Lambert¹⁴ and shown by Földvári and Rosta¹⁵ using other data and methods can be discovered in our analysis. According to this model, besides "confessing Christianity" (characterized by strong belief and regular religious praxis) and "secular humanism" (those who are rejecting religious beliefs and praxis) there is a third category as well. "Cultural Christianity" is marked by uncertainty of belief, irregularity of religious practice,

¹³ Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom," p. 17.

¹⁴ Lambert, "La religion: un paysage en pleine évolution."

¹⁵ Földvári and Rosta, "A modern vallásosság megközelítési lehetőségei;" Földvári and Rosta, "Exploring Types of Religiosity."

distance from churches and an individual choice of the elements of the own religiosity. In many aspects, this third group is an intermediary one between the two poles of “confessing Christianity” and “secular humanism.” These categorisations are also largely in line with the empirical studies on religious types of the Hungarian society conducted by János Szántó.¹⁶ Another similar categorization is the five-category typology suggested by Miklós Tomka, distinguishing between church-related and individual religiosity on the one hand, and religious indifference vs. determined atheism on the other hand. The fifth category was religious undecidedness.¹⁷

However, other than the former analyses, the current study allows us to examine somewhat more thoroughly the role of some non-Christian elements, too. By doing so, we look for answers to the question whether there are religious features that are more characteristic for “cultural Christianity” than for the “confessing Christianity,” or the former is indeed just an intermediate point on a more or less linear scale from “very religious” to “non-religious.” If we found a category that is less dogmatic in its faith and more open to spirituality and non-Christian religiosity, this too could be interpreted as evidence for the existence of the group of seekers.

Our TwoStep cluster analysis resulted in most of the cases¹⁸ in a three-cluster solution. About 93% of the sample could be classified

¹⁶ János Szántó, “A vallásosság dimenziói egy szekularizált társadalomban,” *Szociológia* (No. 3-4, 1990), pp. 187-202

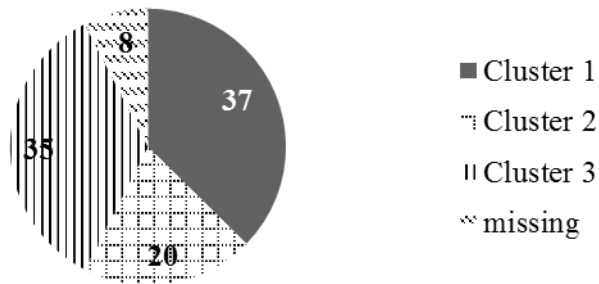
¹⁷ Miklós Tomka, “A vallásosság mérése,” *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle* (Vol. 30. No. 1-2, 1973), pp.122-135; Miklós Tomka, “A változó vallásosság mérésének problémái,” *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle* (Vol. 34. No. 4, 1977), pp. 363-376; Miklós Tomka, “A vallásosság mérése,” *Studia Religiosa – Tanulmányok András Imre 70. születésnapjára*, András Máté-Tóth and Mária Jahn, eds. (Szeged: Bába és Társa, 1998), pp. 18-31.

¹⁸ This clustering method is sensitive for the order of the cases in the data base. In order to avoid measurement artefacts, we conducted the cluster analysis with ten different sequences of the same data base. Out of the ten runs of the procedure, seven resulted in a three-cluster solution and three in a two-cluster model. The relationship between the two- and the three-cluster solutions will be discussed later. These three-cluster models resulting from different sequences of the cases were to a great extent identical, with just minor differences that do not make a significant impact on the interpretation of the clusters.

The quality of the cluster solution can be considered as ‘fair’, measured by average Silhouette, a measurement of cohesion and separation (value = 0,3).

into one of the three clusters.¹⁹ There are two larger clusters, both comprising somewhat more than one third of the entire sample, while about one fifth belongs to cluster Nr. 3.²⁰

Graph 2: The distribution of the three clusters



As mentioned under footnote 16, in some cases the clustering procedure produced a two-cluster solution instead of the three-cluster model, shown on Graph 2. However, the lower number of clusters does not mean a fundamentally different structure in this case. The basic difference between the two solutions is that cluster Nr. 1 of the two-cluster model will be divided into two parts in the three-cluster solution.²¹ On the contrary, the second cluster of the smaller model is almost fully identical with cluster Nr. 3 from the other model. Since the share of cluster Nr. 1 in the sample is almost the double of the share of cluster Nr. 2²², it is obvious that it also plays a greater role for the composition of the first cluster of the two-cluster solution.²³

The uncertainty about the exact number of the clusters leads us to the conclusion, that there are basically two poles in the Hungarian

¹⁹ Cases having a missing value on at least one variable were excluded from the analysis. In order to avoid too large numbers of missing cases and also to measure religious uncertainty, the answer “don’t know” was considered as valid, and all the variables were included into the cluster analysis as categorical. Missing cases resulted exclusively from the rejection of answering a question.

²⁰ See Graph 2.

²¹ Only a minor part of cluster Nr. 1 belongs to the third cluster in the more detailed model.

²² See Graph 2.

²³ See Table 5.

society on the relation to religiosity, but one of them can be much likely divided into two subgroups, allowing for a more accurate picture.

Table 5: Connection between the two- and the three-cluster solutions

Three clusters	Nr. 1	3%	98%	40%
	Nr. 2	35%	2%	22%
	Nr. 3	62%	0%	38%
Total		100%	100%	100%

Source: ISSP 2008

In order to identify the labels of the clusters, we have to take a closer look first at the distribution of the underlying variables in the three clusters. For a better overlook, we indicated in Table A3²⁴ only those categories that were over-represented in the respective clusters. It shows if a category is above average present in one given cluster. However, an over-representation does not mean that the majority of the members of a cluster belong to this category. These features of the clusters enable putting labels on each of the clusters that express their common characteristics.

Among the respondents belonging to cluster Nr. 1 every form of firm non-religiosity is overrepresented. They definitely do not believe in any supernatural including God (or at least they don't believe there is any way to find out about God's existence); they consider themselves as non-religious and have little to no trust in churches. Looking at these categories, it seems proper to label this cluster as "Non-religious."

The second cluster comprises those who are not firmly non-religious, but rather undecided, in religious issues. This is best shown by their attitudes towards God. Answers like "I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at others," or "I don't know" are clearly over-represented in this group. At the same time, belief in a "Higher Power of some kind" but not in a personal God, is also typical for this group of people. Confronted with other concrete forms of the Supernatural, either of a Christian or non-Christian nature, they rather choose not to believe. In addition, they rather consider themselves as non-religious and have little to no confidence

²⁴ See Annex.

in religious institutions. We labelled this group of respondents who do not reject decidedly any forms of divine but are rather sceptical about it as "Undecided."

Among the answers of those belonging to cluster Nr. 3 are basically all answer types overrepresented that are positive towards religion, both decided and unsure. Unlike in Lambert, this group does not only contain confessing Christians but also those having doubts, or considering themselves as just "somewhat religious." It is interesting to see, that belief in both Christian and non-Christian faith elements are above-average present in this cluster. The overrepresentation of the belief in these issues, however, goes along with a greater trust in churches, too. On the basis of these findings, we labelled this cluster generally as "Religious," not making any further distinction.

Looking at the difference between the two-cluster and the three-cluster solution, the latter distinguishes between the two types of undecided and religious groups. Accordingly, the basic distinction that is grasped already in the two-cluster solution, is the bipolarity of non-religious and, to put it very generally, "not non-religious" people.

The ISSP 2008 study contained a lot of other questions on religiosity, too, that were not involved in the cluster analysis. Nevertheless, their statistical relationship with the cluster membership provides more insight about the interpretation of the clusters.²⁵ The frequency of church attendance is one of these variables. As expected, among the members of the "non-religious" cluster people who never go to church are clearly over-represented. As for the other two clusters, religiously undecided people tend to go rarely and irregularly to church, meanwhile among those belonging to the religious category any kind or regular church attendance from once a year to more than once a week is over-represented. Those who are undecided about their religious attitudes, used to go to church in their childhood rather irregularly, but more often than currently. A more frequent mass attendance at the age of 11-12 was also typical for the "religious" cluster.

With regard to the frequency of prayer similar differences can be witnessed as in the case of church attendance.

²⁵ See Table A4 in the Annex.

Perhaps one of the most interesting pictures can be seen by looking at the variable that combines belief in God with the change of this faith over time. Both “religious” and “non-religious” people tend to have a firm, unchangeable position regarding this question. “Non-religious” people have usually never believed, whereas “religious” people say quite often that they have always believed in God. In the cluster of the “undecided” are both those who have lost their faith during their course of life as well as those who came to a new faith in God are over-represented, just like those who do not have a firm position on this issue. However, the presence of those who used to believe but do not do so anymore is stronger in this cluster than that of those who became believers over time.

Spirituality is another hot topic. As expected, people who are neither religious nor spiritual are well over-represented in the non-religious category, while those who belong to the religious cluster tend to consider themselves as religious, with or without a spiritual attitude. There are two categories that are above-average present in the cluster of the “undecided”: those who are just spiritual but not religious, and – true to the name of the cluster – those who cannot answer the question. These results are important in two aspects. Firstly, besides the belief in a Higher Power of some kind but not in a personal God, this is the only other indication, that the cluster of the “undecided” people can be characterized not only by a religious indecisiveness, but also by their own type of relationship to the Supernatural. And secondly, spirituality is not a feature exclusively featured by the “undecided” part of the sample. Members of the “religious” cluster also show a tendency to spirituality, though only in connection with religiosity.

Concerning the image of religions and religious people, “non-religious” people incline to a very bad view on them; members of the “religious” cluster in contrary tend to categorically decline negative images. Just as in the case of a number of other questions, the religiously undecided group stands somewhat closer to the non-religious than to the religious one. This makes once again clear, that the notion “religious” has a rather negative connotation for the members of this group.

Religious people seem to be quite open towards other religions. Both those who agree strongly with the statement that one should respect all religions and those thinking that there are basic truths in

many religions are noticeably over-represented in this cluster. However, the exclusivist position that there was truth in only one religion is also represented above average in this group. The cluster of the “undecided” is either as usually unsure about these issues, or tends slightly to openness, at least in the form of a general respect towards all religions. Interestingly, among the members of the ‘non-religious’ cluster neither openness towards nor rejection of religious plurality can be found in a greater number than in the entire society.

Conclusion

Our two attempts to create or identify categories of religiosity in Hungary based on existing empirical data about attitudes toward supernatural things have resulted in two quite different solutions. The first categorisation tried to be as true as possible to the theoretical typology of Wuthnow and Taylor. This has resulted in three religious types (seekers, believers and a mixture of both) with more than three-fourths of the Hungarian society belonging to none of these three groups. It is evident that the majority of those who believe in God or describe themselves as religious could not be classified into any of the three groups. This might be at least partly due to the lack of appropriate questions better fitting to the theoretical assumptions of the typology. On the other hand, it seems however quite obvious, that there are other types of religious people, too, that are not covered by these two groups. In our view, this model generally ignores those more or less distanced from the traditional churches but having some kind of supernatural orientation, yet without feeling a need for a constant search for the meaning of life or developing an individual spirituality. This type seems to be much more widespread in Hungary than those suggested by Taylor.

The cluster analysis has had a fairly different typology as a result. The three clusters that cover the entire Hungarian society cannot be interpreted in the framework of the seekers-dwellers dichotomy. They are much closer in their content to the trichotomy of Lambert, though not identical to it. Besides a definitely non-religious group similar to the “secular humanism” type of Lambert there is an intermediate cluster of those rather undecided about religious issues, and a third group including a wider range of people having positive attitudes towards religiosity. The members of the second cluster

seem to be part of those fully missed by the typology of Taylor. Nonetheless, there are important differences between the two religious categories of Lambert on the one hand, and cluster Nr. 2 and Nr 3 on the other hand. Firstly, the “religious” cluster does not limit itself to representatives of “confessing Christianity.” It is a rather larger circle of religious people, either close or somewhat distanced from the church. Secondly, religious uncertainty is a common feature of both the “cultural Christianity” of Lambert and the “undecided” cluster of our analysis. However, there are major differences between the two types, too. One of them is a strong tendency to disbelieve in any sort of supernatural apart from some broader interpretation of a non-personal higher power, found only in the “undecided” cluster. This is also the source of the second difference: according to Lambert, “cultural Christianity” is characterized among others by an individual choice of the own belief. Nevertheless, there is little to no sign of this individual religiosity in the second cluster, resulting for instance in a stronger belief in non-Christian faith issues. Quite the contrary, belief in reincarnation, in Nirvana or in supernatural powers of deceased ancestors is equally under-represented in this cluster like belief in heaven of hell.

Our results should by no mean be understood as evidence against the “seeker-dweller” dichotomy of Wuthnow and Taylor. They rather reveal the necessity of the use of new empirical tools that are more sophisticated for the study of the inner heterogeneity of the religious part of the society. Then again, they point at the existence of other religious types. In terms of their proportion in the Hungarian society, some of these types seem to be even more significant than the seeker-dweller typology. The inclusion of new types into an extended typology of religiosity could be the main theoretical gain of the empirical classification of religiosity.

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Appendix

Table A1: Categories over-represented in the groups of religious approach – other religious variables 1.

Group	Variables that were not involved into the typology						
	Belief in life after death	Belief in heaven	Belief in hell	Belief in miracles	Belief in reincarnation	Belief in Nirvana	Belief in supernatural powers of deceased ancestors
Seeker	definitely + probably	definitely + probably	definitely	definitely + probably	definitely + probably	definitely	definitely + probably
Seeker and dweller at the same time	definitely	definitely	definitely	definitely	definitely	definitely	definitely
Dweller	definitely + probably	definitely + probably	definitely + probably	definitely + probably	-	probably	definitely + probably

Source: ISSP 2008

Table A2: Categories over-represented in the groups of religious approach – other religious variables 2.

Group	Variables that were not involved into the typology									
	Church attendance	Church attendance at age 11-12	Prayer	Truth in religions	Denomi-national member-ship	Religions bring conflict	Religious people are too intolerant	Power of churches and religious organizations	Equal rights for religious groups	Respect all religions
Seeker	several times a year + once a year	-	several times a week to several times a week +	<i>(There are basic truths in many religions)</i>	-	-	-		-	strongly agree-
Seeker and dweller at the same time	several times a week to once a month	every week to about once a month	several times a day, once a day, every week	There is truth only in one religion	yes	strongly disagree	strongly disagree	too little	strongly agree	strongly agree
Dweller	several times a week to once a month	several times a week to nearly every week	several time a day to every week	There is truth only in one religion	yes	disagree + strongly disagree	strongly disagree	too little	(disagree)	strongly agree

Source: ISSP 2008

Table A3: Categories that are over-represented in the clusters—
underlying variables

Clusters	Underlying variables										
	Confidence in churches	Belief about God	Belief in life after death	Belief in heaven	Belief in hell	Belief in miracles	Belief in reincarnation	Belief in Nirvana	Belief in supernatural powers of deceased ancestors	Own way of connecting with God	Religious self-description
Non-religious	very little + not at all	doesn't believe + doesn't know	definitely not	definitely not	definitely not	definitely not	definitely not	definitely not	definitely not	strongly disagree	extremely + very + somewhat non-religious
Undecided	some + very little	sometimes believes + Higher Power + doesn't know	probably not	probably not	probably not	probably not	probably not	probably not	probably not	disagree + neither nor	somewhat non-religious + neither nor
complete + great deal of	no doubts + doubts but believes	definitely + probably + can't chose	definitely + probably + can't chose	definitely + probably + can't chose	definitely + probably + can't chose	definitely + probably + can't chose	definitely + probably + can't chose	definitely + probably + can't chose	strongly agree + neither nor	very + somewhat religious	

Selection criterion for the categories shown in the table: Adj. standardized residual is equal to or more than 1.9.

Source: ISSP 2008

Table A4: Categories that are over-represented in the clusters – other religious variables

Clusters	Variables that were not involved into the cluster analysis											
	Church attendance	Church attendance at age 11-12	Prayer	Belief in God before and now	Religiosity vs. spirituality	Denominational membership	Religions bring conflict	Religious people are too intolerant	Power of churches and religious organizations	Equal rights for religious groups	Respect all religions	Truth in religions
Non-religious	never	never	never	I don't believe in God now and I never have + I don't believe in God now, but I used to	I don't follow a religion, I am not a spiritual person	not	strongly agree	strongly agree	too much	-	-	There is very little truth in any religion
Undecided	less than once a year	several times a year + less than once a year	several times to less than once a year	I don't believe in God now, but I used to + I believe in God now, but I didn't use to + Can't choose	I don't follow a religion, I am a spiritual person+ can't choose	-	agree	agree + neither nor	-	neither agree nor disagree	agree+ neither agree nor disagree	-
Religious	about once a year to several times a week	nearly every week to more several times a week	about once a month + every week to more several times a day	I believe in God now and I always have	I follow a religion, I am a spiritual person + I follow a religion, I am not a spiritual person	yes	disagree + strongly disagree	strongly disagree	too little	-	strongly agree	There is truth only in one religion+ There are basic truths in many religions

Selection criterion for the categories shown in the table: Adj. standardized residual is equal to or more than 1.9.

Source: ISSP 2008

Seekers or Dwellers? The ‘Pálferi’ Phenomenon

PÉTER TÖRÖK

While it would be an exaggeration to claim that every Hungarian, or at least every Hungarian Christian knows Father Ferenc Pál or ‘Pálferi’,¹ it is reasonable to claim that he is one of, if not the best known Catholic priest in the country. In 2010, 25-30 thousand was the estimated number of people, who were familiar with the name of Father Pál.² Since then, this number must have increased as his name has been frequently mentioned in the media.³ His weekly lectures are attended by thousands of people with different denominational backgrounds. Moreover, it is hard to tell how many are following his presentations through the internet either online or on record; and still beyond this are the listeners of his edited lectures on Maria Radio⁴ and the readers of his books. One of his latest works, the *A szorongástól az önbecsülésig* (From Anxiety to Self-Esteem) was on top of the prime online book market of Hungary for weeks.⁵

Nevertheless the ‘pálferi’ phenomenon means not only the weekly lectures, or the “Tuesday evening occasions” as Ferenc Pál

¹According to the consensus of Father Ferenc Pál and the organizers, the pálferi phenomenon, occasion, or even the person himself is intended to be written without space. The foundation is also registered as Pálferi. For English native speakers it might be somewhat strange that occasionally the study talks about Pál Ferenc and the pálferi phenomenon, but other times it is referred to as Ferenc Pál. The source of the ‘confusion’ is twofold. First, when somebody is referred to in the Hungarian language, his or her family name is mentioned first, which is followed by what English speakers call first name or given name. The second source is that in Father Ferenc Pál’s case, even his family name, ‘Pál’ (Paul), is a given name.

² Pál Feri MTI report <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHXUPcOVH94&feature=related>. MTI, 2010, Editor Estefán Zsolt, downloaded: 10.12. 2011.

³ Cf. Mónika Andok’s writing in the present volume.

⁴ The Mária Rádió broadcasts the recorded lectures on Friday nights at 8:30 pm, which can be downloaded from the homepage www.palferi.hu.

⁵ News on Magyar Nemzet Online: ‘Catholic Priest’s book is on the top of bestseller list. <http://mno.hu/grund/katolikus-pap-konyve-vezeti-a-toplistat-1137209>. Downloaded 02.08.2013.

himself calls these lectures, but a self-organized movement⁶ as well. The auditorium, the technical background, the online editing and advertising all have been organized by his fans from the very beginning. Father Ferenc Pál 'simply' comes and gives his lecture regardless of the scene and how large his audience is. It is not surprising in itself, because many performers, professors, politicians, priests or pastors on retreats are giving lectures around the country. In Feri Pál's case, however, not only performances are organized but many other so called recreational activities, such as Santa Claus evenings or website-birthday parties, balls, ski camps, gala evenings, boat trips, sports events, summer camps – and last but not least – self-acquaintance groups are organized and run as well. All these events have been inspired, initiated and even effectuated by others. Of course, there have been other popular lecturers with similar environment and topics. Nevertheless they are giving lectures casually and not regularly week-by-week, and not for always "the same audience," and for so long, and definitely not for such a huge mass of fans as Feri Pál has been doing for *more than a decade* now.

Certainly there are other excellent preacher clergymen who are the central character of larger communities just like Father Ferenc Pál. Such was the community initiated and self-organized around the Piarist Father György Bulányi in the Communist area, known as the Bokor-movement, or the also self-organizing "*Csücsop*," i.e. the *Csütörtöki Csoport* (Thursday Group) initiated under the patronage-support of László Bíró auxiliary Bishop of Kalocsa-Kecskemét in 1995.

A considerable difference can be detected in the number of both Father Bulányi's and Bíró Bishop's audience members, being far less to that of Feri Pál. Furthermore, Feri Pál has not intended to establish such a dedicated community life as had formed around Father

⁶ It is beyond the limits of this writing to discuss and justify to what extent and in what sense can this phenomenon be called a movement. It is definitely a new social movement (NSM) in the sense that unlike the old social movements aiming at specific changes in public policy, this movement emphasizes changes in lifestyle and culture. For a discussion of NSMs, see, for example, A. Scott, *Ideology and the New Movements* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990); Steven M. Buechler, "New Social Movements Theories," *The Sociological Quarterly* 1995, Vol. 36, No. 3; Steven M. Buechler, *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism* (Oxford University Press, 1999); and Diana Kendall, *Sociology in Our Times* (Thomson Wadworth, 2005).

Bulányi, and most probably he would not have approved a pursuit of that kind of communistic way of life.⁷ There may be much more in common between the "pálferi" and "Csücsop" groups, most probably because both groups are approximately of the same age and because the main character of both groups is still alive, contrary to Father Bulányi. The most important basis for both "pálferi" and "Csücsop" groups is the ecclesiastic teaching they give. Another important common characteristics is that neither of the two clergyman was the initiator of the self-organization. They have both been "simply" asked to give lectures and continue after their reassignment. And last, but not least, the "Pálferi," just as the "Csücsop" group, is regularly organizing excursions and summer camps for the group members. A further point in regard to the difference in the number of group members, that is important to emphasize is that "Csücsop" has explicitly been initiated with the aim of forming a Christian community and joining forces among the group members has been a purpose from the outset.

The self-organization around Ferenc Pál has at all events to be regarded as a special phenomenon which naturally has not resulted in unanimous enthusiasm. Father Ferenc Pál was not accepted by the institutional church in so far his ordination was postponed for several years. In spite of the popularity of Father Pál in certain strata of the Hungarian society, suspicion about his public performances is evident on the parts of both the clergy and the faithful. *The Feri Pál phenomenon logically and unsurprisingly raises the question of whether his audience belongs to the 'camp of seekers or dwellers'.*

The intention of the present study is to provide a partial but by no means a full and exhaustive answer to this question. The task requires first a brief review of the literature; however, this review will confine itself exclusively to the topics relevant to the so-called Feri Pál phenomenon. For a better understanding, a short biography of Father Pál and a brief description of the movement self-organized around him must also be reported. It is followed by the description of the research. The next part will present the findings on the questions of:

⁷ Informations provided by András Máté-Tóth who has written a book about the communistic life-style of the Bokor movement.

- Where and what did the members of the audience seek before they joined Father Pál's lectures?
 - How were they 'caught', and why do they persist in listening to his Tuesday evening lectures?
 - What are the benefits or the 'fruits' of coming regularly to Father Pál's presentations?
 - What do they believe? To what extent is their belief consistent with the teaching of the institutional church?
 - What is their relationship with the official church?

The concluding section, apart from summarizing the findings, discusses in what sense and to what extent can the members of Father Pál's audience be considered seekers or dwellers. It will also raise some further questions.

Literature Review: What Others Say about Seekers and Dwellers

Apart from claiming that seekers are those who "see themselves as such," Taylor defines them as people who "are looking for meaning, and often see themselves as looking for more than this, for some form of life which will bring them in contact with the spiritual, however they define this." He also depicts dwellers, "who have been perturbed by the entire sexual and authenticity revolutions.... [For the dwellers] the Church is at its best not when it is questioning, adapting, changing, but when it stands firm on its age-old answers."⁸

In order to highlight the characteristics of seekers and dwellers, Taylor also uses Hervieu-Léger's distinction between pilgrims and converts. While the former "is on a quest, the convert has made a decisive turn in the quest, a turn she couldn't have conceived beforehand, hence the image of turning. But the conversion stage usually presupposes a searching stage."⁹ However, the distinction, like most of the distinctions, is somewhat arbitrary. While taking over Wuthnow's ideal typical seekers and dwellers, Taylor warns us at least twice that lots of people partake of both.¹⁰

⁸ Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," in Charles Taylor, José Casanova and George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People. Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), pp. 17, 20.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

Hervieu-Léger's polarization between stability and newness,¹¹ especially in light of Grace Davie's distinction between believing and belonging¹² has a special relevance to the Pálferi phenomenon in so far as Miklós Tomka, an internationally recognized Hungarian sociologist made a similar distinction back in the 1970s.¹³ Tomka distinguished between believers who considered themselves religious according to the teaching of their church and those who regarded themselves as believers in their own way¹⁴. Whereas the former might be roughly equated with dwellers, the latter group might be considered as seekers. Not only his studies but also other Hungarian and international researches¹⁵ using Tomka's distinction contain relevant empirical data highlighting several aspects of being seekers and dwellers.

At last, but not least, Halík offers a relevant theory regarding the possible consequences of heresy, more precisely as Chesterton defined it: "truth gone mad." It strikes Halík, that "heresies" are something like complexes in the sphere of depth psychology: i.e. what was neglected, underestimated, and displaced from the conscious mind does not cease to exist. In the depth of the unconscious these particles wrap themselves in a great deal of psychic energy and become a kind of 'competing ego.' They disturb

¹¹ Danièle Hervieu-Léger, "Mapping the Contemporary Forms of Catholic Religiosity (Some Suggestions to Make Things More Confused)," in Charles Taylor, José Casanova and George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People. Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012).

¹² Grace Davie, "Believing without Belongings: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain?," *Social Compass* 1990, Vol. 37 (December); and Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945. Believing without Belonging* (Oxford, UK/Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1994).

¹³ Miklós Tomka, "A vallásosság mérése," *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle*, 1973, Vol. 1-2, pp. 122-135.

¹⁴ For a qualitative analysis of how and what exactly these believers believe see Zsuzsanna Bögre's study in the present volume, see also another qualitative analysis, Zsuzsanna Bögre, "Religion and Identity," in Andrew Blasko, Taras Dobko, Pham Van Duc and George Pattery, eds., *Globalization and Identity* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), Series 7, Vol. 25, pp. 180-191.

¹⁵ For instance, the two waves of *Aufbruch* (New Departures) research, conducted among the people of the former Communist countries and several waves of the European Values Studies employed Tomka's distinctions.

the harmony of mental life unless they are brought out of the depths of the unconscious and re-integrated into consciousness, which must be broadened. What the church neglected, rejected and underestimated has become "truth gone mad."¹⁶

Halík then enlists several such heresies. When the value of poverty was neglected in medieval times, the Albigensians emerged. When social justice, especially with regard to the situation of the working class was neglected by the Church, Marxism surfaced. When spirituality and idealism were overemphasized and the material aspects of life were disregarded by the ecclesiastics, natural sciences conquered and ruled. Reactions to these 'heresies' included Francis of Assisi and Dominic who restored the value of poverty; the Latin American liberation theology and the social teaching of the Church intended to cure injured social justice; and the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin theorized about the spiritual nature of matter and evolution.

The list could be continued; and the pálferi phenomenon might provide an analogy. The church has been averse to the findings of psychology since its birth by Freud. It seems natural that when psychologists and experts of mental hygiene are ridiculed in Catholic homilies on Sundays that new religious movements offering guaranteed solutions to psychic problems, such as the Church of Scientology or the Forum prosper and flourish. Father Ferenc Pál in his lectures on Tuesday evenings cautiously explores the connections of spirituality and mental health. Before examining in what sense and to what extent the audience expects this exploration, a short presentation of both Father Pál's life and the history of the self-organized movement around him is needed.

Biography of Father Ferenc Pál

Ferenc Pál was born in Budapest on June 29 in 1966. Both of his parents worked in the Hungarian Airlines (MALÉV), his father as a pilot, his mother as a stewardess. For the safety of their children, they never worked on the same shift, which also meant that Ferenc and his twin brother born from the atheist father's third and

¹⁶ Thomáš Halík, "The Disjunction between a Single and Plural Spiritualities," in Charles Taylor, José Casanova and George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People. Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), p. 195.

religiously inactive mother's second marriage rarely saw their parents together. It is characteristic for the parents' relationship with each other, that Ferenc Pál can recall only one love-gesture among his parents.¹⁷ They later divorced. This must have been a decisive experience for him in becoming an expert in mental health, and makes understandable why he considers childhood developments so important.

The twins' energy and the nearby sport court were the main reasons why Ferenc Pál took up athletics in his early childhood. As high jumper, he won several championships from his adolescence. Between 1986 and 1989, he was member of the national team. In 1986 he won the national championship.

His interest in spirituality began when he was 15 or 16 years old. Oriented towards Eastern spirituality, he studied both Buddhism and Hinduism, because at that time he had many prejudices against Christianity. For all practical purposes, Pál lived as a Hindu monk for a while, but then he stopped. He also had partnership experience. He was over 18 when he realized that he knew about several religions, with the exception of Christianity. Ferenc Pál joined a group where he was introduced to the Catholic faith. He was about 20 or 21 when he came to the conclusion that "it is more reasonable to be Christian."¹⁸

He had a special and decisive God-experience on February 7, 1988. He traveled on a bus to the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist when he experienced the presence of God. Ferenc Pál thought that it would be a good opportunity to ask what God's intention is with him. "What do you think of whether I should become a priest?" he asked of God. In his experience God returned the question: "And you, what do you think of it?" In his reply, Ferenc Pál said that he was not sure, but he could imagine himself as a priest. To this God said: "I can imagine too. In fact, even before the creation of the world, I

¹⁷ It is not unequivocal who the author of the source of this information, Mónika Néráth, *A jelen lévő Isten. Pál Ferencsel beszélget Néráth Mónika* [The Present God. Mónika Néráth talks with Ferenc Pál] (Budapest: Kairosz, 2008), p. 11. From the title we might presume double authorship, however, the copyright belongs exclusively to Néráth. For the sake of ease, as a reference I refer to Néráth, *A jelen lévő Isten*.

¹⁸ Néráth, *A jelen lévő Isten*, p. 23, the present author's translation.

imagined you as a priest.”¹⁹ This experience revealing God’s non-pressuring nature, explains the high importance Ferenc Pál, as a Catholic priest places upon individual freedom.²⁰

In 1989 he began his seminarian studies in Esztergom, but a year later he was transferred to the Central Seminary in Budapest. In the sixth, or final year his relationship with the superiors worsened resulting in his expulsion from the seminary. In the justification of the expulsion no major offence was mentioned. “Not only myself, but six others were expelled that Fall. I think the only reason was that we did not fit our superiors’ image of potential priests.”²¹ In retrospect, he does not consider himself innocent; he accepts as much responsibility for his expulsion as he attributes to his superiors. For the clarification of this conflict he underwent psychoanalysis.

In the meanwhile he moved to the Center of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, where he worked for a year as social worker with homeless, elderly and physically handicapped people. Due to the shortage of priests, and because he was an ordained deacon, some of the priests asked Cardinal Erdő to place him in a parish to help out. He was sent to a parish, but received no guarantee for ordination. Nevertheless, he handed in his application for ordination a year later, and was finally ordained on June 15, 1996 in Esztergom. He was chaplain for six years in different parts of Budapest, and then became the rector of the Church of Kövi Szűz Mária, also in Budapest. Since August 2011, he has been deputy rector of the Church of Saint Michael in Angyalföld, a district of workers in the Capital. He is an expert of mental hygiene, family counselor, leader of biblio- and psychodrama groups, and teaches at the Institute of Mental Health, Semmelweis University, a prestigious, formerly exclusively medical university in Budapest. He became famous through his lectures, which he began in the Fall of 2000. As a reward for his lecturing activity, he received the Golden Cross of Merit in 2011. In December 2013 he won the Prima Primissima Award. Since then his followers call him PPPP, i.e. [Ferenc] Pál, the Priest with the Prima Primissima [Award]. But how did those lectures and especially their organization begin?

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30, details, in the present author’s translation.

²⁰ Probably this is the reason why later many people perceived in Father Pál’s lectures the danger of lebaralim, or libertariansim.

²¹ Néráth, *A jelen lévő Isten*, p. 34, in the present author’s translation.

The Beginnings of the Movement around Father Pál

The responsibilities of Ferenc Pál as a chaplain in Terézváros, an inner district of Budapest, included the supervision of the young adults' catechism group. The number of the people in the group counting seventeen members soon expanded to two hundred. As a result of a slowly forging friendship, when Father Pál was reassigned to another parish, the youngsters asked him to continue lecturing for them. At last Ferenc Pál agreed on condition that someone from the group would do all the organizational work; and the events would take place at a neutral location in order to accommodate those who were less familiar with the ecclesiastic environment and would have felt awkward in a church or parish. This last condition has undoubtedly contributed to the result that many religiously less active or inactive person started attending these lectures. From the autumn of 2000, the lectures took place in a hall at Buda, and at the first occasion the number of participants topped at one hundred. The number of followers rapidly increased in spite of the rental fee that had to be paid for the place, therefore a new location had to be found. Providentially, a new possibility surfaced in the building of the Faculty of Law of Pázmány Péter Catholic University with a four hundred seat auditorium. In a kind of exchange, Father Ferenc Pál had to perform all pastoral tasks for the students of the faculty. However, this auditorium was shortly outgrown of as well. Therefore, they moved to the great, nearly one thousand seat, auditorium of Millenáris, an extremely popular scientific, educational and cultural center of the Capital. Although the place seemed to be too small even on the first occasion, Millenáris has provided space for the Tuesday evening occasions since then.

The creation of the movement was not only due to some committed friends with excellent organizing skills, but the personal life-history of Father Ferenc Pál also contributed to its great success. The lack of love in his childhood sensitized him to the dynamics of the healthy psychological developments of personality. Due to his expulsion from the seminary, this sensitivity was complemented by the personal experience with the psychoanalytic method of self-knowledge. In seeking his own ways in his younger years he experienced freedom and respect for personal freedom. His commitment to and perseverance in the call of the Roman Catholic priesthood provide him authenticity in his extraordinary and

unusual priestly activity. In the meanwhile, the determination and organizing expertise of his friends launched a series of lectures which by now has become institutionalized in the form of the Tuesday evening lectures, or as it is phrased in the slang of the participants, the Tuesday evening 'pálferis'. The institutionalization is so advanced, that by now, there are 'pálferi' jokes.

The Research

The research took place in 2011. As a first step an interview was made with Ferenc Pál himself in order to have a clear view of his purposes. He summarized his goals in four points: he wants his listeners to be (1) knowledgeable, and (2) self-reflective, (3) with awareness and (4) self-knowledge or self-recognition.

The second step was a pilot survey in which a systematically selected group of two hundred persons were asked to answer eleven basic questions, such as gender, age, educational level, marital status, employment, denominational belonging, nature of the person's religiosity,²² interest in spirituality, duration and regularity of attendance. From the results we could establish a general picture, or a 'base line'.

In the third step thirteen open ended questions were asked from the audience in an online survey to which 198 persons responded. The questions probed, for instance, audience expectations, first impressions, the results of the lectures, the probable duration of their attendance, where they had previously searched for answers, membership in different groups, what they thought of the future of the lectures, etc. The intention of these questions was to see what the people really thought of the lectures without influencing them with our preconceptions. Their own words and formulations were then built into the final questionnaire.

The main questionnaire contained seventeen topics with a total of more than two hundred questions. In several topics the questions followed both the wording and the coding of the procedures of the wording and coding of the European Values Studies. The participants could either fill out a paper questionnaire or send their answers online. This latter method proved to be more popular, as the

²² Whether the person was religious according to the teaching of the church or in his or her own way. Cf. the discussion of Tomka's distinction in the literature review.

proportion of the fulfilled paper questionnaires has not reached 3% (N=25). A total of 966 persons have participated in our survey, which can be regarded an excellent result, considering that the total number of participants at one occasion is approximately one thousand persons.

The research was closed with an email-interview with the organizers. All of them were interviewed, and none of the twelve people refused to reply to the eleven questions. Apart from basic inquiries, such as gender, age, occupation, educational level, the questions asked the reasons of why they took up the task of doing volunteer work, what they thought of the future of the Pálferi phenomenon, etc.

The Findings

The presentation of the findings takes place in five stages. It begins with the demonstration of some general characteristics such as gender, educational level, employment, etc. It will be followed by some findings relevant to the questions raised in the introduction. Where did the members of the audience seek before they joined Father Pál's lectures? How were they 'caught'? What are the benefits of coming regularly? What do they believe? And what is their relationship with the official church?

General Characteristics. If we want to draw the profile of the average participant, we should take a graduate and employed unmarried woman of 33-37 years, being a member of one of the so-called traditional Christian churches;²³ and with great probability she considers herself as religious according to the teaching of her church. She is interested in spirituality, has been attending the occasions for about two years and clicking on the "pálferi" web-site at least once a month.

Taking the distribution by sex, the proportion of females is consistently twice as much as that of the males (Table 1).²⁴ Two

²³ In Hungary the Catholic Church, the Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church are the so-called historical Christian churches. The Alliance of Hungarian Jewish Congregations (Magyar Zsidó Hitközségek Szövetsége – MAZSIHISZ) also belongs to the group of historical 'churches'.

²⁴ The data in the first and following tables contain the results of the pilot survey and that of the main survey, but in the latter case the results are divided

thirds of those attending the occasions and who follow these occasions on the web-site are female. Somewhat jokingly, the organizers commented on this finding by pointing out that probably it takes two women to convince a man to attend the Tuesday evening occasions.

Table 1. Distribution of the audience by sex (%)

Sex	Pilot	Present	Web	Average
Male	32.8	31.8	36.2	33.5
Female	67.2	68.2	63.8	66.5

The distribution of ages is much less homogeneous. While it is a widespread opinion that the topics of the Tuesday evening lectures are addressed specifically to the interest and problems of the youngsters, the results of the survey show that the proportion of participants below the age of 25 is only under 10 percent (Table 2). The proportion of this cohort is even smaller than the proportion of those between 50-64 years. The largest segment of the sample is of age between 25-34 years, but the proportion of people between the age of 35-49 is also significant. Surveying the numbers of those personally participating in the occasions and people following the lectures through the internet, we found that young people prefer personal presence, while in case of the elder population proportions are much more balanced. In the cohort of the 30-49 years of age an extremely high proportion is listening to the lectures through the website, their number is one and a half times higher than that of those who are able to be present at the occasions. This can most probably be explained by the life-cycle effect, as young parents can hardly make themselves free on weekday evenings.

This hypothesis seems to be proved by the fact that more than half of those listening to the lectures through the website are married (Table 3). This is the only family status in which the proportion of those present at the occasions is subsequently lower than those of the web-site listeners. According to some stereotypes, the Tuesday evening occasions are for young singles who are looking for potential partners. As the data in Table 3 witnesses, while there might be something to it, nevertheless, it is not really true because

and indicate the percentage of those who are actually present at the lecture and those obtained the lectures via the Internet.

roughly half of those who are present – 45 percent – are in some kind of relationships, i.e. they are either courting, engaged, live in common law relationship or married. The proportion of couples living in common law relationship in Ferenc Pál's audience is about the same as the national average.²⁵

Table 2. Distribution of the followers by age (%)

Cohort	Pilot	Present	Web	Average
Under 25	15.5	10.1	5.8	8.4
25-34	38.5	47.4	36.6	43.2
35-49	24.6	30.0	46.9	36.6
50-64	16.0	11.4	9.3	10.6
65 and older	5.3	1.2	1.3	1.2

Table 3. Distribution of the followers by marital status (%)

Marital Status	Pilot	Present	Web	Average
Single	60.0	42.2	27.2	36.3
Courting	n.a.	12.4	9.0	11.1
Common law	2.6	6.5	6.1	6.3
Engaged	n.a.	2.2	2.1	2.2
Married	23.2	23.6	44.7	31.9
Separated	3.2	4.8	2.9	4.0
Divorced	10.5	7.7	6.6	7.2
Widowed	0.5	0.7	1.3	0.9

Regarding the level of education, it shows an excessively high proportion of highly educated people. 64.5 percent of the full sample has graduated and a further 12.7 percent has been studying in higher education. Even higher, nearly 70% is the proportion of those who are employed.

During our research we have often encountered the opinion that the target audience of Ferenc Pál's lectures is not the religious but the atheists. In some others' opinion these occasions are extremely popular in some smaller religious entities, so the potential denominational affiliation of the participants considerably deviates from the average national representation. The data of the survey

²⁵ C.f. Zsolt Spéder, ed., *Demográfiai Jövőkép. Magyarország demográfiai jövőjét meghatározó tényezők alakulásának áttekintése és értékelése a fenntarthatóság szempontjából* (Budapest: Nemzeti Fenntartható Fejlődési Tanács, 2011).

have not proved these presumptions. 92 percent declared themselves religious. This number is extremely high, but still more interesting is the proportion of those declaring themselves religious according to the teaching of the church and those who are religious on their own way. The results of the national representative surveys regularly indicate that the number of people being religious in their own ways is much higher than that of people practicing their religion according to the teaching of the church. Whereas the proportion of the former is about 50 percent, the latter makes up only 15 percent (Tomka 2010: 405). Contrary to this, more than half of the *pálferi* attendees consider themselves religious according to the teaching of their church (Table 4). Furthermore, a high proportion of participants consider themselves religious on their own way. The number of non-religious is relatively low among the participants and the number of atheists is very low. It should be noted, however, that atheists are representing a very low number even in the large-sample representative value researches (less than 5 percent). Regarding denominational affiliation, the participants represent approximately the societal proportions of the so-called historical Christian churches. Thus the higher dominance of Catholics is less surprising, especially if we recall that Ferenc Pál is a Catholic priest.

Research of the sociology of religion in Hungary have proved that within the religious population of the country the majority was represented by people living in rural areas, having a lower social status and being less educated. A new tendency has been outlined only in the past few years which found that while the proportion of religious people declined there was a shift within the religious population towards the urbanite, well educated younger strata.²⁶ Based on the presented data on the audience of Father Ferenc Pál, it is safe to conclude that they are good representatives of this shift.

Ferenc Pál is a mental health professional, a faculty member of the Institute of Mental Health at the Semmelweis University. In his presentations he often talks about the key issues of mental health. In our research we explored the mental health condition of his

²⁶ Miklós Tomka, "Vallási helyzetkép – 2009. A vallásosság elterjedésének, társadalmi bázisának és az életben betöltött szerepének változásai az utóbbi évtizedekben Magyarországon," in Gergely Rosta and Miklós Tomka, eds., *Mit értékelnek a magyarok?*, Agóra IX (Budapest: OCIPE Magyarország–Faludi Ferenc Akadémia, 2010), p. 418.

audience. It was found that 68 percent of the members regarded themselves as happy. With a few exceptions, almost everybody (94 percent) stated that their subjective health status was good. 84 percent rated their influence on life six or more on a ten grade scale. This proportion was close to the outcome of life satisfaction: 76 percent was rather contented with life. According to the self-esteem survey, only one fourth of the persons (26 percent) involved in the research have a negative or neutral self-esteem. The majority (52 percent) of the population has a rather positive self-esteem,²⁷ while roughly another quarter of the respondents has a strong positive self-esteem. All in all, they are in rather good mental health.

Table 4. Religious self-assessment, church membership and denominational affiliation (%)

	Pilot	Present	Web	Total
Religious according to the teaching of the church	50.8	50	57.1	52.8
Religious on own way	40.1	41.3	36.2	39.3
Not religious	7.5	7.8	5.6	6.9
Atheist	1.6	0.9	1.1	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100
Church member	82.5	86.1	89.9	87.6
Non member	17.5	13.9	10.1	12.4
Total	100	100	100	100
Catholic	n. a.	79.9	79.7	79.8
Reformed	n.a.	11.4	12.1	11.7
Lutheran	n.a.	3.7	3.5	3.6

Where and how did they seek previously? The respondents were asked where and in what ways they sought answers to those questions and problems previously that are discussed by Father Ferenc Pál in his Tuesday evening lectures. As we can see in Table 5, there was no one who had no such questions or problems. The most popular way of seeking answers was reading books or relevant material on the Internet. A third of them sought the help of professionals, and also a third attended lectures with psychological topics. The help of ecclesiastical persons or spiritual directors were

²⁷ The Rosenberg scale of self-esteem ranges from minus 15 to plus 15. Positive self-esteem is considered to be between 1-7, whereas a rather positive self-esteem begins with plus 8.

asked only by around a quarter of the audience. Even friends and relatives seemed to be somewhat more trustworthy and/or reliable in these questions. It is important to note that seven percent of the respondents tried to avoid or suppress such questions and problems. In order to face such questions, a charismatic person, like Father Ferenc Pál, and a reassuringly neutral place were needed.

Table 5. The proportion of people seeking answers in different ways (% , multiple choice opportunity)

Rank order	Ways of seeking answers	Proportion (%)
1st	Reading books, searching the internet	73
2nd	Visiting a psychologist, psychiatrist	36
3rd	Attending psychological lectures	32
4th	Talking with friends, relatives	26
5 th	Talking with priests, spiritual director	23
6 th	Trying to avoid and suppress the questions	7
7 th	Earlier I had no such questions	0

The members' embeddedness in community life is also very informative. While about half of them (48 percent) have been and still are members of a community that is very important for him or her, the other half is without such community. Although 20 percent had such a community previously, they left that group. As a consequence of Father Pál's lectures,²⁸ nine percent have started to search for such a community, but only three percent have been successful. Probably the most alarming finding in this regard is that about a quarter of the respondents (23 percent) have never been a member of such a community.

How were they 'caught'? Surveyees were also asked what the most important element or feature in Pálferi's lectures was that seized the person and made him or her to keep coming back. The respondents were allowed to choose only one, the most important one for them. As Table 6 indicates, roughly half of the audience is there for the lecturer, Father Pál. His new approach and personality were what seized them. Need for self-knowledge and the desire to

²⁸ Before the research, Father Pál lectured on the importance and the main characteristics of community life.

understand better or solve partnership problems follow with 16 and 15 percentages, respectively.

Table 6. The most important elements in the Tuesday evening lectures (%)

Rank order	Element	Proportion (%)
1st	New approach to spirituality and psychology	31
2nd	Personality and style of Father Pál	18
3rd	Need for self-knowledge	16
4th	Partnership topics and problems	15
5th	Curiosity	10
6th	No expectation	4
7th	The topic in general	3
8th	Other	3

The ways of how the members of the audience learned first about the 'pálferis' is related to this question. Three quarters of them were invited by their friends, relatives or acquaintances. Perhaps it is not surprising that the personal contacts are still the most effective, especially, when the focus of these lectures is on personal relations and well-being. Ten percent found the lectures or some related topic leading to the lectures on the Internet. Other media sources made up of eight percent of which television and radio constituted five percent. The remaining six percent were different other ways of information.

Fruits and consequences of the lectures. Participants were asked to evaluate the changes they experienced in their lives after joining the Tuesday evening lectures. The higher values in Table 7 mean more people who experienced certain results. The arrangement of the table also indicates that the results can be positioned into three groups. The first group contains personal improvements, which were experienced by four out of five people. The second 'group', the improved relationship with God, was acknowledged by almost two thirds of the participants. The experiences located in the third group improve community life, noted by more than half of the members.

Table 7. The results of the lectures in rank order

Rank order	Results	Value
1 st	More positive approach to life	0.86
2 nd	More patience	0.82
3 rd	Improved (more positive) personal relationships	0.81
4 th	Improved relationship with God	0.62
5 th	Stronger sense of solidarity	0.57
6 th	Extended relationships	0.55
7 th	Improving relationship with the church	0.52

Participants were asked to evaluate the changes they experienced in their lives after joining the Tuesday evening lectures. The higher values in Table 7 mean more people who experienced certain results. The arrangement of the table also indicates that the results can be positioned into three groups. The first group contains personal improvements, which were experienced by four out of five people. The second 'group', the improved relationship with God, was acknowledged by almost two thirds of the participants. The experiences located in the third group improve community life, noted by more than half of the members.

The results or 'fruits' of the lectures was the subject of another question, asking the participants to rank order thirteen statements. These statements originate from the third step of the research where open ended questions probed the participants' experiences and opinions, i.e. the statements about the experiences are their own. In the main questionnaire we simply wanted them to prioritize these experiences: which ones were the most and least important? The result can be seen in Table 8. If we compare the results with Father Pál's intentions, as they were enlisted at the beginning of the description of the research,²⁹ we can see that at least three out the four goals³⁰ are experienced by the participants; what is more, they rank them as the first three most important experience for them. And I consider it important to emphasize again that these statements are

²⁹ For easier reference, I include them here too: Father Pál wants them to be (1) knowledgeable, and (2) self-reflective, and wants them to (3) have awareness and (4) self-knowledge or self-recognition.

³⁰ In so far if we consider the experience of an extended approach towards world and life as becoming more knowledgeable.

the participants' own wording and formulation, not the offered possibilities of a closed question in the questionnaire.

And last, but not least, the nine percent of the audience searching for a community can also be regarded as a 'result'. This result must, however, be placed in a broader context. If we consider that about a quarter of the audience have never been a member of a community, the nine percent is less than impressive. In this light the fact that the least important experiences for the respondents referred to the possibilities of making new acquaintances, friendships, joining communities and participation in programs. These possibilities would be the preconditions of a community life, but they value them the least. Is it because the organizers spoil them with a huge selection of different and rich programs?

Table 8. The rank order of the experiences contributed to the Tuesday evening lectures

Rank order	Experience
1 st	My self-knowledge improves
2 nd	My approach towards world and life is extending
3 rd	I have higher awareness
4 th	My faith (relationship with God) and spiritual life improve
5 th	I am more sympathetic, more open
6 th	My life is more joyous, happier
7 th	I do not feel alone with my problems
8 th	Making decisions is easier
9 th	Other improvements
10 th	My relationship with the church improves
11 th	I make new acquaintances, friendships
12 th	I can join different communities
13 th	I can participate in different programs

Belief system. It was also a commonly spread opinion, that Catholics attending the Tuesday evening occasions were bound to the liberal line within the church concerning both their religious activities and their attitude to the principles of faith. Our research proved the opposite: those who declare themselves being Catholic are usually participants in intensive religious activity. It is exponentially characteristic for those who regard themselves religious according to the teaching of the church (Table 9). More than eighty percent not only *consider* themselves religious according to the

teaching of the church but they *do* observe the religious requests of the Catholic Church.

A roughly similar trend can be observed if we examine their agreements with different Catholic beliefs and moral regulations (Table 10). Apart from judging the question of divorced persons' possibilities and the evaluation of abortion, their agreement on all other issues is almost complete, i.e. it is above ninety percent.

Table 9. Religious activities of Catholics attending the Tuesday evening lectures (%)

Activities	Catholics (without further qualifications)	Catholics according to the teaching of the Church
Weekly mass attendance	67	89
Weekly communion	41	88
Weekly Bible reading	28	38
Weekly rosary	16	23
Yearly confession	61	82

Table 10. Agreement of the Catholic members of the audience with different Catholic beliefs and moral regulations (%)

	Catholics (without further qualifications)	Catholics according to the teaching of the Church
Resurrection of Christ	83	96
Trans-substantiation	74	91
Jesus both God and Human	86	98
Mary, mother of God	83	94
Abortion always wrong	54	69
Divorced cannot take Eucharist	12	17

However, even in the question of abortion, their agreement with the doctrines of the Catholic Church (in other words, their disagreement with abortion) is much higher than that of their similar counterparts within the Hungarian society (Table 11). While a third

or half of the Hungarians, who consider themselves to be religious according to the teaching of the Catholic Church would allow abortion in certain cases, the relevant proportions in Father Pál's audience is less than ten percent. While the Catholic members of the Tuesday evening occasions are probably not 'more Catholic than the Pope', they nevertheless manifest a considerable faithfulness to both the practices and the beliefs of the Catholic Church. The same level of faithfulness is also evident in other aspects of their belief system as it is witnessed by Table 12, which also contains data on the Hungarian society.

Table 11. The opinion on abortion by those Catholics who consider themselves religious according to the teaching of the Church:

Abortion is allowed, if... (% agreement)

Abortion is allowed, if...	Within the Hungarian society*	Among the Participants
Woman is unmarried	36	7
Couple does not want more children	46	9

* Data source for the Hungarian society: EVS 2008

Table 12. Beliefs in different components of various belief systems by the audience of Father Pál and the Hungarian society (%)

Belief in...	Total (N=966)	Catholics (N=683)	Catholics according to the teaching of the Ch. (N=420)	Hungarian Society*
God	94	98	100	73
Life after death	86	92	97	35
Hell	58	65	81	26
Heaven	74	83	97	36
Sin	82	86	93	53
Reincarnation	24	22	9	22
Talisman, amulet	8	7	2	41
Horoscope	19	17	11	-

*Data source for the Hungarian society: EVS 2008

In the past years, scholarly literature has distinguished between religiousness and spirituality.³¹ Although the lectures concern issues like self-esteem, private life difficulties or relationship problems that are not directly connected to religiosity or spirituality, the members of the pálferi community have strong interests in spirituality. Two third of them are very interested; and the rate of those, who are not interested or not interested at all in this topic is very low (Table 13).

Table 13. Participants' interest in spirituality (%)

	Pilot	Present	Web	Average
Very interested	60	63	72	66
Quite interested	36	32	25	29
Not very interested	5	5	3	4
Not interested at al	-	1	1	1

Doubts and meaning. Finally, the participants' doubts about different religious issues and their search for meaning were also examined. To measure religious suspicions and reservations, the Altermeyer religious doubt scale was used.³² It can be safely stated that the members of Father Pál's audience experience less doubt compared to people surveyed in other research.³³ Only two³⁴ out of the eight doubts were experienced at least moderately by more than 40 percents of the respondents. Generally speaking, men doubted less than women. Those attending mass at least weekly are the least doubting, whereas those who never go to mass are the most doubting.

Similar results were found regarding the search for meaning and the meaningfulness of life, measured by the Meaning in Life

³¹ Arthur Holder, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005); Katalin Horváth-Szabó, János Harmatta and Teodóra Tomcsányi, "Teisztikus és humanisztikus spiritualitás," *Pszichoterápia*, 2009, Vol. 18, No. 3.

³² P. C. Hill and R. W. Hood, eds., *Measures of religiosity* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1999).

³³ A. Kézdy, T. Martos, V. Boland and K. Horváth-Szabó, "Religious doubts and mental health in adolescence and young adulthood: The association with religious attitudes adulthood: The association with religious attitudes," *Journal of Adolescence*, 2011, Vol. 34.

³⁴ These two were that they did not formulate an opinion on religion (41 percent) and that religion would not make people better (55 percent).

Questionnaire (MLQ).³⁵ Participants achieved higher scores both on the search for meaning and finding meaning in life than people questioned in other research.³⁶ And again, those found their life more meaningful who attended mass at least on a weekly basis. It is interesting to note, however, that men were less eager to search for meaning and, consequently, they found their lives less meaningful.

All in all, the members of Father Pál's audience are rather religious, very interested in spirituality. They experience less doubts and find their life more meaningful than other people researched. Those Catholics who consider themselves religious according to the teaching of the Church do indeed observe the requests of the church in many aspects. But how do they relate to the Church?

Relationship to the Church. As we have seen in Table 4, a significant proportion of the participants consider themselves as religious according to the teaching of their church. In the case of Catholics, this proportion is somewhat higher than fifty percent. It is informative to examine the relationships of the Catholic members of Father Pál's audience to the church in separating these two groups from the total membership.

The participants' opinion on how competent their churches are in addressing different problems and questions is presented in Table 14. Not surprisingly, the members consider the churches most competent in addressing spiritual needs, and least competent in dealing with social problems. Generally speaking, however, they regard the churches rather competent than incompetent, in so far the values – with two exceptions – are closer to number 3, meaning somewhat competent. This view on the competence of the churches is, again, not surprisingly, strengthening when we look the Catholics' evaluation, let alone the evaluation of those Catholics, who consider themselves religious according to the teaching of the church.

³⁵ M. Steger, P. Frazier, S. Oishi and M. Kaler, "The Meaning in Life Questionnaire: Assessing the Presence of and Search for Meaning in Life," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 2006, Vol. 53.

³⁶ T. Konkoly and T. Martos, manuscript.

Table 14. The competence of churches in addressing certain problems and questions (the higher the value, the more competent they consider the churches: 1= not competent at all, 4= fully competent)

	Total (N= 964)	Catholics (N=684)	Catholics according to the teaching of the Ch. (N=420)
Moral questions	2.82	2.88	2.88
Family life	2.70	2.75	2.89
Spiritual needs	2.87	2.92	3.07
Social problems	2.39	2.48	2.64

In sum, one might come to the conclusion, that the followers of Father Pál, especially those Catholics who are religious according to the teaching of the church are rather observant and satisfied with their churches. Reality is somewhat more nuanced. The questionnaire contained two items measuring the respondents' agreement with two statements: "I disagree with the teaching of my church on several aspects" and "I would like to reform my church from within." Those who completely agreed with both statements could score 8 points. A group of the so-called inner reformers was created of those respondents who achieved at least 6 out of the 8 points.

About 40 percent of the members of Father Pál's audience belong to the group of inner reformers.³⁷ It is probably less surprising that almost half of the persons who are religious in their own way (46 percent) might be considered such reformer. However, the proportion of those who regard themselves as religious according to the teaching of their churches is not far below; it is 38 percent. And in this respect, for all practical purposes, there is no difference of whether someone is Catholic or Protestant: 38.3 percent of the Catholics who are religious according to the teaching of the church are inner reformer.

Seekers or Dwellers?³⁸

The particular phenomenon associated with the movement around Father Pál is admittedly unique in Hungary. More and more

³⁷ Women's 43 percent and men's 38 percent belong to this circle.

³⁸ It is unfortunate that as a consequence of using different databases, I could not employ the same method as Rita Hegedűs and Gergely Rosta did to create indexes of seekers and dwellers (C.f. their study in the present volume.)

people are attracted by the Tuesday evening occasions and the different programs year by year. The aim of this research was to explore the characteristics of the participants, who attend the weekly events in person, or follow the broadcasts through the internet, and to determine the reasons of their popularity.

It was found that these lectures are especially popular among young intellectuals, although other cohorts are also represented among the participants. In spite of the fact that his lectures are not religious instructions or catecheses, these occasions are particularly favored by religious people, predominantly by Catholics. The movement's popularity among the believers can be explained by the fact that father Pál's teachings are consistent with the Christian teaching, but focus on the practical difficulties of private life. The majority of his followers does not consider these Tuesday night occasions as an alternative for the denominational services, rather as an addition to their religious lives. The findings contradicted the stereotyping so often expressed by his critics that Ferenc Pál's teachings do not correspond with the Catholic doctrines; therefore he is favored by 'liberal' Christians. The truth is that the major part of the Catholic members' religious faith is in tune with the official teaching of the church. In that sense they are definitely 'dwellers'.

They are also 'dwellers' in the sense that they do not have much doubt about their faith as it is conveyed by the church. Taylor, as we have seen, depicted dwellers as persons "who have been perturbed by the entire sexual and authenticity revolutions."³⁹ These people are definitely disturbed by these revolutions; that is why they keep returning to Father Pál's lectures on different issues of partnership relations and personal mental health for so long and in such large numbers. In that sense, Father Pál's lectures are present day Catholic response to a heresies, as Halík defined it.⁴⁰

However, as Taylor continues, for the dwellers "the Church is at its best not when it is questioning, adapting, changing, but when it stands firm on its age-old answers."⁴¹ That is not true for the audience of Father Pál. As we have seen, a significant portion wants to reform the church. They are also seekers in the sense that they search for meaning. We have also seen that they are very interested

³⁹ Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," p. 20.

⁴⁰ Thomáš Halík, "The Disjunction between a Single and Plural Spiritualities."

⁴¹ Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," p. 20.

in spirituality. These features reinforce again Taylor's depiction of seekers who "are looking for meaning, and often see themselves as looking for more than this, for some form of life which will bring them in contact with the spiritual, however they define this."⁴²

In other words, they are both seekers and dwellers, just as Taylor warned us that lots of people partake of both 'camps'.⁴³ They represent well stability and newness, but perhaps not in the polarizing sense of Hervieu-Léger, and definitely not in the then surprising combination of "believing without belonging," as Grace Davie formulated it.⁴⁴ A significant part of the followers of Father Pál are believing *and* belonging. However, they are not completely comfortable in the church, because they want to reform it from within.

The questions are – and must be the topics of further researches – what exactly and how do they want to change the church?

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⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴³ Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," pp. 21-22.

⁴⁴ Danièle Hervieu-Léger, "Mapping the Contemporary Forms of Catholic Religiosity"; Grace Davie, "Believing without Belongings: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain?"; Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945. Believing without Belonging*.

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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

Purpose

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

Projects

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

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The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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