

THE SERVICE OF EVANGLISM, THE EVANGELISM OF SERVICE

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THE SERVICE OF EVANGELISM, THE EVANGELISM OF SERVICE

The Influence of John R. Mott, Hendrik Kraemer,
Willem A. Visser 't Hooft and Johannes C. Hoekendijk on the Development of the
Understanding of Mission in the Reformed Church in Hungary
(1910-1968)

DE DIENST VAN EVANGELISATIE, DE EVANGELISATIE VAN DE DIENST

De invloed van John R. Mott, Hendrik Kraemer,
Willem A. Visser 't Hooft en Johannes C. Hoekendijk
op de ontwikkeling van het zendingsbegrip
in de Gereformeerde Kerk in Hongarije (1910 – 1968)

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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To Klári

To Bence László, Zsófia Boglárka and Janka Klára
To the memory of Márton J. Gonda

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ABBREVIATIONS

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

CWME – Commission on World Mission and Evangelization

HK-A – Hendrik Kraemer Archives (Utrechts Archief)

IMC – International Missionary Council

JCH-A – Johannes C. Hoekendijk Archives (Library of the Utrecht University)

JRM YALE – John R. Mott Papers (Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, CT)

KIE – Keresztyén Ifjúsági Egyesület [YMCA]

MEKDSZ – Magyar Evangéliumi Keresztyén Diákszövetség [Hungarian Fellowship of Evangelical Students]

MEKMSZ – Magyar Evangéliumi Keresztyén Missziói Szövetség [Hungarian Evangelical Christian Missionary Society]

MREZSL – Archives of the Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary (Budapest)

MRKSZ – Magyar Református Külmissziói Szövetség [Hungarian Reformed Foreign Missionary Society]

NZR – Nederlandse Zendingsraad [Netherlands Missionary Council]

NZR-A-UA – Archives of the Netherlands Missionary Council (Utrechts Archief)

RCH – Reformed Church in Hungary

RE – Református Egyház [Reformed Church] – periodical

SVM – Student Volunteer Movement

THSZ – Theológiai Szemle [Theological Review] – periodical

TIREK – Tiszáninneri Református Egyházkerület Levéltára [Archives of the Tiszáninneri Reformed Church District of the Reformed Church in Hungary] (Sárospatak)

TTREK – Tiszántúli Református Egyházkerület Levéltára [Archives of the Tiszántúli Reformed Church District of the Reformed Church in Hungary] (Debrecen)

WCC – World Council of Churches

WCC-A – Archives of the World Council of Churches (Geneva)

WSCF – World Student Christian Federation

WSCF YALE – Papers of the World Student Christian Federation (Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, CT)

YMCA – Young Men’s Christian Association

YWCA – Young Women’s Christian Association

FOREWORD

'We do not do this [research] for 'archaeological' purposes, that is, to justify our curiosity about the way past generations perceived their missionary responsibility. Rather, we do it also, and primarily, with a view to getting a deeper insight into what mission might mean for us today.' (David J. Bosch)

Academic contacts between the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands and the Debrecen Reformed College, Hungary have a long history, beginning in the 17th century. This dissertation is a humble contribution to the continuation of the historical tradition of academic interaction (peregrinatio) between Debrecen and Utrecht. As an alumnus of the Debrecen Reformed College I consider it a great privilege that I may enter this tradition and I feel a great responsibility in doing so. I am very grateful for to the alma mater in Debrecen and in Utrecht for letting me stand on the shoulders of giants.

Although this book bears only one name as its author, this study could not have come into being without the help of numerous persons and institutions.

First of all, I wish to express my deep gratefulness to my supervisor Professor Emeritus Jan A. B. Jongeneel, who has been encouraging me during the whole process of research and has enriched me with his wise and creative comments and insights. I have always felt warmly welcomed in Utrecht and in Bunnik and I have felt his continuous support throughout the whole, rather lengthy process of writing this study. I am thankful to my second supervisor Professor Anne-Marie Kool, who inspired me by her dissertation, which was also supervised by Professor Jan A. B. Jongeneel and defended at Utrecht University.

I am also very thankful to my colleague and superior Sándor Gaál, associate professor in mission studies, head of the Department of Mission and Ecumenical Studies of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University, who has supported my PhD studies during recent years with much empathy and has never given up hope that it will be finished some day. I am also very thankful to Klára Lenkeyné Semsey professor emeritus, the former head of this Department, for her support.

I am thankful to many scholars who have offered me their time for consultation in different phases of the research and who have helped me with important insights. I remember with gratitude the late József Barcza (1932-2004), professor of ecclesial history in Debrecen and the late János D. Pásztor (1925-

2007), professor of ecumenical studies (Budapest and Debrecen). I am much indebted to my former teacher of missiology, János Bütösi professor emeritus in mission studies (Debrecen), who honoured me by reading the manuscript and provided me with important suggestions. I have always received much encouragement from my former teacher Cornelis J. Haak, senior lecturer in missiology (Kampen), too. I am very thankful to Martha L. Smalley (Yale Divinity School Library) for her valuable help while doing research in the John R. Mott Archives and to Peter van Rijn, librarian of the University of Utrecht for his manifold assistance. The quality of this study was much improved by the detailed and valuable remarks offered by Professor Ferenc Postma (Free University, Amsterdam).

I am very grateful to my home institution, the Debrecen Reformed Theological University for creating optimal conditions for me for the scholarly work and for giving me the freedom of flexibility in my work as a teacher without which I would not have been able to do my research. I thank the former Protestant Institute for Mission Studies (Budapest) for creating a forum for the exchange of insights in the framework of the Missiological Research Fellowship. I am thankful to the Center for Intercultural Theology, Interreligious Dialogue, Missiology and Ecumenical Studies (IIMO) of the Utrecht University for offering me space and resources for my research in 2006 and for the sense of belonging (although often virtual).

This long process of research could not have taken place without the support of several sponsors. Stichting Fundament (Utrecht, The Netherlands) offered generous scholarships which made it possible for me to stay in the Netherlands for periods of intensive research in 2003 and in 2006. The Hilfswerk der Evangelische Kirchen Schweiz (HEKS) made it possible for me to do research in the Archives of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2003. The David M. Stowe Fund offered me a generous grant that I may do research in the Yale Divinity School Library (New Haven, CT) in 2007. I have received financial support from the Bütösi Missziói Alapítvány as well, in order to do research both in Hungary and abroad. I am also very thankful to the Rev. Pieter van Gorp for his great gift of a valuable collection of books on missiology and on ecumenical studies.

I am also very thankful for the manifold assistance I received when preparing the manuscript, especially to Rev. Gabriella Rácsok and to Martin M. Robb for correcting my English and to Márta Zimányi for the final correction of the text; they are not responsible for any errors in the text. I express my thanks to Rev. Gábor Kustár, graphic artist, as well, for the illustrations and for the cover design.

I can not express how grateful I am to my wife Klári for accompanying me on this long journey, which has been much more difficult for her than for me. Without her support, perseverance and prayers I could have never finished this dissertation.

And above all I am grateful to our Heavenly Father for his providence that I have experienced every moment of my life. SOLI DEO GLORIA.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1.1. Context

Almost two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are in different stages of reintegration into the Western world. These countries, allotted to the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union at the Yalta and Potsdam negotiations of the Allies (legalized in the Paris Peace Treaties, 1945) are now walking an unknown way. Unprecedented in history, they are trying to re-join the Western European civilization, to which they had always believed to belong, at least culturally. This process of re-integration is symbolized by the joining of the states of Central and Eastern Europe to the representative political, military and economic organizations of the West (North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), European Union, International Monetary Fund, OECD). However, these post-communist societies are still struggling – socially, mentally and morally – with their past of isolation, oppression and ideological indoctrination, and they still have a long way to go to redefine their identity in the new historical context.

These processes of re-integration into the West have a decisive impact on the ministry of the churches of the region. They need to redefine their role in the changing societies, taking into account the radically new context for their service and trying to be faithful to the Lord of the Church, who ‘yesterday, today and forever’ is the same. These churches find themselves in an unprecedented historical context, too: they are ministering in and to a society which has experienced a transition from an explicitly atheist state to a secularized, pluralist, (post-) modern reality. This situation must be examined, understood, analysed and reflected on in order to meet responsible and theologically-informed decisions instead of acting out of instinct or simply reacting to the challenges of the age. However, for such an analysis of the present a clear understanding of the past is also required, as a *conditio sine qua non*. The churches in a communist (socialist) society experienced a period which is often described by biblical metaphors like ‘the Babylonian captivity’ or the ‘pilgrimage in the desert’.¹ The official theologians often boasted that the Central and Eastern European churches had become an avant-garde of the development of Western Christianity.² Our generation can (and should) not escape the obligation and responsibility to make attempts to understand and reflect on the theological developments of Christianity in the years of Communist/Socialist³

¹ István Bogárdi Szabó, *Egyházvezetés és teológia a Magyarországi Református Egyházban 1948 és 1989 között*, Debrecen, 1995, p. 22 (hereafter: Bogárdi Szabó, 1995).

² Op. cit., p. 20.

³ In the Hungarian context the term ‘Socialism’ (*szocializmus*) was used to describe the political system of the country in the period 1956-1989, referring to an ‘earlier stage’ of development towards an ideal Communism.

dictatorship. Such reflection and appraisal may help to see more clearly and may also pay a valuable contribution to the search for ways of renewed ministry by our churches.

Bogárdi Szabó, a Hungarian Reformed theologian, when describing the situation of the Reformed Church in Hungary in the years of Socialism, calls attention to an important aspect of understanding the church life of the period: the impact and the role of the ecumenical movement in Central and Eastern Europe.⁴ He argues that understanding the influence of the ecumenical movement is indispensable to gain a real insight into the theological situation in the region. In the same spirit, Lukas Vischer, in a lecture held at the Second Seminar on Reappraising the Recent Past in the Churches of Eastern and Western Europe (Berlin, 1995), argued for the need of a critical evaluation of the relationships between the ecumenical movement and the churches under the former 'Communist regimes'.⁵ These relationships played a crucial role in the life and theology of the Central and Eastern European churches, and many aspects of these relationships are still unexplored and await further research. This present study is an attempt to make a contribution to this major spectrum of research.

1.1.2. Aim

This dissertation intends to study the problem of the theological impact of the ecumenical movement on the theological work of the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), one of the Hungarian mainline (or 'historical') Protestant Churches in the Republic of Hungary.⁶ The scope of the research is limited to one single theological problem, the definition of Christian mission. This perspective is chosen out of the conviction that Christian mission is one of the key issues in the life of the Christian Church, both in its dimensional and intentional character, and the theological definition of Christian mission reflects the whole underlying theological concept of the time in a concentrated way. Furthermore, the new social context of 'double secularization'⁷ challenges the churches in Central and Eastern Europe to redefine their relationship to the 'world' (the 'non-church') and, consequently, they must rethink their concepts of Christian mission, too. This process needs a deeper understanding of the development of the theological definition of Christian mission in its historical and ecumenical contexts. On the other hand, an exploration of this

⁴ Op. cit., p. 11-15.

⁵ Lukas Vischer, 'The World Council of Churches and the Churches in Eastern Europe during the Time of the Communist Regimes: A First Attempt to an Assessment' in: *Religion, State and Society*, 25/1 (1997), p. 61.

⁶ In Hungary the term 'historical churches' (*történelmi egyházak*) refers to those denominations and religious bodies which are rooted in the history of Greater Hungary (Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran, Jewish and Unitarian). Nevertheless, the terminology is rather undefined and provokes both sociological and theological criticism.

⁷ A concept introduced by the Hungarian Roman Catholic sociologist of religion Miklós Tomka referring to the parallel process of the spontaneous secularization in Western culture, and the violent secularization conducted by the atheist Communist regimes in the former Ostblock.

field may also pay a humble contribution to the ongoing discussions in the ecumenical (and other) circles about the nature of Christian mission, bringing in an aspect into the process of debate, that of the 'Second World perspective', the fruits of the theological reflection of a major Protestant Church of Europe, experiencing the perils of a modern atheist dictatorship. Thus the aims of this research are (1) to contribute to the ongoing debate in the Hungarian Protestant churches about 'what is mission' by shedding light on its ecumenical and international dimensions and (2) to provide a contribution to the development of the definition of mission in the ecumenical movement in the 20th century from a 'second world'⁸ perspective by the means of a case study (the RCH).

Within this wider context an attempt is undertaken to answer the following questions, (1) How did the RCH define Christian mission theologically in the period of 1903-1968? (2) What were the ecumenical frames of reference of these definitions of mission?

The results of this research contribute to a better understanding of the history of the theological definition of mission of the RCH in the period between 1903-1968 and it will shed light on some aspects of the role (and especially of the impact) of the emerging ecumenical movement in Hungary during the 20th century and especially during the Cold War. It may contribute to the assessment of the contextuality of the concept of mission in one of the Protestant Churches of the 'Second World', too.

1.1.3. State of the Question

The RCH was a founding member of the World Council of Churches. Her representatives played an active role in different ecumenical bodies (within the WCC but also in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches WARC). However, her position within the ecumenical movement changed profoundly after 1961, the year of the official admittance of the Russian Orthodox Church to the WCC. According to Zoltán Balog 'the result was that the small 'Eastern European' churches and their problems were marginalized'.⁹ This marginalization kept growing in the decades to come and it can be experienced even today. After a short period when the interest of the world ecumenical community was briefly focused again on Central and Eastern Europe (that of the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dramatic events of 1989-1991 in the crumbling Soviet bloc), the region quickly lost attraction. Only a relatively few publications are committed to the research of ecumenical issues of the 'second world', and many questions of the relations of the ecumenical movement to it are still unanswered. Hans Hebly,¹⁰ Lukas Vischer,¹¹ Gerhard

⁸ Cf. Anna Maria Kool, *God Moves in a Mysterious Way, The Hungarian Protestant Foreign Mission Movement 1756-1951*, Zoetermeer, 1993, p. 1-6. For the terminology: especially footnote 1 on page 1 (hereafter: Kool, 1993).

⁹ Zoltán Balog, 'The Ecumenical Movement and its Relations with 'Eastern Europe': A Hungarian Perspective' in: *Religion, State and Society*, 25/1 (1997), p.76.

¹⁰ Hans Hebly, *Eastbound Ecumenism. A Collection of Essays on the World Council of Churches and Eastern Europe*, Free University Press, Amsterdam, 1986.

Linn,¹² Zoltán Balog¹³ and Anne-Marie Kool are discussing several aspects of these relationships. The volumes edited by Gerhard Besier, Armin Boyens, Gerhard Lindemann¹⁴ and by Heinz-Jürgen Joppien¹⁵ contain invaluable contributions to the topic, too.

The ecumenical issue was discussed in many publications during the Socialist dictatorship in the Hungarian Protestant Churches. It was a constant frame of reference for many authors and the emphasis on ecumenical issues fitted well into the ecclesio-political context of the ruling regime. This ideological burden has caused a common distrust and suspicion over against the ecumenical movement and its problems.¹⁶ And although there are sporadic publications about ecumenical issues, no critical historical analysis of the ecumenical contacts of the Hungarian Protestant Churches is available today. It is Bogárdi Szabó who stresses the importance of further research of this issue, in his pioneering dissertation on the theological developments in the Reformed Church of Hungary in the period of 1945-1989.¹⁷

The development of the theological definition of mission in the RCH is most comprehensively described by Kool.¹⁸ However, the scope of her extensive study was to write a history of the Christian mission of the Protestant Churches in Hungary, thus the attention to the theological (missiological) reflection to that question was necessarily limited. The time frame of her dissertation does not span beyond 1951. The dissertations of Bogárdi Szabó,¹⁹ of Károly Fekete,²⁰ of Sándor Fazakas,²¹ of Sándor Gaál,²² and of Ete Álmos Sípós²³ address the issue in a valuable way, too, although as a topic subordinate to the main theme of their studies. János Bütösi gives a very brief introduction to this topic in his pioneering missiological textbook²⁴ and János Pásztor offers important insights as well in his

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Gerhard Linn, 'The World Council of Churches and the Churches in Eastern Europe' in: *Religion, State and Society*, 25/1 (1997), p. 69-72.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gerhard Besier, Armin Boyens, Gerhard Lindemann (eds.), *Nationaler Protestantismus und Ökumeneische Bewegung. Kirchliches Handeln im Kalten Krieg (1945-1990)*, Dunker und Humboldt, Berlin, 1999.

¹⁵ Heinz-Jürgen Joppien (ed.), *Der Ökumenische Rat der Kirchen in den Konflikten des Kalten Krieges*, Verlag Otto Lembeck, Frankfurt am Main, 2000.

¹⁶ A good illustration to this is the fact that at the Reformed Theological University of Debrecen, Hungary, the Department of Ecumenical Studies was dissolved in 1991.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Kool, 1993.

¹⁹ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995.

²⁰ Károly Fekete, *Makkai Sándor gyakorlati teológiai munkássága*, DRHE, Debrecen, 1997 (hereafter: Fekete 1997).

²¹ Sándor Fazakas, *Új egyház felé?*, DRHE, Debrecen, 2000 (hereafter: Fazakas 2000).

²² Sándor Gaál, *Kezdeményező egyház*, DRHE, 2006 (hereafter: Gaál 2006).

²³ Ete Álmos Sípós, 'Bittet den Herrn der Ernte'. *Gyula Forgács (1879-1941), Pionier der ungarischen reformierten Inneren Mission*, Boekencentrum, Zoetermeer, 2007.

²⁴ János Bütösi, *Missziológia mint teológiai tudomány*, DRTA, Debrecen, 1995 (hereafter: Bütösi 1995). A second, revised edition of the same book was published in 1999. (This second edition is referred to hereafter as Bütösi 1999).

missiology.²⁵ However, a systematic study of the development of the theological definition of Christian mission in the RCH in the 20th century is still to be written in the future. The same is true of a historical assessment of the ecumenical relationships of the RCH in the last century. Our research neither undertakes to offer a full scale systematic elaboration on the development of the concept of mission in the RCH nor ventures to describe the intricate history of the ecumenical relationships of that church in the 20th century. What follows here is to offer a general overlook of these two topics and an attempt of a historical research of the questions, what was the ecumenical frame of reference in the different stages of the development of theological definition of mission in the RCH, and how did the ecumenical context influence the understanding of Christian mission in that church?

1.1.4. Time-frame

It is always difficult to set up a time-frame of a study, because the historical process is a continuous flow of events where the causes and the consequences belong inseparably together. It is still needed to discipline the interest of the researcher and to define the beginning and the end of the scope of the study.

Although the central research topic of this study lies in the set of historical events during and after World War II, 1910, the date of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh is chosen as a starting date, widely appraised as a watershed in the history of modern missionary movement. Although the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Missionary Society²⁶ was established²⁷ seven years before this event (1 May 1903), representing a turning point in the history of the Hungarian Protestant (foreign) mission movement,²⁸ it was Mott's visit to Hungary in 1909 that gave a decisive impetus to the cause of the Hungarian Protestant missionary movement, which was then later inspired by the Edinburgh 1910 conference, too. That is why attention is paid to these events, too.

It is even more difficult to define the end date of this research. If secular history is concerned, 1989, the fall of Socialism in Hungary would be a logical choice. If the theological/missiological developments are taken into consideration then the year 1961 appears to be a natural watershed (the integration of the International Missionary Council into the World Council of Churches and the admittance of the Russian Orthodox Church to the WCC, New Delhi), which (latter) development changed the role of the Hungarian Protestant Churches profoundly within the Ecumenical movement. About the extent of this change Bogárdi Szabó writes,

²⁵ János Pásztor, *Misszió a XXI. században*, Velence, 2000 (hereafter: Pásztor 2000).

²⁶ In Hungarian: *Magyar Evangéliumi Keresztény Missziói Szövetség*.

²⁷ Kool, 1993, p.191.

²⁸ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 67-190 and Ábrahám Kovács, *The History of the Free Church of Scotland's Mission to the Jews in Budapest and its Impact on the Reformed Church of Hungary 1841-1914*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2006.

...the Russian Orthodox Church joined officially the World Council of Churches (1961, New Delhi) and this [event] dismantled the Protestantism of the Eastern bloc of her role of mediator, which she had been fulfilling in the context of the great secular- and ecclesiastical political dichotomy.²⁹

Another argument for choosing 1961 as the end date of this research would be that it almost coincides with the termination of the office period of Visser 't Hooft as the general secretary of the WCC (1965).

However, the results of this research show that the 4th Assembly of the WCC, held in 1968, Uppsala, Sweden, represents an important point of contact concerning the theological influence of Hoekendijk in Hungary.³⁰ Thus, although 1968 – an important date in world politics and in the political history of Hungary, too – can not be associated with any crucial theological/missiological developments in the Hungarian Protestantism, still this date is chosen as the end-point of the scope of this present research.

1.1.5. Thesis

The hypothesis underlying this study is the following. Two major changes took place in the definition of Christian mission in the RCH in the course of the 20th century. The first change was a move away from a definition of mission in ecclesial, confessional and national categories, when mission was identified with practical pastoral care of the Hungarian Reformed diaspora. By the beginning of the 1930s this understanding of mission was replaced by a fundamentally different one, mission was henceforth defined as the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, calling the heathen (foreign mission) and the nominal church members (home mission) to a personal conversion to Christ. The second change in the understanding of mission took place after the Second World War and was codified in the Mission Ordinances of 1952. Mission was now defined as service of the cause of the Kingdom of God for the benefit of the neighbour (diakonia) and for the sake of peace and social justice (social diakonia). These two fundamental changes – that can be described as paradigm shifts – were closely related to the theological impact of two foreign theologians. John R. Mott (1865-1955) played a key role during the process of the first change, while Johannes C. Hoekendijk (1912-1955) was influential during the process of the shift of paradigm in the definition of mission after the Second World War. It is argued that these two personalities

²⁹ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 12.

³⁰ Pieter van Gorp shows in his monography on Hoekendijk that Uppsala 1968 was deeply influenced missiologically by Hoekendijk. Pieter van Gorp, *Kerk en zending in de theologie van Hoekendijk. Een plaatsbepaling* (1912-1975), AcaMedia, Haarlem, 1989, p. 262-265.

created important ties between the RCH and the (emerging) ecumenical movement, and they were instrumental in placing the missiological developments in RCH into ecumenical context.

In the second part of this dissertation the impact of four distinguished representatives of the ecumenical movement on the understanding of mission in the RCH is described. The description of their contacts to the RCH can be taken as case studies of the relationship of the emerging ecumenical movement to Central and Eastern Europe. In this sense, the study of the relationships of the four theologians is of equal historical value, as they demonstrate different aspects of these contacts. However, this study focuses on the impacts exerted by Mott and by Hoekendijk on the theological definition of mission in the RCH because, as it will be argued, their impact on the definition of mission was clearly discernible. The results of this research show that although the theological impact of the other two scholars under examination, that of Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965) and of Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985), was limited, they created a link to the ecumenical movement, and – as it is hoped to be demonstrated – they were used (and sometimes misused) as a frame of reference in the theologizing of the RCH.

Mott and Hoekendijk were chosen as central objects of this research for several reasons. It is a widely accepted fact that the theology of Mott and of Hoekendijk was very influential in shaping the concept of mission in the ecumenical movement. They were influential in the Reformed Church in Hungary, too. Through their personal contacts, their visits and through their publications (partly in Hungarian, too) they exerted an impact which is not yet analysed and appraised in contemporary historiography. Anne-Marie Kool, in her dissertation on the Hungarian Protestant Foreign Mission Movement³¹ discusses many aspects of the missiological influence of the emerging ecumenical movement in Hungary. She calls the attention to the strong influence of Mott³² and, when writing about the visits of Hoekendijk to Hungary in 1947 and 1948, she also calls for 'a profound theological evaluation of the theological impact of Hoekendijk's lectures...'.³³ Hendrik Kraemer's influence is studied, too, as it is supposed that his Barthian missiological concept must have been welcomed in a predominantly Barthian Reformed theological context in post-war Hungary. Attention is paid to Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft's role in Hungary, too, because, as a key person in the ecumenical movement, he had frequent contacts with Hungary.

Our thesis is that Mott and Hoekendijk played key roles in the re-orientation of the theology of mission in Reformed Church in Hungary in the period discussed. Hoekendijk's concept of mission shows structural parallelisms and theological interrelatedness with the definition of mission in the official theology of the RCH, the 'theology of the serving church'.

³¹ Ibid.

³² E.g. Kool, 1993, p. 157-159; p. 208-212; p. 365; p. 886.

³³ Op. cit., p. 752.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

1.2.1. *Systematic Approach*

When elaborating the results of this research, a systematic approach is chosen, one aspect – the understanding of Christian mission – is singled out, and the attention is solely concentrated to this one theological topic. In this context, it is focused on the impact of the four theologians listed above, concentrating on that of Mott, of Kraemer, of Visser 't Hooft and of Hoekendijk (and their Rezeptionsgeschichte). Historical and bibliographical evidence of contact is sought (personal contacts, correspondence, quotes, references), and their missiological concepts are compared to those of the most influential theologians of mission in Hungary of the period (comparative missiology).³⁴ However, historiographic research is only done in order to establish evidence which is needed to shed light on the context of processes of theological 'cross-fertilizing'.

In this sense an attempt is made of a parallel reading of missiological texts produced in the ecumenical movement and in the circles of a Central-Eastern European Protestant Church, the Reformed Church in Hungary. Their interrelatedness is examined and, if possible, demonstrated.

Of course, it would go far beyond the scope of this study to offer a history of the definition of mission in the ecumenical movement and/or in the Reformed Church in Hungary. That is why the subject of this study is limited both in its time frame and in its scope concerned. Although the time-span of the period under research is from 1910 on the attention is concentrated to the period of 1945-1968. The scope is limited to the study of the development of the definition of mission in the RCH in its ecumenical context, other – however important aspects, like the sociological or political context – is only dealt with to the extent it serves our primary interest. The scope of the study is also limited by the fact that this research is confined to the development of the definition of mission in the RCH only.

In the general overview of the development of the definition of mission in the ecumenical movement (Chapter 2) no new findings are published, the descriptions are based on already published (thus secondary) sources. The description of the development of mission in the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) is partially based on primary sources. In the chapters about the impact of Kraemer and Visser 't Hooft (Chapters 5, 6) our study is limited to the most important aspects of their influence in Hungary. In Chapters 4 and 7 an attempt is made to map the whole scale of Mott's and Hoekendijk's contacts with the RCH

³⁴ Cf. Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 32, about 'comparative ecclesiology'.

and their impact is investigated in detail. The findings in these chapters are mostly based on research of primary sources and of yet unpublished material.

The study is concluded with a chapter of Final Observations, in which the results of the research are summarized and an attempt is made at the appraisal of the relevance of our findings. Some lines are drawn in order to put this study into the perspective of further studies.

1.2.2. Case Studies

In this study no attempt is made to write a whole scale history of the impact of the ecumenical movement on the theological developments in the RCH.³⁵ Instead, the contacts and the influence of four selected theologians are researched and described.

The description of the contacts of these persons with the RCH and of their impact on the understanding of mission can be denoted as case studies. The method of case study approach is not used here as a didactic tool, but as an instrument to demonstrate different aspects of a phenomenon (in our case, the impact of the ecumenical movement on the understanding of mission in the RCH) through actual cases. In this sense cases are more than illustrations, they are concentrated presentations (*Darstellungen*) of a distinct phenomenon.

1.2.3. Paradigm Shift Theory

Since the publication of David J. Bosch's epochal handbook on Transforming Mission,³⁶ the applicability of Thomas Kuhn's paradigm shift theory³⁷ in missiology is evident. In this study the terms 'paradigm' and 'paradigm shift' are used in the way Bosch describes them.³⁸

Bosch calls the attention of the reader to the problem of the difficulty of defining what the concept of 'paradigm' means.³⁹ If Kuhn's own definition is taken as a point of reference, according to which a paradigm is 'the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community',⁴⁰ this definition can be applied to one single area, too (e.g. to the question of heliocentricity of our world view, etc.). In this sense it can – in the

³⁵ Such a research project would be of a great value both for a better understanding of the process of theologizing in Hungary and it would also pay an important contribution to the study of the history of the ecumenical movement. It would also shed light on the question: to what extent the Hungarian Reformed theologians influenced the theological discussions in the ecumenical movement.

³⁶ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Orbis, Maryknoll, NY, 1991 (hereafter: Bosch 1991).

³⁷ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970.

³⁸ Bosch 1991, p. 181-189.

³⁹ Op. cit., p. 185.

⁴⁰ Thomas Kuhn, op. cit., p. 175, quoted by Bosch 1991, p. 185.

footsteps of Bosch – be spoken about a paradigm *of* mission, meaning the ‘constellation of beliefs, methods and techniques...shared by the members of the community’ (i.e. the RCH) *about* mission. It is argued that the changes in the understanding of mission in the RCH in the period discussed were so fundamental that they can be described by the concept of ‘paradigm shifts’.

1.3. STRUCTURE

After this Introduction (Chapter 1), a general overview of the development of concept of mission in the Ecumenical Movement is given, from the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910, until the 4th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), held in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1968 (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3 a description of the development of the theological definition of Christian mission in the Hungarian Reformed theologies of the period is offered. Part II is devoted to the study of the impact of the four outstanding ecumenical personalities (Chapter 4, Mott; Chapter 5, Kraemer; Chapter 6, Visser ‘t Hooft) on the understanding of mission in the RCH. In Chapter 7 the impact of Hoekendijk is discussed in detail. The dissertation is closed by a chapter on our conclusions. A detailed Bibliography is offered at the end of the study, and the results of the research are summarized in the Hungarian and in the Dutch languages, too.

1.4. SOURCES

1.4.1. Primary Sources

The primary sources of this study may be put in three major categories. The first group is that of the printed primary sources. Theoretically, all published works of Mott, of Kraemer, of Hoekendijk and of Visser ‘t Hooft could be used as sources, but, of course, it would be impossible to cover all these materials in one single dissertation. That is why the interest is limited to those works of the authors which were directly or indirectly influential in the Hungarian Protestant theology. Attention might be payed to those works of the authors in which important hints are found at their way of thinking on issues, which were important in Hungary. Another group of the printed primary sources consists of those Hungarian publications in which references are made to one (or more) of the authors listed above. Again, some other works are also taken into consideration, where important insights can be discovered in relation to our research. The third group of the primary sources consists of unpublished materials. These materials are to be found in the J.C. Hoekendijk Archives, deposited at the Department of Manuscripts, in the Library of the Utrecht University, The Netherlands. Another important source of information is the Hendrik Kraemer Archives, deposited in the Archives of the City of Utrecht, The Netherlands. Important documents of Visser ‘t Hooft’s Hungarian contacts can be found in the Archives of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland.

The Mott papers and the WSCF Papers, deposited in the Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, CT, USA, were researched, too. Hungarian archives also hold some relevant material concerning our topic, the Archives of the Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Budapest collects the mission-related documents of the Synod (and, until 1948 those of General Convent) of the RCH, and several items of correspondence between Mott and his Hungarian counterparts are deposited in the Archives of the Dunamelléki District of the RCH (Ráday Archives).

1.4.2. Secondary Sources

Other printed texts (books and articles), written about the studied authors are counted as secondary sources. Publications with hints about their possible impact in Hungary are put to this category, too.

1.4.3. General Literature

Books and articles about the development of the theology of mission in the Ecumenical Movement, about the relationship of the Ecumenical Movement as such with Central and Eastern Europe, about the theological and historical developments in Hungary, especially in the Protestant Churches, are used as general works. These categories are also used in the Bibliography.

1.5. Technical Questions

The dissertation provides a wide range of references, offered in notes on the bottom of the pages. Often quoted sources are referred to using abbreviations. The bibliographical data are usually abbreviated by the surname of the author and by the date of publication (e.g. Bosch 1991). Others are listed under the title 'Abbreviations'.

Many of the primary sources of this research are not written in the English language (but in Hungarian, Dutch, German and French). For the sake of better accessibility, quotations of Hungarian and Dutch sources are translated into English. If it is not noted otherwise, these translations are made by the author.

2. MISSION IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT 1910-1968

In the following discourse a very short summary of the development of the concept of Christian mission in the ecumenical movement between 1903 and 1968 is offered. A chronological line is followed (diachronic method) and the attention is limited to discussing the world missionary conferences (Edinburgh 1910, IMC, CWME). Two exceptions are made, the 3rd General Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in 1961, New Delhi, India, is only briefly discussed, because of the integration of the IMC and the WCC and, as a conclusion, a short paragraph is devoted to the 4th Assembly of the WCC (Uppsala, Sweden, 1968), due to its missiological relevance. The changes of the definition of mission in the ecumenical movement are the background against which the development of the theological understanding of mission in the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) is intended to be studied. At this point the interaction between the (missiological circles of) the ecumenical movement are not discussed; they are addressed in the following chapters. It is sufficient to note the names of the Hungarian Reformed participants at the meetings, wherever any data are available about their participation.

2.1. MISSION AND ECUMENISM BEFORE EDINBURGH 1910

The Ecumenical Movement of the 20th century, the movement of protestant, orthodox and indigenous churches (in discussion with the Roman Catholic Church) searching for ways of expressing the theologically normative notion of the 'one, holy, apostolic church' as it is confessed in the Apostles' Creed and in the Nicene Creed, was born in the modern missionary movement.

Although the churches of the 16th century Reformation hardly participated directly in the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ among those who did not believe in it for almost two hundred years, their theology carried a strong missionary potential. The individual character of the personal faith which was required from the Protestant believer, the centrality of the proclamation of the Word of God on the mother tongue of the congregation, and the doctrine of universal priesthood of all believers created a solid foundation for the great missionary endeavours of Protestantism to come. The Pietist renewal movement in the 18th century rediscovered and reinterpreted Protestant theology in a missionary way in the German states, Puritanism played a similar role in Great-Britain, and the theologies of the Great Awakening (and the ones that later sprung from the

experiences of the Evangelical Awakening) gave a missionary impetus to the life of the church. The optimistic mood of the Enlightenment combined with the growing supremacy of the European Protestant powers like Britain, The Netherlands (and, to a much smaller extent, Denmark) on the oceans resulted in a rapidly growing missionary consciousness and activity. As the famous title of the last three volumes of Kenneth Scott Latourette's grand oeuvre on *The History of the Expansion of Christianity*¹ describes it, the 19th century was the great century of Christian mission. However, this century was rather an activist than reflective period of Christian mission. Although many books and reports were published about the progress of Christianity among 'the heathen', the theological reflections on the nature and on the issues of mission were just beginning to emerge. In spite of the initiative taken by Friedrich Schleiermacher to include the study of missions in the theological curriculum, and after a short period of teaching about mission at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, it was the German Gustav Warneck (1834-1919) who established missiology as a discipline of theology at the University of Halle, Saxony, in 1896.

Next to the growing presence of academic missiology at the European and North American theological faculties, the growing need of systematic reflection and practical consultation between the many (Protestant) missionary associations and church bodies was sensed worldwide by the end of the 19th century. The dream of the pioneer Baptist missionary William Carey to call all organizations of the world involved in Christian mission for a grand Convent (he planned to organize it in Cape Town, South Africa at the beginning of the 1800s) was realized in 1910, when the first World Missionary Conference convened in Edinburgh, Scotland, under the leadership of Mott and Joseph H. Oldham.

2.2. EDINBURGH 1910

The World Missionary Conference (WMC), held in 1910 in Edinburgh, is regarded to be the 'fons et origo' of the modern missionary movement.² Although it is right to say that this conference was the first of the international missionary conferences, there were several initiatives which preceded the conference.

In the 19th century, when a boom of Protestant missionary activity took place on the Southern hemisphere, parallelisms in the missionary work caused irrational use of human resources, which resulted in absurd situations (e.g. a village divided into two different – European! – denominations, along an artificial demarcation line), and, at some occasions, they led even to conflict. The need of the coordination of the missionary work on the field was very apparent. Initiatives were taken to solve these kind of problems by 'comity agreements'. These local and

¹ Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, seven volumes, New York, 1937-1945.

² Tomas Shivute, *The theology of mission and evangelism in the International Missionary Council from Edinburgh to New Delhi*, Helsinki, 1980, p. 25.

regional consultations led to the recognition of the need of wider cooperation and of strategic planning in order to make missionary work more efficient.

The first of a wider range missionary conference took place in 1854 in New York (first Union Missionary Convent) and was followed by a somewhat similar meeting in London in the same year. In 1860 another conference was held in Liverpool. These meetings were 'purely consultative being dominated by administrators and directors of missionary societies'.³

The first remarkable attempt to organize an international missionary conference was the 'Centennial Conference', London, 1888. This meeting was different in nature because, next to practical matters, it dealt with questions like reconsidering the missionary thinking of the Reformation. Thus, for the first time, theological reflections on mission issues made their way to the agenda of international missionary consultations.

It is often stated that the direct precedent of Edinburgh 1910 was the Ecumenical Missionary Conference, held in 1900, in New York. At New York 1900, the task of the missionary enterprise was discussed at three levels, evangelization, Christianization of the lives of non-Western peoples and the question of establishment of churches on the mission fields. This consultation was again more practical than theological. The question, 'What is mission' was not addressed, because the content of the term was evident.

The geographical definition of mission prevailed at this meeting (and at the preceding ones),

according to which mission means being sent from the Christian West (Christendom) to the non-Christian East and South in order to convert the heathen, to Christianize the lives of the people according to the patterns of Western Christianity, and to establish self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches 'on the field'. The terms 'evangelization', 'evangelism', 'missions',⁴ 'foreign mission' were used as synonyms.

The first World Missionary Conference convened in 1910 in Edinburgh, Scotland was a meeting of European and American missionary societies and not of churches. Africa and Asia stood at the centre of interest in Edinburgh, as the most promising mission fields of the future. However, representatives of younger churches were scarcely present at the conference. The goal of the conference was to discuss the strategy of worldwide mission and evangelization. Mott (1865-1955), the American Methodist lay theologian and Joseph H. Oldham (1874-1969) were very influential in organizing and running the conference. Gerald H. Anderson described the main concern of the assembly with the question, 'How missions?'⁵ Just as it was the case with the preceding American and British conferences, the emphasis was laid on the practical challenges which global Christian missions face in their spiritual conquest of new territories winning souls for the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Shivute, 1980, p. 19.

⁴ In German: *die Sendung*; in Dutch: *de zending*.

⁵ Gerald H. Anderson, 'The Theology of Mission among Protestants in the Twentieth Century' in Gerald H. Anderson (ed.), *The Theology of Christian Mission*, SCM Press, London, p. 5-7.

The meeting was highly optimistic in its mood and uttered the hope that 'the evangelization of the world in this generation' was possible. The concern which occupied the delegates was to find the best means and methods in order to enhance the efficacy of the missionary enterprise. As one of the most important hindrances on the way to more efficient Christian missionary work, the conference identified the division of churches and the concurrence of missionary societies on the field. A Continuation Committee was set up in order to prepare the foundation of a cooperative organ to coordinate missionary activity all over the world. This led to the formation of the International Missionary Council (Lake Mohonk, 1921).

Discussions on the theological definition of mission were not sensed as important at the conference. Although the lectures and addresses displayed a certain view on what Christian mission would mean, there seemed to be a general consensus over this key issue. As Tomas Shivute expresses it,

There was little discussion concerning the content of the message itself and nothing was said of any examination of the theological basis of missionary enterprise during the conference commissions. The question here was strategy not theology.⁶

Naïve optimism, a sense of urgency and conspicuous military terminology were characteristic of the language of the conference. As mentioned earlier, in Edinburgh 1910 no formal theological study was made in order to define what Christian mission was. One must rely on the reports and proceedings of the conference⁷ in order to find out what were the underlying concepts of mission.

In Edinburgh the geographical definition of mission was accepted as evident, mission means the sending of missionaries from the Christian West (including Australia and New Zealand) to the non-Christian South and East in order to convert the people of other religions to Christianity. Although the source of Christian mission was held to be 'divine', and 'superhuman',⁸ and the role of the Holy Spirit as the actor of mission was emphasized,⁹ mission as a great human endeavour of devoted Christian individuals and societies was not questioned. No reflection was made on the problem of the dominance of Western culture and of the colonial systems. There was a general consensus about the uniqueness of the Christian religion as the only and exclusive way to salvation. Other religions were considered to be altogether evil and 'pagan' from which Christian mission should save the souls. Shivute summarizes the theological concept of mission widely accepted in Edinburgh as follows,

⁶ Shivute, 1980, p. 26.

⁷ *World Missionary Conference 1910. With Supplement: Presentation and Discussion of the Report in the Conference on 15th June, 1910. I-IX*, Oliphant – Anderson & Ferrier, New York – Chicago etc, s.n.. (hereafter: Edinburgh 1910 Report).

⁸ Edinburgh 1910 Report V, p. 94.

⁹ Edinburgh 1910 Report I, p. 354-355.

Instead of 'What is the Gospel', the question was asked, How shall the Gospel which both saves and unites be preached? [...] The aim was stated as being the communication to the world of the life which Christians have in Christ.¹⁰

2.3. JERUSALEM 1928

In Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, the second World Missionary Conference was held. The first was called together by the International Missionary Council (IMC), which was established in 1921, at Lake Mohonk, as the direct result of the first WMC in Edinburgh. Officially, the Jerusalem conference was titled as the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council.

The situation in which the conference convened was substantially different from that of Edinburgh 1910. The mood of optimism disappeared altogether, mainly because of the loss of the credibility and integrity of the Christian West by the tragic events of the First World War. The conference was faced with the phenomena of growing secularism in the West, with the rise of an aggressively atheistic political regime in Soviet-Russia and of religious syncretism. While in Edinburgh, 1910, the general impression was shared by the participants that the other world religions are on the way to disappear or, at least, to loose importance, the Jerusalem meeting had to face the fact of a revival of the ancient Eastern religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Shintoism. That is why the conference was held in the awareness that the Christian mission in crisis. Gerald H. Anderson described the meeting with the question, 'Wherefore mission?'

This situation compelled the participants to reflect more profoundly on the theological issues related to mission. The illusion that the alleged moral and religious superiority of the West would provide Christian mission with an evident motivation and legitimization was shattered.

When analysing the development of the theology of mission in the ecumenical movement, David J. Bosch confirms that the role of theology was stronger at the Jerusalem meeting than before. 'As regards the motive of mission, Jerusalem actually surpassed Edinburgh in theological depth'.¹¹ It is also Bosch who points to the fact that the Jerusalem meeting concentrated on the priestly office of Jesus Christ contrary to Edinburgh 1910, where the royal office was stressed.¹² Among the many challenges of the time, a Christocentric foundation of mission was chosen, as a famous sentence of the Jerusalem Report¹³ formulates it, 'Our message

¹⁰ Shivute, 1980, p. 189.

¹¹ Bosch, 1980, p. 163.

¹² Op. cit., p. 163-164.

¹³ *Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, March 24th – April 8th, 1928. I-VIII*, Oxford University Press, London, 1928 (hereafter: Jerusalem 1928 Report).

is Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of what God is and of what man through him may become'.¹⁴

In Jerusalem, the problem of other religions was high on the agenda. W.E. Hocking and other American liberal theologians propagated a view on mission which would not aim at converting the followers of other religions to Christianity any more, but would assist in the formulation of a world civilization, where different religions can live side-by-side and work together for a more peaceful and harmonious life on the Earth, representing high spiritual and moral values. These relativistic tendencies, which were opposed by the continental delegates (e.g. Karl Heim and Hendrik Kraemer), were balanced by the efforts to define mission in the context of the Kingdom of God. According to Bosch, 'as far as the purpose of mission concerned, Jerusalem described this as the preliminary realization of the Kingdom'.¹⁵

The idea of the realization of the Kingdom of God was influenced by the theological streams represented by Christoph Blumhardt, Hermann Kutter and Leonhard Ragaz in Europe (religious socialism), and by Walter Rauschenbusch and Reinhold Niebuhr in America (Social Gospel). These theologies promoted the need of transforming the social systems in accordance with the example of the teaching of Christ ('the conversion of the structures'). They criticized the individualistic tendencies of the Pietistic tradition and those of the English and American awakening movements and called for direct political activity of the Christian churches in the political arena. The Jerusalem Conference largely identified herself with these insights and expressed this in declarations like this,

We cannot be content to live in a world that is unChrist-like [sic]...since Christ is the motive, the end of Christian missions fits in with that motive. This end is nothing less than the production of Christ-like character in individuals and societies and nations through faith in and fellowship with Christ the living Saviour, and through corporate sharing of life in a divine society.¹⁶

However, the same warning signs were also given at the Jerusalem meeting by the continental delegates, who found that the exaggerated emphasis on the social aspect of the calling of the church bears the danger of an immanent eschatology.¹⁷ The common denominator was the 'comprehensive approach' on mission which took up the diaconal aspect into the definition of mission, without giving up the aspects of proclamation and the call for an individual spiritual conversion. 'In this endeavour we realize that man is a unity and that his spiritual life is indivisibly rooted in all his conditions – physical, mental and social.'¹⁸

¹⁴ Jerusalem 1928 Report I, p. 480.

¹⁵ Bosch, 1980, p. 163.

¹⁶ Jerusalem 1928 Report I, p. 486.

¹⁷ Cf. Jerusalem 1928 Report I, p. 420.

¹⁸ Jerusalem 1928 Report VI, p. 287.

Bosch summarizes that the definition of mission at the Jerusalem 1928 Conference was rather 'vague' and 'reserved' and that the relationship of the Kingdom of God and the church was not clarified.¹⁹

2.4. TAMBARAM 1938

The next enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council took place at Tambaram, near Madras, India, 1938. (Originally, it had been planned to gather at Hangchow, China, but the Japanese invasion of China forced the organizers to move the conference to India.)

The historical context of the meeting was extraordinarily difficult. Totalitarian dictatorships were flourishing in Europe (Germany, Italy, Russia) and in Asia (Japan); there was a civil war in Spain; Germany had annexed Austria and Japan invaded China. The general sense of crisis was felt more intensively than at Jerusalem 1928. There some optimism still prevailed that the 'Christian West' would learn from the terrible experiences of the Great War (1914-1918) and, through such bodies as the League of Nations, humanism and the Christian (political) ideals would take the upper hand. By 1938 all these hopes proved to be no more than illusions.

The theological context of the conference was also fundamentally different from that of the preceding ones. The dialectic theology of Karl Barth had become the most influential theological stream in continental Protestant theology, causing a 'Copernican turn' in missiology, too. As Johannes Aagard put it, 'The decisive Protestant missiologist in this generation is Karl Barth.'²⁰

Barth's mission-related writings, among them his famous lecture at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932²¹ became sources of a new missiological approach. His theology was interpreted to missiology among others by Karl Hartenstein and, at Tambaram, by Hendrik Kraemer in his grand work, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.²²

The central theme of the Tambaram conference was 'The World Mission of the Church'. One of the most important theological developments at this meeting was the stressing of the centrality of the church in mission. In the 'great' 19th century of Protestant world mission, the missionary societies played the decisive role. In this phenomenon the aspect of the voluntary commitment of pious individuals was fundamental. Barthian theology uttered a harsh theological judgment on every human initiative in mission and stressed the divine origin and the transcendent character of the church. Following this line, at Tambaram mission

¹⁹ Bosch, 1980, p. 164.

²⁰ J. Aagard, 'Some Main Trends in Modern Protestant Missiology', in *Studia Theologica*, 19 (1965), p. 238-259.

²¹ Karl Barth, 'Die Theologie und die Mission in der Gegenwart', in *Zwischen der Zeiten* X (1932), p. 189-215.

²² Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, London s.n.. [1938].

was theologically linked with the church. Church and mission became inseparable and mutually criterial of each other. As Karl Hartenstein expressed it, 'Wer Kirche sagt, sagt Mission. Aber umgekehrt, Wer Mission sagt, sagt Kirche.'²³

According to David Bosch,²⁴ three other aspects were emphasized theologically at the Tambaram Conference: Mission as witness, a new understanding of the Kingdom of God in the context of eschatology and a new *theologia religionum*. Bosch argues, that at Tambaram the prophetic office of Christ was emphasized, and, derived from this, the witnessing character of mission was highlighted. In this sense Tambaram was influenced by the Barthian theology, too. Mission was looked upon as a divine action, as the work of God which is realized in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, about which the church must bear a witness, all over the world. Mission is not one of the activities of the church but belongs to her nature.

The question of the Kingdom of God stood again in the centre of theological debate. The German delegation published a declaration (*Sondererklärung*) on the theme of eschatology, because they felt that the Anglo-American delegates were still very much possessed by the idea of the realization of the Kingdom of God within world history. The German *Sondererklärung* stressed the importance of the distinction between world history and the history of salvation (*Weltgeschichte, Heilsgeschichte*) and, under the influence of Oscar Cullmann, the 'already' and 'not yet' character of the Kingdom. In this sense they described the church as an 'interim body', 'between the times'.²⁵

The question of the theology of religions was also one of the central themes at Tambaram. Henrik Kraemer was requested by the IMC to prepare a study material for the conference on this question. The result of his work was his grand oeuvre, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. It is widely agreed that this work of Kraemer – which is much more than a study material on the question of religions – bears the fingerprints of Barthian theology, although Kraemer's views are closer to those of Emil Brunner.²⁶ In this work Kraemer diametrically opposed the relativistic theology of religions, represented among others by the Hocking-report of 1932. He argued that the incarnated Word of God in Christ is a judgment of all of religions, including Christianity as a religion, too. There is radical discontinuity between the religions and the Christian faith. Christian mission requires a conversion from human religiosity. Kraemer also broke with the geographical dichotomy in missionary terminology, he spoke about the Christian message in a (i.e. one) non-Christian world and introduced the rather challenging concept of christopaganism,

²³ Quoted by Shivute, 1980, p. 68.

²⁴ Bosch, 1980, p. 167-175.

²⁵ *The World Mission of the Church. Findings and recommendations of the Meeting of the International Missionary Council, Tambaram, Madras, India, December 12th to 29th, 1938*, International Missionary Council, London, 1938 (hereafter: Tambaram 1938 Report), p. 41.

²⁶ Bosch, 1980, p. 169.

The Christian Church, religiously speaking, in the West as well as in the East is standing in a pagan, non-Christian world, and has again to consider the whole world its mission field, not in a rhetorical but in the literal sense of the word.²⁷

2.5. WHITBY 1947

The next enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council convened at Whitby, Ontario, Canada, in 1947. The meeting was still under the shadow of the horror of the Second World War (1939-1945) and this context contributed to the self-searching and reflective character of the conference. The question was asked, to what direction Christian mission should move forward. ('Whither mission?'). At Whitby the ecumenical fellowship – *koinonia* – of the church was experienced again as hope for a world, '...which is baffled by the tragedy of apparently meaningless suffering'.²⁸ It was strongly sensed that the church can only fulfil her calling in a fragmented and suffering world in unity, in 'partnership in obedience'. It became clear that all paternalistic attitudes of the West must be banned from missionary relationships and the younger churches of the South and East must participate in the missionary circles as equals.

The missionary capacity of the church herself was discussed in the light of the developments of the first half of the 20th century. While Tambaram 1938 'rediscovered' the church for mission, at Whitby 1947 the relationship of church and mission were studied even more deeply. The missionary nature of the church was thus emphasized even more radically,

The Church must be made to realize that unless it is missionary it is simply not the church. The moment the Christian church becomes an end in itself it ceases to be God's servant and becomes His rival. The Church is the Church only when it is the missionary instrument of God's will.²⁹

Here the influence of the Dutch 'theology of the apostolate' (A.A. van Ruler, Hoekendijk, E. Jansen Schoonhoven) can be traced.³⁰

The eschatological dimension of mission was stressed once again. Under the influence of Walter Freytag, Karl Hartenstein and Max Warren, the 'coming' aspect of the Kingdom of God was highlighted in a historical context when the world displayed the failure of mankind of realizing 'God's Kingdom on Earth'. As Bosch formulated it,

²⁷ Kraemer, 1938, p. 16-17.

²⁸ Charles W. Ranson (ed.), *Renewal and Advance. Christian Witness in a Revolutionary World*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1948 (hereafter: Ranson, 1948), p. 214-215.

²⁹ Op. cit., p. 203.

³⁰ Bosch, 1980, p. 176-178.

Precisely the kingdom, as already present yet still imperfect, implied that the Church-in-mission could not withdraw from the world. History and eschatology were inseparably intertwined. The Church's mission was moored to the Second Advent...³¹

In this sense Whitby 1947 spoke of mission as 'expectant evangelism'.³²

2.6. WILLINGEN 1952

The next enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council convened in Willingen, Germany, in 1952. The theme of the conference was 'The Missionary Obligation of the Church'. A comprehensive study of the basic missiological problems prepared the conference with contributions from Europe and from America as well.³³ The central question to which most of the discussions boiled down was the one which had occupied the ecumenical missionary movement since Tambaram 1938, the relationship of church and mission. Three approaches are identified by David Bosch³⁴ concerning this topic. The 'high' view on mission, represented by Hoekendijk,³⁵ saw the church as an event, 'in actu', to be an interlude between God and the world. In this approach the church had no independent place in theology without mission. The proponents of the 'middle' view on mission were the followers of the Dutch theology of the apostolate. They defined the church as being missionary by nature, but they looked upon the church as an inevitable instrument of mission. The third group, who had a 'low' view on mission, consisted of those who held that mission is one of the several constitutive elements of the church together with pastorate, diaconate and worship. Because of the apparent disagreements, the conference never adopted a formal declaration; instead an 'Interim Report'³⁶ was received by the participants.

It was Max Warren, among others, who helped to integrate the differing views on this key theological issue. He argued that the source and foundation of mission can not be the church but it must be God. At the conference this was formulated in the following way,

The missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the Triune God Himself. Out of the depths of his love for us, the Father has sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile all things

³¹ Op. cit., p. 176.

³² Ranson, 1948, p. 8, Cf. Shivute, 1980, p. 102-106.

³³ Cf. Shivute, 1980, p. 111-125.

³⁴ Bosch, 1980, p. 179-180.

³⁵ Cf. J.E. Lesslie Newbigin, 'Mission to Six Continents,' in Harold E. Fey, *The Ecumenical Advance. The History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Vol. 2, 1948-1968, London, 1970, p. 179.

³⁶ Norman Goodall (ed.), *Missions under the Cross. Addresses Delivered at the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, Germany, 1952; with Statements Issued by the Meeting*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1953 (hereafter: Goodall, 1953).

(ta panta) to Himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit, to be made one in him with the Father in that perfect love which is the very nature of God.³⁷

With this statement the concept of 'God's mission', *missio Dei*, was introduced to the debate on the definition of mission. At Willingen this concept was understood as a Trinitarian foundation of mission in accordance with the ancient Christian tradition, which used the term 'missio' as a reference to the internal act of the Triune God sending out the Son to the world. However, at Willingen the Trinitarian definition of mission was linked with a soteriological one (cf. the emphasis on the Cross at Willingen), which made it theologically feasible to derive mission from the Trinity in an indirect way, i.e. in the context of Christology.

At Willingen the relationship of the world history and the history of salvation was again in the foreground of interest. Just as earlier, the American and British participants represented a vision in which the Kingdom of God is actualized in world history (by the church as an instrument). Karl Hartenstein remarkably notes that they even denied the existence of 'two histories'.

[Sie] wollten [...] die Einheit von Kirche und Welt um der Solidarität der Liebe mit dem Menschen willen aufs äusserste betonen. Sie erklärten, dass jeder Versuch, die Kirche neben der Welt als Arche oder Refugium zu beschreiben, haeretisch sei. Sie gingen so weit zu sagen, dass das Drama der Erlösung der Welt durch Christus nicht eine Heilsgeschichte neben der Weltgeschichte sei, sondern wie sie das aus dem alttestamentlichen Prophetenzeugnis glaubten ablesen zu können, Weltgeschichte selbst die Heilsgeschichte sei.³⁸

The continental, especially the German delegation insisted on the substantial distinction of the world history and the history of salvation.

David Bosch's remark may be interesting in this respect when he, with a reference to Helmut Rosin,³⁹ argues that a later – hoekendijkian! – 'widening' of the concept of the *missio Dei* became a 'Trojan horse' by which the 'American' concept slipped into the continental missiology. Bosch sees the developments like this,

In the period after Willingen the concept *missio Dei* gradually changed its meaning. It came to signify God's hidden activities in the world, independent of the Church, and our responsibility to

³⁷ Goodall, 1953, p. 189.

³⁸ Karl Hartenstein, 'Theologische Besinnung,' in Walter Freytag (ed.), *Mission zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Von Gestaltwandel der Weltmission der Christenheit im Licht der Konferenz des Internationalen Missionsrats in Willingen*, Evang. Missionsverlag, Stuttgart, 1952, p. 19.

³⁹ Helmut Rosin, *Missio Dei*, Inter-University Institute for Missiology and Ecumenics, Leyden, 1972.

discover and participate in these activities. This view was already discernible in embryo at Willingen...⁴⁰

Although the Willingen meeting could not reconcile the differing positions on the nature of mission, the affirmation that Christian mission is rooted solely in God's mission and that it belongs to the very nature of the church made this Assembly 'one of the most significant in the series of world missionary conferences'.⁴¹

2.7. ACHIMOTA 1957-58

The 6th and last meeting of the International Missionary Council before its integration into the World Council of Churches (WCC, founded in 1948 in Amsterdam) was held in Achimota (near Accra), Ghana, at the turn of 1957-58. This meeting was mainly preoccupied with solving the practical questions which the integration required. Theological questions were not regarded as urgent as these practical issues were. A 'Draft Plan of Integration'⁴² was discussed and the conference accepted the plan that IMC would be fully integrated into the structures of the WCC. The theological reasoning of this important step was found in the conviction of the inseparable unity of church and mission, which, since Tambaram 1938, was supported by a general consensus in the ecumenical missionary movement. The conference declared that the mission and unity of the church '...belong together; mission is the esse of the Church, the Church needs mission and the mission needs the Church [...and...] 'theological consistency' requires that the two bodies should become one'.⁴³

Although Achimota 1957-8 did not bring about such a theological breakthrough as Willingen 1952 did, some missiological remarks of the study materials presented may be of further interest.

During the Assembly smaller Bible-study groups were organized which dealt with crucial biblical concepts of mission. These were topics like 'witness', 'peace/shalom', 'the Messianic Kingdom', 'reconciliation with God'.⁴⁴ It is remarkable that 'the nature of the mission to which the people of God are called in Christ' was included in the discussion of the concept of 'shalom'.⁴⁵

At Achimota mission was again defined as God's mission, but the Christological emphases, which were present in Willingen, too, were even stronger here. It was noted that the church should follow the Lord Jesus Christ in His way of fulfilling His mission, on the way of incarnation and solidarity with humankind.

⁴⁰ Bosch, 1980, p. 180.

⁴¹ J.E. Lesslie Newbigin, 'Mission to Six Continents,' in Harold E. Fey, *The Ecumenical Advance. The History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Vol. 2, 1948-1968, London, 1970, p.178.

⁴² Ronald K. Orchard (ed.), *The Ghana Assembly of the International Missionary Council, 28th December 1957 - 8th January 1958, Selected Papers, with an Essay on the Role of the IMC*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1958 (hereafter: Orchard, 1958), p. 156-164.

⁴³ Orchard, 1958, p. 158.

⁴⁴ Shivute, 1980, p. 155.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

The 'kenotic' aspect of mission was stressed, which led the conference to say that '...it is the Church's mission (*missio ecclesiae*) to be God's servant [...] let the Church in our time take the 'form of a servant'''.⁴⁶ Mission was defined as the 'very *esse*' of the 'Servant Church'.⁴⁷

This latter concept shows interesting parallelisms with the 'theologies of the servant church' and the 'theology of diakonia' in the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in contemporary Hungary.

2.8. NEW DELHI 1961

The World Council of Churches (WCC) held its third General Assembly (after Amsterdam 1948 and Evanston 1954) at New Delhi, India, in 1961. At this meeting the International Missionary Council merged with the WCC and became one of its Divisions, coordinated by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). The integration meant a substantial structural change as well, the IMC consisted of missionary societies, many of which did not belong to any denomination or church. As the WCC has only churches as members, many of these (in the majority American) organizations lost their formal links with the ecumenical movement. By this step the vision of Tambaram 1938 was – at least structurally – fulfilled, it was formally expressed that church and mission belong theologically together.

At New Delhi a brief definition of mission was formulated on the occasion of the merger of the IMC and the WCC. Mission is 'the proclamation to the whole world of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the end that all men may believe in him and be saved'.⁴⁸

This definition is very much in line with Barthian theology and even bears reminiscences of the formulations of Edinburgh, 1910. On the other hand, by the influential lecture of Joseph Sittler,⁴⁹ the concept of the 'cosmic Christ' was introduced to ecumenical theology. He argued that Christ is not only the Lord of the church, or Lord within the church, but He is the Lord of all (*ta panta*), and redemption must be understood just as comprehensively as the divine act of creation. This new concept had far-reaching consequences in the theology of mission, too, if God is active also outside of the church (in the world history) then no theological distinction of the 'church' and the 'world' is legitimate any more. This concept of the cosmic Christ paved the way for an even more radical broadening of the concept of *missio Dei*. Even at New Delhi there were several theologians – among them Lesslie Newbigin – who warned against the danger of identifying historical developments with the activity of God.⁵⁰ However, at New

⁴⁶ Orchard, 1958, p. 119.

⁴⁷ A. Wind, *Zending en oecumene in de twintigste eeuw*, Deel Ila, Kampen, 1991 (hereafter: Wind, 1991), p. 38.

⁴⁸ Quoted by Bosch, 1980, p. 187-188.

⁴⁹ Joseph Sittler, 'Called to Unity,' in *Ecumenical Review*, 51/2 (1962), p. 177-187.

⁵⁰ Bosch, 1980, p. 188.

Delhi both the proclamation character of mission and its social aspect were emphasized,

Witness to the Gospel must [...] be prepared to engage in struggle for social justice and for peace; it will have to take the form of humble service and of practical ministry of reconciliation amidst the actual conflicts of our time.⁵¹

According to A. Wind it was at New Delhi 1961 that the new way of the ecumenical missionary thinking, which followed 'the footsteps of prof. Hoekendijk',⁵² became evident for the wider public.

2.9. MEXICO CITY 1963

The Commission for World Mission and Evangelism held its first conference (which was thus the 7th World Missionary Conference) at Mexico City, Mexico, in 1963, two years after the integration of the IMC to the WCC. Drawing the due conclusions from the fact of the integration and from its underlying theological insights, it was declared that the church is always and everywhere in a missionary situation, thus no geographical concept of the 'mission field' is acceptable. The well-known slogan was coined about the 'Mission in Six Continents'. The motto of the conference was 'God's Mission and Our Task'. The aim of the meeting was to concentrate on the practical consequences of the now generally accepted concept of *missio Dei*.

According to Bosch, the concept of mission at Mexico City was 'vague and generalized'.⁵³ He sees three reasons for this, (1) 'the positive evaluation of the secularization process'; (2) 'the prevailing spirit of optimism' and (3) 'the lack of appreciation of the fact that the world adopts an essentially negative stance towards mission'.⁵⁴ Mexico City did not substantially contribute to the flow of discussion on the nature of Christian mission. The questions with which the ecumenical theology of mission was struggling for a long time (and especially since Willingen 1952) were still not solved. According to Wolfgang Günther, 'So blieb die Frage nach dem Verhältnis des Handeln Gottes in und durch die Kirche und in der Welt ungeklärt'.⁵⁵

The shift in the theological definition of mission which was initiated at Willingen 1952 and made a breakthrough in New Delhi was to be experienced in Mexico City 1963 as well. A. Wind summarizes the content of this shift as follows,

⁵¹ Visser 't Hooft (ed.), *The New Delhi Report. The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, Associated Press, New York, 1962, p. 86.

⁵² Wind, 1991, p. 140.

⁵³ Bosch, 1980, p.189.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Günther 1970, p. 131.

‘mission and missiology was more and more related to world history’⁵⁶, and he adds that this process would reach its apex in Uppsala, 1968.⁵⁷

2.10. UPPSALA 1968

The fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches convened in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968, in a very turbulent historical context. The student revolts in Paris and in the United States and the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of the Warsaw Pact after the promising developments of the Spring of Prague in the same year contributed to a general sense of change in the world political arena.

The Assembly of the WCC was not formally combined with a conference on mission, but the meeting had far reaching consequences missiologically, too. David Bosch describes Uppsala as the ‘apex of the ecumenical theology of secularization’.⁵⁸

The WCC launched a study project about the missionary structure of the congregation, the results of which were presented in Uppsala.⁵⁹ Under the influence of this report the goal of mission was generally identified with the humanization of the society. The attention was directed to God’s activity in the world and world history was looked upon as the primary arena of God’s mission. *Missio Dei* was still the overarching concept to describe what mission is, but any separate mission of the church, apart from the world, was denied. The task of the church was now to discover God’s presence and activity in the contemporary world, and to ‘enter into partnership with God in history’.⁶⁰ Hendrikus Berkhof identifies here a shift from a missionary commitment (although the term ‘missio’ was used abundantly) towards a diaconal commitment to the world.⁶¹ The key concept of mission was ‘shalom’ by which the life of the ‘new humanity in Christ’ is described. A. Wind describes the missiological developments in Uppsala 1968 similarly, he emphasizes that a new understanding of salvation was formulated at this Assembly, where the reconciliation of God with the world is seen as given in the cross and resurrection of Christ. He also points to the fact that the distinction between history of salvation and world history is banned and the goal of mission is defined as participation in God’s mission aiming at the humanization of the world.⁶² The influence of the theological insights of Hoekendijk is evident in the missiological deliberations of Uppsala 1968.⁶³

⁵⁶ Wind, 1991, p.194 (translation: GL).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Bosch, 1980, p. 190.

⁵⁹ *The Church for Others*, WCC, Geneva, 1968.

⁶⁰ Bosch, 1980, p. 190.

⁶¹ Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christelijk geloof*, Nijkerk, 1973, p. 432 (referred to by Bosch, 1980, p. 190).

⁶² Wind, 1991, p. 384.

⁶³ Cf. Bosch, 1980, p. 190 and van Gorp 1989, p. 246-262.

2.11. THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY AND THE WORLD MISSIONARY CONFERENCES

Results of a research of the official Reports and other publications about the World Missionary Conferences show that the RCH was not represented by official delegations at these conferences in the period discussed (1910-1968).

There was no delegation from Hungary present at the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference.⁶⁴ However, a young Hungarian Reformed pastor, István J. Kovács, was present at the Conference in the capacity of a journalist. The Jerusalem 1928 report includes a full list of participants of the meeting. No Hungarian representatives are listed and no data is known about the presence of any Hungarian Reformed Church member.⁶⁵ No Hungarian name is listed among the participants of the Tambaram 1938 Conference and no data are available about any Hungarian Reformed presence.⁶⁶ No data are available about any Hungarian Reformed Presence at the Withby 1947 Conference.⁶⁷ The list of the participants of the Willingen 1952 conference contains no Hungarian names, and no data are available about Hungarian Reformed participation.⁶⁸ The official records of the Achimota 1957-58 Conference do not contain any reference to Hungarian participation.⁶⁹ There is no information available about any Hungarian Reformed participant at the Mexico City 1963 Conference of World Mission and Evangelization.⁷⁰

The only exception is the New Delhi 1961 Conference, because it was a WCC General Assembly and the RCH (as a founder and member church of the WCC) always sent delegations to these events. The RCH was represented at the WCC Assembly, New Delhi, 1961, by a delegation of three persons. The members of the delegation: Tibor Bartha, bishop of the Tiszántúli District of RCH, former lecturer in Ecumenical Studies at the Debrecen Reformed Theological Academy, István Szamosközi, bishop of the Dunamelléki Church District, and Zsigmond Varga, professor of New Testament studies at the Debrecen Reformed Theological Academy.⁷¹ These delegates were high-ranking officials of the RCH, including the presiding bishop (Bartha). This fact illustrates that – although the RCH has limited interest in participation in directly missionary events, the officials of the church considered it as important to be present at summits of ecumenical churches.

⁶⁴ W.H.T. Gairdner, *Edinburgh 1910. An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference*, Oliphant Andersen and Ferrier, Edinburgh-London, 1910. No list of participants is included.

⁶⁵ Jerusalem 1928 Report, p. 205ff.

⁶⁶ *International Missionary Council Meeting at Tambaram, Madras, December 12th-29th, 1938*, Vol. VII, Oxford University Press, London, 1939, p. 181ff.

⁶⁷ *Minutes of the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council and of the Committee of the Council*, Whitby, Ontario, Canada, July 5-24, 1947, IMC, Geneva, 1947.

⁶⁸ *Minutes of the Enlarged Meeting and the Central Committee of the International Missionary Council*, Willingen, Germany, July 5-21, 1952, IMC [s.d.].

⁶⁹ Ronald K. Orchard (ed.), *The Ghana Assembly of the International Missionary Council (1957-1958)*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1958.

⁷⁰ Ronald K. Orchard (ed.), *Witness in Six Continents. Records of the Meeting of CWME of the WCC held in Mexico City, December 8-19, 1963*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1964.

⁷¹ Willem A. Visser 't Hooft, *New Delhi 1961*, Evangelische Missionsverlag, Stuttgart, 1962, p. 410.

Although it was not a conference of the CWME, the 4th General Assembly of the WCC is also discussed in this study because of its missiological relevance and because of its importance for the Hungarian context. The Uppsala 1968 Assembly was attended by a large delegation of the RCH, Bishop Tibor Bartha, Bishop Lajos Bakos, Kálmán Huszti, professor of the Budapest Reformed Theological Academy, Zsigmond Varga, professor of the Debrecen Reformed Theological Academy, and Károly Tóth, ecumenical officer of the RCH.⁷² Tibor Bartha took part in the work of Section II, which discussed the mission of the church.⁷³

The Hungarian Reformed press did not cover the World Missionary Conferences in depth. The exception is Kovács, who published his personal experiences of the Edinburgh 1910 conference extensively.⁷⁴

On the other hand, there was little or no attention paid to Hungary and to the RCH in the official reports about these conferences. Hungary is not even mentioned in the WMC volumes, or only referred to in passing.⁷⁵ The Archives of the IMC has got a separate heading 'Hungary' but this contains only twelve documents, mostly about the general situation of the churches in Hungary.⁷⁶

2.12. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

The idea of mission always played a prominent role in the ecumenical movement; in fact, it was one of the main motivations to pursue the process towards the visible unity of the church. At the beginning of the 20th century the representatives of the missionary societies of the West had an optimistic outlook upon the progress of Christianity 'to the ends of the world'. Mission was understood as saving the souls of the heathens by calling them to individual conversion to Christ. However, partially due to the influence of Barthian theology and because of the cultural shock of the two world wars, combined with the emergence of the 'younger churches' on the former 'mission fields', a double process of transformation of the concept of mission was set in motion. On the one hand, it was more and more clear that the separate existence of 'church' and 'mission' was theologically not legitimate, thus the integration of missionary societies, associations and agencies into the structures

⁷² Norman Goodall (ed.), *The Uppsala Report 1968*, WCC, Geneva, 1968, p. 410-440.

⁷³ Op. cit., p. 410.

⁷⁴ István J. Kovács, *Az Edinburghi világ missziói konferencia*, Budapest, 1910; id., 'Az edinburghi világmissziói konferencia I-VII,' in *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap*, LIII/26, p. 409-411; LIII/27, p. 422-425; LIII/28, p. 436-438; LIII/29, p. 454-456; LIII/30, p. 468-470; LIII/31, p. 485-488; and LIII/32, p. 501-503. (The WCC Assemblies were covered in detail in the RCH press, always according to the interests of the official church leadership. Cf. e.g. Tibor Bartha, 'Jelentés az egyházak ökumenikus szolgálatáról,' in *RE*, XXI/3 (1969), p 52-56.

⁷⁵ E.g. *International Missionary Council Meeting at Tambaram, Madras, December 12th-29th, 1938*, Vol. VI, Oxford University Press, London, 1939.

⁷⁶ *Guide to the International Missionary Council Archives - Part 5* (H-10,015: Country Files: Europe), Series 9, Hungary; <http://www.library.yale.edu/div/imcpart5.htm#series9>.

of the ecclesial bodies became a growing phenomenon. In the ecumenical movement this process resulted in the merger of the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches in 1961. On the other hand, it became more and more accepted that due to the loss of the credibility of the Christian quality of the Western civilization by the world wars and because of the upcoming Christological notion of the 'cosmic Christ', the ecclesiocentric understanding of mission was attacked radically (also by Hoekendijk). The solution to this tension was found in the concept of a fundamental re-interpretation of the concept of mission in the context of *missio Dei*. After Willingen 1952, this – actually Barthian – concept gradually became an overarching term for God's action in secular history. The idea that God's mission is directed to the world, having the humanization of mankind (shalom) as its aim, meant a shift in the understanding of mission. The church was defined in relation to the *missio Dei* and it was argued that the church is only a church *in actu*, inasmuch she is an instrument of God in fulfilling His humanizing mission in the world. The acts of God's mission should be thus discovered in the events of world history. In this sense the relation of the church to the actual events of contemporary historical developments is made a criterion of her ecclesial quality. Thus it was the world to set the agenda.

Our research demonstrates that the RCH was not represented at the World Missionary Conferences, except in Edinburgh 1910, by a pastor who was present as a journalist. (The RCH, as a founding member of the WCC did send delegates to all the General Assemblies of that body). The simplest reason for the absence of the RCH at the IMC/CWME meetings is the fact that no Hungarian organizations were members of the International Missionary Council or an affiliated body of the CWME. However, the fact that the RCH did not even send any observers or experts to the consecutive conferences can be explained by the obvious limitations of travel under the Communist dictatorship and by the limited financial sources, too. On the other hand, this fact betrays a limited interest of the RCH in general in the cause of global mission, too.

3. PARADIGM SHIFTS IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY, 1910-1968

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The theological definition of Christian mission in the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) has undergone fundamental changes in the course of the 20th century. As demonstrated in this chapter, one can identify three different phases in the understanding of mission under research. Mission was understood as ministry among the Hungarian Reformed diaspora, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, then – under the influence of the emerging Revivalist movement – a process of re-definition of mission can be traced in the first two decades of the 20th century, which lead to the introduction of the Mission Ordinances of 1931 and to the codification of the Article on Mission of the Church Order of the RCH (1933/III.). Mission is understood as a regular ecclesial activity with the aim of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and inviting people to faith in Him. A paradigm shift in the definition of Christian mission took place in this period. After the Second World War, another fundamental change can be identified, the result of which was published in the Mission Ordinances of 1950 and, especially in the Mission Ordinances of 1952. Diakonia was made a criterion of Christian mission and its aim was described as service of the fellow humans, of a just society and of the humankind (world peace). Here another paradigm shift took place in the theory of mission.

When describing these developments, this research is concentrated on the study of the understanding of mission as reflected in the official documents of the RCH (ordinances, church law), because they help us to understand the way of thinking about mission in that church. The brief surveys of the different concepts of mission by key theologians of the period serve as background material to the study of the official documents. However, the dilemma is obvious that – especially in the period of the Communist dictatorship – official statements and documents of the church do not necessarily reflect the consensus of the wider public of the church membership. That is why it is argued that the second paradigm shift identified in this study (the one after the Second World War) was a mere theoretical paradigm

shift in the definition of mission, with a limited impact on the way of thinking of the actual church.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. First an attempt is made to describe the understanding of mission in the RCH at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (3.2), then the period of the Interbellum is studied (3.3), and the third part deals with the developments after the Second World War (3.4). Final observations are offered in 3.6.

3.2. UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

The Reformed Church in Hungary did not have any distinct Mission Ordinances until 1931. However, the idea of mission was not alien to the life of the Church. Since the Synod of Debrecen (1881) constituted the constant governing bodies of the RCH, reports about the missionary work of the church can be read in the minutes of the Synod and in that of the General Convent¹ of the RCH. These reports offer a realistic picture about the way the concept of mission was used in the church. On the one hand, the reports themselves betray how the executive officials of mission of the RCH used this term, and the decisions of the Convent (or Synod) document properly the general standpoint of the highest governing bodies of the church about this issue.

The minutes of these reports² reflect quite a coherent definition of what mission is. The reports about the missionary work describe a special activity of the RCH among the Hungarian Reformed diaspora. A Mission Report from 1900 illustrates this well. Count József Dégenfeld, chairman of the Committee of Mission of the General Convent, and János Szabó, secretary, proposed a motion in their report (submitted on 24 April 1900) in order to set up missionary committees on the classis level. They describe the goal of these committees in the following way, '[the missionary committees] should have the religious care of the diaspora, the moral and material support of it as one of their main tasks...'³ Another Mission Report, from 1902, has a similar approach, 'The devoted caring of the cause of mission and the regular financial support of it had not remained fruitless, it returns an abundant profit in the sense of belonging together of the church members, and in the fruitful and edifying fulfilment of the ministry of safeguarding the Hungarians, stuck among the [other] nationalities.'⁴

¹ The General Convent (*egyetemes konvent*) was the highest operative governing body of the RCH between 1881-1967. It consisted of representatives of all the five (after 1920 four) Reformed Church Districts in Hungary. (A coordinating organization of all the Hungarian Reformed Churches of the Carpathian Basin uses a similar name since the middle of the 2000s (cf. *Generális Konvent*); however its function and its legal status fundamentally differs from the previous body.)

² The Minutes of the General Convent and of the National Synod were published in a printed form after the sessions. (Hereafter: Convent: Conv. Minutes and Synod: Synod Minutes).

³ Conv. Minutes 1900, p. 89-90.

⁴ Conv. Minutes 1902, p. 108.

What the goal of mission concerns the reports reflect the following elements, edification of the church in diaspora, safeguarding the Reformed confessional identity of the members, preservation of their Hungarian identity, spreading the benefits of the Hungarian national culture. In the Mission Report of 1902, several of these elements can be detected, 'the benefactors build the fundamentals of the church in the missions, day by day'⁵ (ecclesial element); 'we hope that our members, so far on the way of roumanization,⁶ will be given back to the Hungarian nation'⁷ (national element); 'we thank our supporters for their love in action, through their donations they help the dissemination of the religious and moral life and the spreading of the culture'⁸ (cultural element). A Mission Report from 1901 summarizes the goal of mission eloquently, '[the Mission Reports] demonstrate annually the development of the institution of mission, which serves the confessional, the national and the general cultural interests.[...] This work consists of search for the lost and reintegration of them, and the saving and protecting of those under siege...'⁹ Here the confessional element is highlighted, too. A Report from 1900 connects the religious and the national element, 'The blessings of the setting up and maintaining of the missions are more and more obvious in the religious and moral life of our members and in keeping their national consciousness awake.'¹⁰

Mission is understood predominantly, almost exclusively, as an activity among Hungarians. Although it can be read about cases sporadically when missionary work is initiated among the non-Hungarian speaking population on the peripheries of the Kingdom of Hungary, but they are put in the context of the same national and religious purposes of mission. For instance, a Reformed teacher of Abód is praised in one of the Reports for teaching the non-Hungarian speaking Greek Catholic (Roumanian?) population 'our religious hymns and patriotic songs', 'this teacher fulfils a genuine Hungarian national and ecclesial mission in this region'¹¹ – the rapporteur concludes. The same connection between the national and the religious/ecclesial elements of mission can be seen here, extended by the aspect of Hungarianization. However, it is important to emphasize that the Mission Reports of the Convent and of the Synod between 1881 and 1920 do not reflect that systematic 'Magyarization' of any kind were a goal of the mission of the RCH.

On the other hand, if there were any intentions to do mission among the non-Hungarian speaking population in order to create Roumanian-, Serbian- or Croatian-speaking Reformed congregations, they were generally not welcomed by the Convent. In 1901, József Szalay, a Reformed pastor in the Békés-Bánát classis, proposed the planting of 'Serbian-Roumanian Reformed churches' in the region.

⁵ Op. cit., p. 112.

⁶ In the original text the term *eloláhosodás* ('Walachianization') is used, which is politically incorrect today.

⁷ Op. cit., p. 109.

⁸ Op. cit., p. 115.

⁹ Conv. Minutes 1901, p. 106.

¹⁰ Conv. Minutes 1900, p. 830.

¹¹ Conv. Minutes 1902, p. 68.

According to the motion, 'the mission should be that of the Reformed Church. The newly formed Serbian-Roumanian churches should be under the control of the Mission Committee and they should have autonomy.'¹³ Since the Békés-Bánát Classis did not accept the plan, Szalay appealed to the Convent as the higher ecclesial authority. The Convent denied the acceptance of the plan, too, saying that 'although [the Convent] would welcome the spreading of the evangelical consciousness and life among Serbian and Roumanian Orthodox population',¹⁴ it still proposed to put the issue off the agenda, due to the following reasons, 'Because our sisters and brothers are about to perish, stuck among foreign nationalities...', the financial sources are limited, and they 'do not want to endanger interdenominational peace'.¹⁵ This argumentation betrays a nationalistic limitation of the scope of Christian mission on the one hand, but, at the same time, it documents an early attempt to refute proselytism. It would be an anachronism to speak about a sign of early ecumenical consciousness in relation to this single case, but it still can be established that the question of peaceful co-existence of denominations was an aspect that did play a role in the decision making of the Convent of the RCH at the beginning of the 20th century. Szalay was not discouraged by this negative decision. Three years later he sent in the proposal to the Convent again, although without the perspective of organizing independent Serbian and Roumanian congregations. His motion was welcomed by the Convent this time.¹⁶

Béla Levente Baráth, when describing the missionary activity of the Tiszántúl Church District (Debrecen) in the same period, formulates his conclusions about the goal of mission in the same spirit, 'The real task of the 'Mission Committee' of the church district was the care for the Reformed, living in diaspora on the territory of the district'.¹⁷ He makes an interesting remark on the theological presuppositions behind this missionary activity, when saying, 'This form of home mission – functioning in the context of the *Volkskirche* - took the obligatory church membership for granted'.¹⁸ Thus, gaining new members for the church was not included in this sort of understanding of mission. Moreover, the aim of mission was ecclesiocentric, according to Baráth, the ultimate purpose was the organization of independent (Hungarian) Reformed congregations.¹⁹

As it is demonstrated below (3.3.), the emerging revivalist movement in the RCH was growing gradually in the years after the turn of the century.²⁰ It may be the indirect impact of this movement that the need of clarification of the term

¹³ Conv. Minutes 1901, p. 76.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Cf. Conv. Minutes 1904, p. 73-74; regarding Szalay's missionary activity, see Kool, 1993, p. 143-144.

¹⁷ Béla Levente Baráth, *Földbegyökerezés és égbe fogózás. A Tiszántúli Református Egyházkerület története Baltazár Dezső püspöki tevékenységének tükrében (1911-1920)*, Debrecen, 2003 (unpublished dissertation), p. 45.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Op. cit., p. 45-47.

²⁰ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 195-197.

‘mission’ was addressed more and more regularly in the Mission Reports in these years. Several cases are known when pastors were warned not to denote regular church activities as ‘mission’ in their report.²¹

One of the most remarkable achievements of this period was the resolution of the Convent which introduced ‘Home Mission and Pastoral Care’ as a compulsory course in the theological training.²² The resolution contains a brief description of the themes which were to be taught in this course, ‘Spiritual counselling and religious and moral education of our members living in our homeland and abroad; the care for the poor, the sick, the orphans and for those in moral crisis [...] in order to integrate them into the practical activity of Christ-like love’.²³ In this text the growing impact of the concept of *innere Mission* in the spirit of Wichern can already be identified, although the basic goal is still directed to ‘our members’ (*híveink*) living in diaspora situations, the aspect of charity (*diakonia*) is introduced as a new element. The Christological reference in the text betrays the same theological process. The same kind of mediating tendency can be found in the Mission Report of 1916, too, ‘The great aim of mission [...] is that our members, stuck among followers of other religions [sic!], could enjoy the warmth of the blessings of the divine grace and of the holy church.’²⁴ The diaspora element is combined with soteriological and ecclesial aspects.

The term ‘mission’ was thus widely used in the RCH in the period around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It was defined as a ministry among and caring for the needs of the Hungarian Reformed diaspora, living on the peripheries of the Kingdom of Hungary, among other nationalities. The goal of mission was fourfold, i. confessional, fostering Reformed Christian identity; ii. ecclesial, setting up new, independent congregations; iii. national, safeguarding the Hungarian national identity; iv. cultural, spreading of the values of (Hungarian Protestant) culture. The definition of mission was theologically unreflected, it was formulated according to the felt needs of the Reformed communities. It can be described as ecclesiocentric and reflects a certain tint of underlying *theologia naturalis*, which includes an idealistic concept of nationality (*Volkstum*).²⁵ No ecumenical references can be detected about any interaction with theological concepts of mission from other countries. It seems that the formulation of this understanding of mission was a result of orientation predominantly according to the given context in which the RCH lived in this period. In this sense, this concept of mission can be interpreted as a radically contextualized definition of mission.

Two other elements, the proclamation of the divine grace and the love of Christ and social action became gradually a part of the understanding of mission in the second decade of the 20th century, supposedly due to the growing influence of the revivalist circles. These emerging elements can be taken as signs of a process of

²¹ Cf. Conv. Minutes 1903, p. 96, or Conv. Minutes 1911, p. 128.

²² Conv. Minutes 1910, p. 96.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Conv. Minutes 1916, p. 200.

²⁵ Cf. Hoekendijk 1948, p. 58-78.

change, which lead to a fundamental redefinition of mission in the RCH, to a paradigm shift in the theological understanding of mission.

The Mission Committee of the Convent addressed the need of a clear definition of mission with a strong wording, already in 1917. The Report speaks of a 'total uncertainty about the concept of mission' and asks the Convent to take steps to clarify this term.²⁶ This attempt of clarification of the term took place only later, in the literary debates about the nature of Christian mission, in the period of the Interbellum. However, the uncertainty around 'what is missionary work' remained a problem even in the following period.

3.3. UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION UNTIL WORLD WAR II

The life of the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) in the years before and after the First World War was largely determined by the coexistence of the 'official church' and the numerous societies and associations of 'home mission'.²⁷ The 'official church' was still under the influence of the rationalistic and liberal tendencies of the late 19th century, tinted with a strong sense of national identity. On the other hand, in the countryside, and especially in the Eastern part of Hungary (Tiszántúli Church District)²⁸ a rather conservative and confessional theological stream prevailed, expressed in quite withdrawn but deep personal piety ('Debrecen Orthodoxy'). The missionary societies were established mainly under the influence of Anglo-American revivalist and German Pietist theologies and most of them had direct links to Western organizations of 'home mission' (e.g. the Hungarian KIE was a member of the World Alliance of YMCAs.) According to the description of the ecclesial situation which Kool offers about this period²⁹ two other theological streams may be mentioned which played an important role especially between the two World Wars, the so-called 'historical Calvinism', which was built mainly on the theology of Abraham Kuyper and on Dutch neo-orthodoxy and dialectic theology which, influenced by Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Eduard Thurneysen, had a growing impact on the life of the RCH in this period.

When an attempt is made to offer a brief survey of how the representatives of these four groups (i.e. 'officials', 'Revivalists', 'historical Calvinists' and 'Barthians') defined mission theologically, one must keep in mind that there was a certain common denominator which joined these theologians to one other, viz. their loyalty to the RCH. Although they represented different theological opinions, they

²⁶ Conv. Minutes 1917, p. 183-184.

²⁷ In Hungarian: *belmisszió*, literally: inner mission. Cf. the German term *innere Mission*.

²⁸ The Reformed Church in Hungary as a national church was divided into five Church Districts until 1920: Dunántúli (i.e. Transdanubian District), with its see in Veszprém; Dunamelléki (i.e. Danubian) District with its see in Budapest; Tiszáninneni (i.e. Cistibiscan District) with its see in Miskolc; Tiszántúli (i.e. Transibiscan) District with its see in Debrecen; and Erdélyi (i.e. Transylvanian) District with its see in Kolozsvár. After 1920 only four of the five districts remained in the Kingdom of Hungary; the whole territory of the latter and a part of the Tiszántúli District were joined to Roumania.

²⁹ Kool, 1993, p. 297.

were united in their commitment to struggle for the edification of the RCH. This was – remarkably enough – the case with those theologians, too, who were active in organizations which were formally ‘outside of’ the structures of the RCH.

3.3.1. Aladár Szabó

Aladár Szabó (1862-1914) is often praised as the ‘herald of the 20th century missionary awakening’.³⁰ He studied theology in Budapest and in Edinburgh. As a leading figure of the revival movement in the RCH on the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and before World War I, he was instrumental in establishing several societies for home and foreign mission. He had good relationship with the Scottish Mission in Budapest³¹ and with the German Speaking Reformed Affiliated Church.³² He was a teacher at the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest and a minister of the Budapest-Józsefváros Reformed Church. He was also active in publishing materials in order to wake up missionary interest especially at the grassroots level of the RCH.

Szabó published a book about the history of foreign mission in 1911.³³ He himself describes his book as ‘...the first larger Hungarian book about the history of mission...’³⁴ In the first chapter ‘On the Beginnings of the Missionary Work’.³⁵ Szabó offers a short definition of what mission means according to his understanding. He summarizes it as follows,

The Christian understands ‘mission’ as sending in order to extend the Kingdom of the Lord and to make the saving powers known. The missionary, according to Christian understanding, is someone who knows God and, out of love for the Lord Jesus Christ in whom God appeared, goes to those and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, wants to make an impact on those who do not know the salvation through Christ or who have not accepted it. Thus it is God who stands behind the Christian missionary work, Who gives authorization to missionary work through Jesus Christ and Who gives empowerment through His Word and His Spirit.³⁶

³⁰ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 135-160; p. 200-203.

³¹ About the history of the Scottish Mission in Budapest see Ábrahám Kovács, *The History of the Free Church of Scotland's Mission to the Jews in Budapest and its Impact on the Reformed Church of Hungary 1841-1914*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2006.

³² About the origins of this church see Ábrahám Kovács: *A Budapesti Ev. Ref. Németajkú Leányegyház eredete és története - The History of the German Speaking Reformed Affiliated Church of Budapest 1858-1869*, D. Harsányi András Alapítvány, Debrecen, 2004.

³³ Aladár Szabó, *Külmissziói útmutató [A Guide to Foreign Mission]*, Magyar Protestáns Irodalmi Társaság, Budapest, 1911 (hereafter: Szabó, 1911).

³⁴ Szabó, 1911, p. 5.

³⁵ Szabó, 1911, p. 8-13.

³⁶ Szabó, 1911, p. 8-9.

In this definition the spiritual character of mission is highlighted very clearly, no cultural or national motivation is included in this description, a purely religious motivation of mission is offered here. The source of mission is God as the Holy Trinity and the ultimate goal of mission is the extension of the Kingdom of God in order to save souls. The aspect of 'sending' and 'going' is stressed. It is conspicuous that – although the title of the book speaks about 'foreign mission' (*külmisszió*), the author claims to define 'mission' as such, without making any difference between 'home' and 'foreign' ministries. It is also important that this definition is individualistic in nature, no word is mentioned about the church as a bearer of mission, it is the pious person, the missionary who 'out of love for the Lord Jesus Christ' goes to the non-believers. However, when speaking about the 'objects' of mission, Szabó speaks about two categories, those who have not heard about the salvation and those who yet not accepted it. This latter aspect may refer to the work among the 'nominal' Christian on the home front (i.e. Christian West), thus, in this sense, 'home mission' may be taken as included in this definition. In her analysis of Szabó's thinking about mission Kool describes it as challenging the understanding of mission prevailing in the contemporary RCH at two points. He confronted a spiritual-religious definition of (foreign) mission with (1) mission as a patriotically motivated national cause and (2) with mission as the extension of the (Hungarian Reformed) church.³⁷ The results of Kool's research also prove that Szabó was also motivated by his wish to serve the renewal of the RCH, and he worked for it 'from below', i.e. aiming at the (missionary) renewal on the grassroots.³⁸ Szabó's definition of mission clearly shows the impact of the theology of the revival, which, in the Hungarian Protestantism, had sources in German Pietism and the *Innere Mission* movement of e.g. Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-1881) and in the Anglo-Saxon Evangelical theologies, as channelled to Hungary by the Scottish Mission and by the Christian youth work movements (YMCA, SVM), especially by Mott. It is remarkable that in the preface of the book Szabó mentions 'the reports of the recent universal missionary conference'³⁹ as one of his resource materials. It can be supposed that Szabó means here the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, 1910. As the definition of mission offered by Szabó is very close to the understanding of mission of Edinburgh 1910, an early sign of the theological influence of the early ecumenical missionary movement on the RCH can be detected here.

³⁷ Kool, 1993, p. 149-160.

³⁸ Kool, 1993, p. 156-157.

³⁹ Szabó, 1911, p. 6.

3.3.2. Gyula Forgács

The first systematic study of mission in the RCH was published in 1925 by Gyula Forgács (1879-1941). Forgács,⁴⁰ a Reformed pastor, played an important role in the revival movement which was initiated – among others – by the Bethánia Association (a Hungarian branch of the international Christian Endeavour movement). Forgács was active in the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Missionary Society (MEMSz) and in its successor, the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Missionary Society (MRKSz), too, of which he was general secretary in 1933-36. He had strong links to Scottish missionary circles. His book, *A belmisszió és a cura pastoralis kézikönyve* [A Handbook of Home Mission and of Pastoral Care]⁴¹ was published in 1925 in the series *Református Parochialis Könyvtár* [Reformed Library for the Congregations]. This series was purchased by almost all of the local congregations of the RCH, thus this book reached a wide circle of the grassroots level of church. In this quite practical handbook Forgács offered a brief summary of the theological foundation of mission, too.

Forgács describes the nature of mission in the context of the relationship of man/woman to God. According to him God is the source of mission. He is the One who gives grace to the elect and sends them out so that they would serve Him. The greatest Sent One is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of mission. God's people receives grace and gets the gift of the Holy Spirit and, out of grateful love to God, obeys His commandments, accepts her calling and commits herself fully to fulfil it. God's missionaries are like an invisible holy army led by the Lord. Their goal is to lead people to Christ and to infuse the churches with a missionary fervour and transform them into missional churches. The true church is this missionary army, all followers of Christ are missionaries. Christ's army will conquer the Globe, 'to the ends of the Earth.' Forgács stresses the importance of the unity of mission, because the main motive of mission is always the same: being sent by God. By this he denies all attempts to define mission along geographical lines or to make a theological distinction between mission and evangelization. On the other hand, he does not follow the traditional Pietistic way either, as he calls everyone a 'missionary' who participates in the spreading of God's Kingdom, including the officials of the institutional church, too. However, he still distinguishes between home mission (*belmisszió*) and foreign mission (*külmisszió*). Although a certain extent of lack of clarity of concepts can be sensed here, it seems that for him home mission means the spreading of the gospel inside the church, whereas foreign

⁴⁰ For a detailed study of Forgács' oeuvre see: Ete Álmos Sipos, 'Bittet den Herrn der Ernte'. Gyula Forgács (1879-1941), *Pionier der ungarischen reformierten Inneren Mission*, Boekencentrum, Zoetermeer, 2007; for his curriculum vitae especially p. 53-93.

⁴¹ Gyula Forgács, *A belmisszió és a cura pastoralis kézikönyve*, Pápa, 1925 (hereafter: Forgács 1925).

mission refers to evangelization of those who are outside of it. He gives an interesting exegetical reasoning of why the regular activities of the church are parts of her mission. He argues with the fact that the aspect of teaching (*didaskain*) is included in the Great Commission (cf. Mt 28,19).

In this first Hungarian Reformed missiological handbook Forgács made an attempt to harmonize the differing theological understandings of mission, represented by the 'official church' on the one hand and by the 'Revivalists' on the other. He apparently tried to lay the theological foundations of the integration of the independent missionary societies into the structures of the RCH. The strength of this approach is that it stresses the divine origin of mission over against the humanistic-romantic and nationalistic tendencies of the 19th century. Although he still operates with the elements of the heroic personal commitment of the individual missionary (a typical 19th century missiological *topos*) and with the vision of the final glorious victory of Christianity over other religions and ideologies, he puts the emphasis on God's initiative as the solid basis of the church's missionary enterprise. On the other hand it is quite apparent that Forgács's frame of reference is the contemporary *status quo* within the church (*Volkskirche*), and that he is strongly influenced by the Pietistic concept of the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* (especially in the fact that he would like to integrate the revivalist societies in order to create a missionary elite which should transform the empiric church from within. He extends the concept of mission to all regular activities of the church (like preaching), too, referring to the element of teaching in the Great Commission (Mt 28,19). However, as Kool demonstrates convincingly, this reasoning is based on an exegetical mistake.⁴² Forgács takes the phrase *didaskontes* out of its context and does not pay any attention to its grammatical form (participle). Thus he ignores the fact that this participle is grammatically subordinate to the imperative in the sentence (*matheteusate* – 'make disciples') which, again can not be looked at apart from the aoristos participle *poreuthentes* ('going away'). Kool is right stating that the Biblical foundations of mission by Forgács are not well elaborated and that his approach can be described as 'panmissionism'.⁴³

Forgács's work, the first Hungarian Reformed missiological textbook, represents well the double goal of the followers of the revivalist conviction within the RCH. On the one hand they intended to be faithful to the aims of the revival movement – to 'save souls for Jesus Christ' – but on the other hand they were longing for a missionary renewal of the RCH, too. For this reason, they set up missionary and revivalist societies, but they worked hard to integrate them to the RCH in order to wake missionary consciousness in the whole church and to transform it to a missional church, without changing her sociological status as the church of the people (*Volkskirche*). Forgács, in this popular and influential textbook on mission expressed this double goal clearly, but did not offer a systematic theological foundation of mission. His approach is determined by the contemporary struggles within the RCH. In this sense it can be defined as contextual.

⁴² Kool, 1993, p. 301-302.

⁴³ Ibid.

3.3.3. László Ravasz

László Ravasz (1882-1975), bishop of the Dunamelléki Church District, was the most influential Reformed personality – within the church and in the Hungarian society as well – between the two World Wars. Next to his numerous functions in the RCH he held several important offices in the cultural and political life of contemporary Hungary, among which the most important was his membership in the Higher Chamber of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Hungary. He was the chairman of the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Missionary Society (MRKSz), between 1931 and 1937. His theological works – influenced by John Calvin, Albert Schweitzer, Ernst Troeltsch and Karl Barth, represent well the ‘official’ theology of the RCH between the two World Wars.

Ravasz summarized his understanding of what Christian mission means in a lecture held at a conference in 1928.⁴⁴ In this lecture he referred to the Great Commission of Christ (Mt 28, 16-20) as the legitimation of mission. According to him this Commission provides Christian mission with a transcendent motivation. The believer’s experience of salvation makes him/her – by the work of the Holy Spirit – to share it with others (cf. Acts 4,20), this is what he calls the ‘psychological motivation’ of mission. He sees also a ‘theological’ motivation for mission, God wants that everyone would be saved (cf. 1Tim 2,4).

The following doctrinal insights build the foundation of mission,

1. Humankind is fallen because of sin.
2. Every person bears the image of God. As the result of the general revelation even the ‘heathens’ have – however blurred – knowledge of God. The notion of *logos spermatikos* is (Justin Martyr) alluded here.
3. Christ is the revelation of the Absolute Truth.

He sees mission as the proclamation of this Christ and the call for conversion to Christianity. The ultimate goal of mission is to plant churches and to create a Christian culture. Kool remarks⁴⁵ that Ravasz’s definition of mission seems to be soteriologically founded for the first sight, but, because of his philosophically determined Christology – Christ as the principle of Truth – he gives a high priority to the cultural aspect of mission. This high view of human culture must be evaluated in the context of contemporary Hungary, where the preserving and promoting of the authentic Hungarian culture was on the top of the political agenda. Kool exerts fierce criticism on the phenomenon, she sees here an accommodation to the prevailing state ideology. She finds similar tendencies in Ravasz’s missiological expressions, as well. However, it must also be taken into consideration, that Ravasz, by emphasizing the importance of the cultural element of mission, might have tried to counterbalance the generally negative approach on secular culture, which often

⁴⁴ First published in *Hajnal*, IV/3 (1928), p. 1-5.

⁴⁵ Kool, 1993, p. 311.

occurred in revivalist circles. It is also possible, that he attempted to build a bridge between the traditional understanding of mission as diaspora-work and a soteriologically founded concept of mission as promoted by the revivalists. This would fit in to his well-known program of ‘making the mission ecclesial and the church missional’.

Ravasz’s approach on mission is different from that of the ‘revivalist’ Forgács. His approach has broader perspectives (especially with respect to the issue of culture), but the practical consequences of this approach were not developed.

3.3.4. *Jenő Sebestyén*

Jenő Sebestyén (1884-1950), professor of Systematic Theology at the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest, was the most important proponent of the theological stream called ‘historical Calvinism’. His aim was to lead back the RCH to its Calvinistic and confessional origins. In order to do so he and his followers simultaneously argued against the liberal and rationalistic views as well as against the theology of the revival (or, as they referred to it, ‘general Christianity’⁴⁶).

Sebestyén made his views on the understanding of Christian mission clear publishing an article in 1932 on the ‘Reformed Principles of Foreign Mission and their Application in the Practical Life of the Church’.⁴⁷ According to this essay the church must engage in mission because this is a commandment of God, and as such, a basic and primary activity of the church. The origins of mission are in the inner decision of the Holy Trinity to save the fallen humanity. Mission is thus founded in the sovereign will of God. Accordingly, it may never be an initiative of pious individuals or societies, who would do it according to their own insight. It must exclusively be the activity of the (visible, institutional) church. The goal of mission is the establishing of new churches (*plantatio ecclesiae*). Missionaries must be ordained ministers of the church, sent out by local congregations. The (local) church must be responsible for the missionaries both spiritually and financially. Through all the different activities, the ultimate goal of mission is the glorification of God.

These missiological insights – though they represented a wide consensus especially among the functionally conservative church membership – never had a decisive impact on the further development of the concept of mission in the RCH. The revivalist and Barthian impulses were much stronger in the missionary practice.

⁴⁶ ‘General Christianity’ in Sebestyén’s terminology: non-denominational or interdenominational Christianity.

⁴⁷ Jenő Sebestyén, ‘A külmiszió református elvei és azok alkalmazása a gyakorlati egyházi életben’, in: *Külmisziói Évkönyv*, Budapest, 1932, p. 9-15.

3.3.5. Sándor Virágh

The influences of Swiss dialectical theology (Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Eduard Thurneysen) reached Hungary through the mediation of Transylvanian theologians, especially by Sándor Tavaszy, professor of systematic theology at the Reformed Theological Faculty of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Roumania). He published the first 'Barthian' theological textbook in 1932, which marked the formal 'arrival' of this theological stream in the Hungarian-speaking theological world.⁴⁸ Barthian theology gradually became the most influential theological direction in the following decades of the 20th century in the RCH. It was Sándor Virágh, secretary of the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Missionary Society (MRKSz) between (1930 and 1949), who applied some of the insights of Barthian theology to the understanding of mission in Hungary.

According to Virágh, the origins of Christian mission are in God Himself, in his eternal plan to save humankind. He is the One who acts when He uses the Christians as His instruments, in His church. All expressions of the Christian life have a missionary quality, as the authentic Christian presence is a witness of the Word. The goal of mission is the proclamation of God's will, communicated in the special revelation (*revelatio specialis*) in Christ. The elect obey this call by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Christian has an elementary wish to belong to the church, thus mission results in the creation of congregations. The planting of churches is thus not an aim but a consequence of mission.

One can only appraise the importance of Virágh's missiological work if it is kept in mind that he was active in the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Missionary Society (MRKSz) which had its roots in the Pietistic theology of the revival. When stressing the objective element of revelation as a foundation of mission he confronted the subjectivist tendencies of that context. His concept of mission can be described as radically theocentric. His theology, however, did not bring about any changes in the understanding of mission in the ranks of the RCH, the circles committed to the cause of mission followed the well-known revivalist patterns.⁴⁹

3.3.6. Mission Ordinances, 1931

The General Convent of the Reformed Church in Hungary issued Mission Ordinances in 1931, in order to describe the task and the place of the missionary activity of this church.⁵⁰ The introduction of these Ordinances was a sign that the

⁴⁸ On the influence of Barthianism in Transylvania, cf. Árpád Ferencz, *Der Einfluss der Theologie Karl Barths auf die Reformierte Kirche Rumäniens*, Theologischer Verlag, Zürich, 2005.

⁴⁹ Kool, 1993, p. 318.

⁵⁰ *Missziói Szabályrendelet*, MREEJK 1931, Appendix No. 3 142/1931. Published partially in English in Kool, 1993, p. 911-920.

church had begun to accept the program of bishop László Ravasz whose intention was ‘to make the mission ecclesial and to make the church missional’.⁵¹ Actually, the Mission Ordinances of 1931 (further, MO 1931) was the first formal step on the way of integration of the missionary work into the structure of the RCH, which was a wish of Reformed ministers and lay members, who were influenced by the revival and remained loyal to the RCH at the same time. It was their intention to serve both the mission cause and the (missionary) renewal of the RCH. The most evident reflection of this double program was expressed in the missiological views of Gyula Forgács. It is of utmost importance to study this document (and the like) of the RCH because it does not only reflect the theological concept of mission prevailing in the RCH of the time, but – as an integral part of the ecclesial legislation – it had a normative power and, as such, it influenced the thinking on mission in the ranks of the church to a great extent.

While the Mission Ordinances of 1931 is not a theological document, it offers guidelines and creates structures for the missionary policy and activity of the RCH. The text of the MO 1931 is divided into four chapters,⁵² (1) About Missionary Work and Its Components; (2) The Organs of Missionary Work; (3) The Agents of Missionary Work; (4) Sources to Cover the Expenses of Missionary Work. The text is divided into 81 paragraphs. Chapter 1 begins with a general description of what mission is. In §1, the Ordinances speaks about mission as founded by God and as the ‘holy obligation’⁵³ of the church. In §2 mission is divided into two branches, ‘The two parts of missionary work, home and foreign missions mutually condition, strengthen and nourish each other. Therefore it is needed [...] that both of them are performed in the Church.’⁵⁴

Home mission is defined (§3) as a complementary element of the regular pastoral care of the congregation, consisting of both the support of the spiritual growth of the church members and works of charity (*diakonia*). Its goal is described as a struggle against the dangers in spiritual life, the engrafting of the human souls into Christ and the help to grow in Him. Home mission includes evangelization, distribution of religious literature, religious education in and outside of the family, regular visitation of the church members. Charity is described as having three components, helping, healing and saving work. Evangelization is defined (§4) as

...sharing the Gospel with those members of the church, who are long lastingly cut off from hearing the Gospel, owing to their jobs or their life circumstances or because they are influenced by sects or finally because the hunger and thirst for the Gospel is dying in their souls ...⁵⁵

⁵¹ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 682.

⁵² Kool’s translation of the Hungarian text into English is followed here, with minor modifications. In Chapter 2 of MO1931 which is not published by Kool (translation: GL), cf. Kool, 1993, p. 911-920.

⁵³ Kool, 1993, p. 911.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

In the following paragraphs components of home mission are described, such as distribution of literature (§5), religious education (§6), children work (§7), youth work (§8), work among adults and prevention from sects and cults (§9), education of young couples and parents (§10), Bible study groups (§11), religious cultural events (§12), choirs (§13)⁵⁶ and the home visits (§15). In §14 important regulations are introduced concerning the relationship of the church and the religious (including missionary) societies. According to MO 1931 new religious societies, initiated by RCH members, may only be established with the consent of the church council (*presbitérium*) of the local congregation, or – if the society intends to function in a wider region – with the consent of the higher church bodies (classis, district, General Convent). The Ordinances oblige the existing Reformed-related religious societies to present their statutes to local, regional or national church bodies and to submit an annual report of their work every year. From §16 to §20 charitable work (*diakonia*) is described as an integral part of home mission, without any further reflection on theological issues, like mission versus social action. In paragraphs 21 and 22 the importance of the diaspora work is stressed and the practical aspects of this activity are regulated.

A rather short paragraph (§23) is committed to the question of foreign mission.⁵⁷ While home mission is described in 19 paragraphs, covering 7 pages (of the English translation), the whole issue of foreign mission is summarized in one single paragraph consisting of nine lines (in English). However, important deliberations are made in these few sentences, foreign mission is described repeatedly as ‘our obligation’, and the propagation of the cause of foreign mission is requested of all ministers. Offerings for foreign missionary purposes are introduced and the pastors are asked to report to the Mission Office of the General Convent if there were any candidates for foreign missionary work in their churches. No definition of foreign mission is offered (in the whole text of the MO 1931).

In the following chapters the functioning of the missionary work of the RCH on the different levels of church administration is described in detail. In the text of the document ‘missionary work’ is used as a term to describe the activity regulated by MO 1931, without any further specification.

The MO 1931 is not designed to offer an accurate theological definition of what the term ‘mission’ means. However, it indispensably contains elements which shed light on the underlying missiological concepts, applied in the regulation of the missionary work of a mainline, ‘historical’ Protestant church in Central Europe, in the 1930s. When studying the text the following observations can be made. In the MO 1931 reference is made to the divine foundation of Christian mission. The whole document defines mission as a purely religious question, thus no references are made to national identity or cultural supremacy as possible motivations of it. Mission is thus defined theologically, or, more cautiously, it can be stated that allusions are made to a theological definition of mission. The second apparent

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Kool, 1993, p. 918.

characteristic of the concept of mission applied in this document is the ecclesio-centric understanding of it. Mission is often referred to as an evident obligation of the church. In paragraph §14 the existence of (voluntary) missionary societies is acknowledged, but the intention of the text to extend the control of the church to these societies is clear as well. It seems that – by all means, technically – missionary work is understood as the task of the church exclusively. However, religious (included missionary) societies may function but only under the umbrella of the church. Further, home mission is clearly described as an activity of the church directed to her own members. Thus home mission stays within the boundaries of the church herself. Here an underlying ecclesiological presupposition can be traced which looks at the church as an empiric social entity, covering a wide range of members with very differing intensity of commitment to the church. In this sense ‘church membership’ is not a theological but a sociological category. The scheme in which the church missionizes herself supposes that there are members of the church (including the minister) who belong to the church spiritually, too, thus they intend to call to faith those members of the church who have not experienced the spiritual aspect of belonging to the church (yet). This concept shows parallels with the Pietistic idea of the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* or *Kerngemeinde*. Such references as the ‘engrafting of the human souls into Christ’ (§3)⁵⁸ display that at least this element is present in the understanding of mission in MO 1931. However, it is more evident in the whole text of the document that (home) missionary work is not defined precisely: it seems to encompass all the elements of regular church life including prevention from ‘spiritual dangers’ such as sects and supporting the ‘spiritual growth’ of the members in every aspect of their lives including moral, mental, intellectual and cultural elements. In this sense the general experience of the *volkskirchliche* character of the RCH determines the whole concept of mission in this document. A third characteristic of the Ordinances of 1931 is that it puts very little emphasis on foreign mission. Mission is described as having two branches, home (*belmisszió*) and foreign missions (*külmisszió*). Although the ‘obligation’ to foreign mission is mentioned more than once, no description is given what foreign mission means, and the reference to foreign mission is omitted from the list of the tasks of the Missionary Committees of the different levels of church administration.⁵⁹ Although foreign mission (i.e. mission abroad) was – even if on a smaller scale – present in the life of the RCH,⁶⁰ it was not viewed by the ‘official church’ as an important element in her life.

The MO 1931 represents a typical ecclesio-centric and ‘pan-missionist’ understanding of mission, which defines mission in the frame of reference of the empiric situation of the RCH in the 1920s and 30s. In this sense it is a contextualized concept of mission, without a proper theological reflection on the

⁵⁸ Our translation of the Hungarian text: ‘*a lelkeknek Krisztusba oltása*’. The translator, unfortunately, misunderstands the text when translating it as ‘to imbue human souls with Christ...’ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 911.

⁵⁹ Cf. Chapter 2 and 3, the latter in: Kool, 1993, p. 919-920.

⁶⁰ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 447-515.

basic issues raised by this approach (especially with regard to ecclesiology). As it is documented elsewhere and as can be sensed in the text of the MO 1931, too, the theological influence of Gyula Forgács was quite strong in formulating this first detailed regulation of the missionary work in the RCH. It seems that in this text the spiritually motivated missionary concept of the Revivalists within the RCH (to save souls for Christ and to work on the renewal of the RCH through imbuing her with missionary fervour) is harmonized with the intentions of the 'official church', the representatives of which (such as bishop László Ravasz) became convinced of the need of the spiritual renewal of the church (especially under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon Evangelical impulses mediated by Mott, and through the growing impact of Barthian theology). The coincidence of these two desires created a situation which led to the integration of the missionary work into the structures of the RCH. But the definition of mission was still determined by the theologically unreflected concept of *Volkskirche* (and an underlying certainty of the existence of the *corpus christianum*). The theological inconsistencies of this concept were still not addressed at all, but they soon became evident in the public theological debate between Sándor Makkai and János Victor.

3.3.7. *Article III on the Missionary Work of the Church, 1933*

'The year 1933 was a historical moment in the history of the Hungarian Reformed Church. For the first time mission work got an official place in its constitution.'⁶¹ Kool's words refer to the act by which the Synod introduced a new Article to the Constitution of the RCH in 1933, Article III on the Missionary Work of the Church.⁶² This short article in the Constitution symbolically expressed that mission had received an official position in the life of the church, and became an organic element of her ministry. After the introduction of the Mission Ordinances by the General Convent in 1931, which regulated the missionary activity of the RCH in a practical way, the highest legislative body of the church had integrated mission into her legal structure. This act meant a strong affirmation of the cause of mission by the 'official church'.

The Article consists of eleven paragraphs; most of them discuss practical matters. As a legal document, the Article does not include an elaborated theology of mission, but the brief definitions offered by it (especially in §1, §2 and §3) reflect an underlying theological concept.

In §1, mission is described as an act of obedience to the Holy Spirit, and as a fulfilment of the Great Commission in Mt. 28:18-20. Missionary work is made an obligation of all church officials, employees and members.⁶³ In §2, mission is

⁶¹ Kool, 1993, p. 525.

⁶² *A Magyarországi Református Egyház III. törvénycikke az egyház missziói munkájáról*. Published in English in Kool, 1993, p. 905-907. Translation: Kool.

⁶³ Kool, 1993, p. 905. In the English translation the reference to mission as the obligation of the church members is omitted, in spite of its presence in the Hungarian text. Cf. Kool 1997, p.387.

divided into two branches, home mission (*belmisszió*) and foreign mission (*külmisszió*). Home mission is defined as a complementary element of the pastoral care of the congregation, spiritual ‘building’ of the church members and ‘...the healing of the ills of the Christian society’.⁶⁴ Home mission is further divided into the following fields of activity (§3): preaching, evangelization, distribution of literature, Christian education, home visits, charitable work (*diakonia*), diaspora work. Evangelization is not defined at all. Social work (*diakonia*) is included under home mission as an evident part of it, and is understood in a broad sense of the word: even struggle for a ‘more just and fraternal Christian society’ is listed as a part of it. Foreign mission is defined as leading non-Christian people to Christ. In §10 it is described as a duty of the RCH to take her part in the foreign missionary work of the Protestant (literally, evangelical – *evangéliumi*) churches of the world. It is stated that the RCH fulfils her calling to foreign mission either in cooperation with other churches or on her own.⁶⁵ The Article contains a short reference to the relationship of the RCH and the societies of home mission (§8): it requires that new societies may only be established with the consent of the different levels of church administration.

The concept of mission in this Article shows, of course, a lot of similarities to that of the Mission Ordinances accepted two years before, in 1931. Mission is defined here as a biblically-motivated obligation of the church with spiritual ends. Interestingly enough, the reference to the divine origin of mission is missing here, and more stress is put on obedience (to the Spirit and to the Great Commission) as a foundation of mission. The definition of home mission is very similar to that of the MO 1931: it encompasses all the regular church activities. It is noteworthy that a new element is included here, the reference to Christian society. The activity in and for the Christian society is raised to the level of the main goals of home mission (§2), and it is referred to in the context of *diakonia* too. As the content of this work is not described any further, it is not certain if it only refers to social work or whether – and allusions to the struggle for a more just society (§3) may point in this direction – even political activity was meant by this. Another new element is the definition of foreign mission as leading non-Christian peoples (*népek*) to Christ. Here again the spiritual-religious motif is remarkable, but the reference to the peoples (in plural!) reflects a thinking which still looks at the globe as divided into Christendom and ‘heathen’ parts. References to a Christian society confirm this, too. From these elements an understanding of mission may be reconstructed which, on the one hand, thinks in Christendom terms and is determined by the realities of the *volkskirchliche* situation, where church membership may be a social instead of a spiritual category (cf. MO 1931), and, on the other hand, it looks upon mission as ‘leading people(s) to Christ’, thus leading the still ‘non-believer’ church members to a more conscious faith in the Saviour and to a more active Christian life, and leading the still non-Christian ‘peoples’ (far away) to Christ, converting them to Christianity. As already stated when analyzing the MO 1931, this concept is close

⁶⁴ Kool, 1993, p. 905.

⁶⁵ Kool, 1993, p. 907.

to the revivalist understanding of mission which aims at the inner renewal of the empiric church. Article III of 1933 does not bring about a new concept of mission compared to that of the MO 1931, but the references to a Christian society open up an even broader understanding of Christian mission than before. It must be noted here also that no theological reflection is made on the relationship of mission and *diakonia* (charity, social action) in this document.

3.3.8. The Makkai-Victor Debate

It is apparent that the Mission Ordinance of 1931 and the Article on Mission of 1933/III reflect an ecclesiocentric definition of mission, which was determined by the contemporary context of the RCH at that time. Deep theological elaboration on missiological issues is still missing at this point of history; the confrontation with this problem leads to the famous ‘Makkai-Victor debate’ in 1941, when these sensitive issues were finally addressed publicly.

3.3.8.1. Makkai’s Understanding of Mission

The most outstanding missiological work published between the two World Wars in the RCH was written by Sándor Makkai (1890-1951), former bishop of the Erdélyi (Transylvanian) Church District and then Professor at the Reformed Theological Faculty of the István Tisza University in Debrecen, Hungary. He was also an executive for mission of the General Convent of the Reformed Church in Hungary. He published a lot of work on the problem of mission and evangelization, and in 1938 he summarized his view on this topic in a book on the Missionary Work of the Church.⁶⁶ His understanding of mission was also demonstrated in a public debate on this issue, in the Reformed church press of 1941 with János Victor, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Reformed Theological Academy, Budapest.⁶⁷ In his book on the missionary work of the church Makkai offers a brief definition: ‘We must define all the activities of the church as ‘missionary’; i.e.: on the commandment of Christ, *she goes to the souls*.’⁶⁸

This definition is very characteristic of Makkai’s understanding of what mission is. For him the foundation of mission is the sending will of God, expressed in the commandments of Christ. Christ is the greatest Missionary of the Father. He authorizes the apostles and the church to continue His mission (Jn 17:18). Thus this mission is given to the church as a substantial activity of her life, and it is given exclusively to the church. No individuals or no enthusiastic religious societies can

⁶⁶ Sándor Makkai, *Az egyház missziói munkája [The Missionary Work of the Church]*, Révai, Budapest, 1938 (hereafter: Makkai, 1938).

⁶⁷ János Victor, ‘Mi a ‘missziói munka’? [What is ‘missionary work’]’, in *Református Világ Szemle*, X/1 (1941), p. 12-24 (hereafter: Victori, 1941a); Sándor Makkai, ‘Mi a ‘missziói munka’ [What is ‘missionary work’]’, in *Teológiai Szemle*, XIII/1 (1941), p.31-43 (hereafter: , 1941); and János Victor, ‘A ‘missziói munka’ teológiájához’ [To the theology of ‘missionary work’]’, in *Teológiai Szemle*, XVIII/2 (1941), p. 84-99 (hereafter: Victori, 1941b).

⁶⁸ Makkai, 1938, p.116, italics in the original text. Remark: Kool’s reference to the page number is not correct, Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 320.

claim this mission as their own because it is the calling of the universal Christian church. Mission is ecclesial to such an extent that it always stays within the boundaries of the church. Makkai solves this apparent contradiction by applying the doctrine of predestination to the teaching on mission: those to whom the Gospel is preached and who obey it are the elect of God, thus they are ‘unconscious’ members of the church.⁶⁹ Following this logic he concludes that ‘... the church always fulfils her mission within her own body’.⁷⁰

He divides the missionary work of the church into three branches.⁷¹ The first is ‘pastoral mission’. This activity, according to Jn 21:15-16, is directed at the ‘true’ members of the church, the believers, who live among dangers and temptations. This work should be done by the minister, the pastor of the church. The content of this branch of mission is pastoral counselling of the congregation. The second branch is ‘congregational mission’. In Mt. 10:5-6, the Lord sends His disciples to the ‘lost sheep of Israel’. In this sense, this branch of mission intends to reach the members of the church who are fallen into sin, are estranged from the church or have gone astray. This commandment is given to the whole church, thus every member of the congregation must be active obeying it. The third branch of mission is called the ‘multiplying’ of ‘foreign mission’. It is based on the Great Commission given by Christ (Mt. 28:18-20). In obedience to this command, this part of the missionary work reaches the elect who do not know Christ yet. Its ultimate goal is the planting of churches, the ‘self-multiplication’ of the church. Makkai stresses that mission is a constant activity of the church; it can never be said that the mission of the church is fulfilled, or finished.

In Makkai’s definition, elements of the theology of the revival (cf. what he calls ‘congregational mission’), of Calvinism (cf. the emphasis on election) and – to a lesser extent – of Barthian theology (cf. Christo-centrism) can be traced. His understanding of mission might be defined as eclectic, or it could also be seen as an originally ‘Makkaian’ missiological approach. This approach is fundamentally determined by the missionary situation in the RCH at that time. One of the most important problems which occupied those active in the missionary life of the RCH was the complicated relationship of the ‘official church’ and the (missionary) societies, or, to put it another way, the structural position of the revival in the body of the RCH. In this sense Makkai’s approach is tailored to the situation of the RCH in the late 1930s. On the other hand, his approach has a theological (missiological) claim, defining what mission as such is. Together with Victor it must be concluded that in this case theory (theology!) is determined by the practice.

Makkai’s view on mission had a decisive impact on the missionary life of the RCH. However, it must be stated that he practically confirmed the missiological *status quo* that had prevailed in the RCH about the theological understanding of mission since Gyula Forgács. There was one quite important exception, which led

⁶⁹ Makkai, 1938, p. 122.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Op. cit., p. 116-117.

to tragic consequences not long after: Makkai theologically denied the *raison d'être* of the independent ('para-church') missionary societies.⁷²

3.3.8.2. Victor's Understanding of Mission

János Victor (1888-1954), professor at the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest, was one of the most prominent theologians of the revival in the RCH.⁷³ He elaborated his understanding of mission in a public literary debate with Sándor Makkai on the question 'what is the 'missionary work' of the church', in 1941. The debate began with an article by Victor, published in the periodical *Református Világ Szemle* [Reformed World Review], in which he exerted criticism on Makkai's understanding of mission.⁷⁴ After Makkai's answer in the *Theológiai Szemle*,⁷⁵ Victor revisited the question again in the following issue of the same organ.⁷⁶

Victor exerts criticism on Makkai's definition of mission in five points.⁷⁷ According to him Makkai's definition of mission is *hermeneutically* wrong, because he 'reads the situation of the RCH into' the message of the Scripture. This way it is not the biblical text but the context of the church that becomes the criterion of mission. Studying Makkai's approach *ecclesiologicaly*, Victor points to the lack of distinction of the normative, Biblical propositions on the church and of the empiric reality of the church as an institution in a concrete social context. He sees Makkai's missiological thesis, that some members of the church are sent to other members of it, as theologically inadequate. He stresses that according to the New Testament understanding of the church, she consists exclusively of those who believe in Christ. His critique is concentrated on Makkai's *soteriology* as well. Where the Debrecen professor argues that in missionary work Christ is proclaimed to those who are already elected, and as such, already incorporated into the church, Victor insists on the typical evangelical conviction, according to which mission is done in hope. It is only God who knows the elect among those who hear the Gospel. Thus the church in mission crosses her own borders and steps out of the circle of the *coetus electorum*. The fourth point of Victor's criticism is ecclesiastical in nature. He rules out Makkai's proposal of a church structure based exclusively on the concept of mission (cf. 'pan-missionism'). According to Victor, this proposal cannot be founded exegetically. He opts for the classical ecclesiastical system of the Calvinist Reformation, in which the regular, internal activities of the church are organized around the concept of the 'office', instead of 'mission'. Finally, the

⁷² After the Communists acquired total control in Hungary in 1948, they systematically worked on the dissolution of the independent (among others, religious) organizations. Makkai's ecclesiocentric understanding of mission was – to the contrary of his intentions – used and misused by the pro-Communist church leadership to undergird the integration (i.e. dissolution!) of these societies in 1950-1951. Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 699-701.

⁷³ About his life and work see Sándor Gaál, *Kezdeményező egyház*, DRHE, Debrecen, 2006.

⁷⁴ Victor, 1941a.

⁷⁵ Makkai, 1941.

⁷⁶ Victor, 1941b.

⁷⁷ Victor, 1941b, p. 84-99.

Budapest theologian dismisses the whole missiological concept of his Debrecen counterpart. Makkai's high view on mission, defined very widely, is not acceptable for him. He intends to purify the concept of mission and to confine it to the activities of the church directed towards those 'outside' of her ranks, in order to invite them to a spiritual conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This profound critique pointed to the weaknesses of Makkai's popular missiological concept, but it did not propose any new element in the missiological discourse at this point. Victor's contribution was that he gave a systematic analysis of the theological issues concerning the definition of mission in the RCH. Although he disputes only with Sándor Makkai, he actually struggles against the missiological tradition of the RCH, already present in Forgács too, which tends to define all aspects of the life of the church as 'missionary'.

3.3.9. Paradigm Shift: From Diaspora to Evangelization

The Mission Ordinances of 1931 and the Article on Mission (1933/III) represent a watershed in the history of the theological understanding of mission in the RCH. They document a paradigm shift that has taken place in the understanding of Christian mission between the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and the 1930s.

The concept of mission prevailing in the RCH at the moment of the organization of her permanent national structures (1881) and at the turn of the centuries, as reflected in the official deliberations of the church, shows a theologically unreflected, but still coherent understanding. Mission is understood as the ministry of the church among the Hungarian Reformed diaspora, with a fourfold goal: ecclesial, confessional, national and cultural. Mission is defined in social categories, and orientated according to the context of church life; it is a contextualized concept of mission.

The Mission Ordinances of 1931 and the Article on Mission (1933/III), which represent the 'official' understanding of the RCH about mission as elaborated and accepted by her highest legislative bodies, show a fundamentally different concept of mission. Here mission is understood as leading people to faith in Christ (evangelization), and supporting them through charitable works (diakonia). Mission is divided into two branches, home mission, which is directed to the nominal members of the church; and foreign mission, which is directed to the 'heathen'. Thus mission is defined in spiritual categories with a rather diffuse but still discernible theological foundation. This theological concept can be identified as a soteriocentric (Evangelical) one, but applied to the special context of the RCH as *Volkskirche*, (home) mission is directed to the members of church. In this sense it is again possible to speak about a contextualized Evangelical definition of mission.

Both the official reports and the normative legislation of a church (in this case, about mission) are documents of the prevailing theological concepts which orientate the life of a church. In this sense they – much more than the publications of individual theologians – represent a way of thinking the community of the

church carries about a certain issue. In this sense they can be described as documents of the dominant paradigm. As demonstrated above, there is a fundamental difference in the concept of mission between the two sets of documents. Since it is supposed that they represent the dominant paradigm of mission in the RCH, one can legitimately speak about a paradigm shift in the understanding of mission, which took place between the turn of the centuries and the 1930s.

3.4. UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION IN THE RCH 1948-1968

3.4.1. *Political Context*

After the turbulent years of the Second World War, Hungary became a part of the Soviet sphere of interest as its territory was occupied by the Red Army in 1945. Although some feared that the new Soviet rulers would introduce a harsh Communist dictatorship and direct persecution of churches right after the War, it did not work out that way. A multi-party democracy was established, in which the non-Communist parties had a certain, limited freedom to carry out their political activities, and the churches could reorganize their lives and ministry. Although the whole political landscape was controlled by the Soviet army and by the officials of the Allied Forces, this unexpected freedom caused an unprecedented optimism in the ranks of the historical (mainline) churches. In the Reformed Church of Hungary representatives of several spiritual directions established new organizations and hoped to initiate a movement of inner reform and renewal of the spiritual life of the church.⁷⁸ The issue of Christian mission played an important role in the rhetoric of almost all of these renewal movements. It became almost a commonplace that the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) had failed to fulfil her missionary calling in the previous decades and now, after the crisis of the War, the re-assessment and reorganization of the missionary activity of the church should play a crucial role in the renewal of the church (cf. the idea of the 'reciprocal effect of mission').⁷⁹ This was one of the most important motivations in seeking contact with the sister churches in Europe, especially with those in the Netherlands, because the circles interested in the renewal of the church hoped that co-operation in missionary work with churches with a long tradition of missionary activity could help wake up the missionary consciousness of the Hungarian church public and could result in a joint missionary venture on a (preferably Reformed) mission field. However, it soon

⁷⁸ For the situation of the RCH after WWII see: István Bogárdi Szabó, *Egyházvezetés és teológia a Magyarországi Református Egyházban 1948 és 1989 között*, Debrecen, 1995; Jos Colijn, 'Kicsoda ellenünk?' *Törésvonalak a második világháború utáni magyar református egyház- és teológiatörténetben*, Kiskunfélegyháza, s.d. [1992], Kool, 1993; Lukas Vischer, 'The World Council of Churches and the Churches in Eastern Europe during the Time of the Communist Regimes: A First Attempt at an Assessment' in *Religion, State and Society*, 25/1 (1997), p. 61-68; and Sándor Fazakas, *Új egyház felé?*, DRHE, Debrecen, 2000.

⁷⁹ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 661-705.

became evident that the period of (limited) democracy and the flare-up of spiritual activity in the RCH was doomed to be only a short-term, transitory phenomenon. In 1948 the Communists grasped power, and the so-called 'Iron Curtain' fell. All political parties except the Communist party (the Hungarians Workers' Party, MDP), and all the civic associations, societies and unions (including religious ones) were forced to dissolve themselves 'voluntarily'. The agricultural properties were nationalized and confiscated from their previous owners; churches lost their lands too (which struck the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church most heavily); and by this the source of income of the ecclesial schooling and social system was undermined. The nationalization of the educational system of the churches followed soon. Religious education first remained compulsory even in public schools, but it was gradually excluded from the curricula. The intimidation of pupils and parents grew to such an extent that even the optional religious education dwindled in most of the schools. On 22 May 1948 an Agreement (*Egyezmény*) was signed by the Hungarian Government and the RCH, in order to guarantee 'the healthy and peaceful coexistence of state and church'.⁸⁰ However, it soon turned out that 'the church was not able and the state was not willing to act according to the Agreement'. After the resignation of Bishop László Ravasz of Budapest and Bishop Imre Révész of Debrecen, and as a consequence, the election of Bishop Albert Bereczky (in Budapest) and Bishop János Péter (in Debrecen), the political control over the RCH became even stronger, because both Bereczky and Péter were more open to the influence of the ruling regime.

The life of the RCH in the period between 1948 and 1968 (and until 1989) was totally determined by the church-state relationships.⁸¹ It was the state (in practice the Communist/Socialist Party) which allotted a certain (from time to time changing) role to the churches in Hungary, and this role determined the freedom of movement of the churches, within set boundaries. The Socialist state never gave up its ideal of the total dismissal of the churches from public life (together with the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the 'disappearing churches'). The 'struggle against clerical reaction' was an often-repeated slogan in Party circles, and from time to time it was put on the agenda of Party gatherings on different levels. However, the churches could not be made non-existent by bureaucratic means, thus a *modus vivendi* had to be found. The Hungarian [Roman] Catholic Church, under the leadership of Cardinal József Mindszenty, decided to resist the state's intentions of 'domesticating' ecclesial life. The two mainline Protestant churches, though along different lines, were more open to negotiations with the state, and turned out to be willing to sign a formal Agreement with the Government and to cooperate 'in the building of Socialism'. It is an open question why they did so. The role of the moral instability of certain ecclesial leaders and their personal interests may not be underestimated, and the direct infiltration by the Communist Party (and by the secret services) must have been an important factor as well. However, practical and theological reasons were also present when making these decisions. It was a wide-

⁸⁰ Quoted by Kool, 1993, p. 781 (Kool's translation).

⁸¹ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 7-11.

spread, though not openly—declared, argument that co-operation with the state was necessary in order to guarantee the basic functions of the church in the new political situation. In his memoirs, László Ravasz describes this with heavy words (at the beginning of the 1970s): ‘The church as an institution is a spiritual ÁVO [political police force], which is paid and used by the state in the hope that it can throw her away when she is not useful any more. The church has to play this alien and forced role in a minimal way in order to protect her spiritual work and to cover the growing harvest of what she had sewn in tears. One of the means to achieve this is the open acceptance [...] of the Socialist social order...’.⁸² It would go beyond the scope of this study to assess the efficacy and the (theological) legitimacy of this strategy. The observation must suffice here that the Hungarian Catholic Church, which, in the beginning, chose the way of confrontation, was also forced to give up this strategy later, under the pressure of state politics, without achieving any of its strategic goals. It is also to be remarked that the concept of ‘cooperation for protection’ has often been used (since the political changes of 1989-90) for apologetic purposes by representatives of the church establishment of the time.

Before a brief description is given of the most important theological developments in the RCH during the period in question, it is important to mention that church-state relationships also changed during the period of 1948-1968. It is remarkable that these changes depended exclusively on the actual political intentions of the state. These changes in the official state (Party) policy over churches in Hungary can be described by the following periodization, using Gusztáv Bölskei’s terminology: oppression, ghettoization, instrumentalization and dialogue.⁸³ In the first period (around and after the Communist *coup d’état* in 1948) the state used direct means to achieve its goals in church life (e.g. the forced resignation of church leaders, imprisonment, intimidation). After 1957 the state chose to exclude churches from public life in the hope that they will loose influence and would gradually disappear (ghettoization). However, as the disfunctionality of the Socialist political and economical order became more and more apparent, the state began to utilize churches in order to ‘pacify’ certain areas of social life. The church was allowed to be more active in social care (for the elderly, the physically and mentally handicapped, alcohol and drug addicts). This had a double advantage for the state, they could mobilize the energies of the church in solving more and more critical social crises (gaining cheap and motivated human resources), and they could use it to demonstrate the ‘freedom of religion’ in Hungary (‘shop-window policy’). Next to this policy of instrumentalization, a formal Marxist-Christian dialogue was started, also, in the last two decades of Socialism. (However, it is to be remarked that this periodization is rather generalizing. E.g. in the first years after 1948 the state persecuted directly the representatives of the ecclesial opposition (Lajos Ordass, László Pap, Béla Pap etc. – oppression), it tried to cut the churches off their social structures (nationalization of schools – ghettoization) and used them

⁸² László Ravasz, *Emlékezéseim*, Budapest, 1992, p. 394.

⁸³ Gusztáv Bölskei, ‘Az egyházkép változása a Magyarországi Református Egyház utóbbi negyvenöt esztendejében’, in *Confessio*, 1991/1, p. 22-25.

for ideological support (instrumentalization). These elements were thus present parallel to each other.).

3.4.2. *The Theology of the Serving Church*

Bogárdi Szabó, in his groundbreaking dissertation on *Church Leadership and Theology in the Reformed Church in Hungary, 1945-1989*,⁸⁴ states that the ‘official’ theological system of the RCH in our period, which was generally known as ‘the theology of the serving church’, had never been elaborated fully.⁸⁵ As he convincingly demonstrates, it was a theological system which can be reconstructed from the limited number of theological publications but also from journalistic essays, church ordinances, episcopal speeches and alike. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify the main characteristics of this theological system, because the overwhelming majority of the publications in the RCH were devoted to elements of this theological program (Bogárdi Szabó speaks of ‘mono-theology’⁸⁶).

3.4.2.1. Terminology

The emerging official theology of the RCH after 1948 was described in different terms. In the ‘50s it was the term ‘theology of the narrow way’ which was often used by one of the main representatives of this conviction Bishop Albert Bereczky.⁸⁷ Parallel to this the terms ‘theology of service’ and the ‘theology of the serving church’ became widely accepted. In the Lutheran Church in Hungary a ‘theology of diakonia’ was developed following basically the same pattern.⁸⁸ Another key theologian, Bishop Tibor Barthá, introduced a new term to denote the same theological system, ‘Evangelical Calvinism’. In this study the term ‘the theology of the serving church’ is chosen to describe this phenomenon, for the following reasons: (1) this is the term by which this theology is referred to in the RCH today; and (2) this term directs our attention to the key theological insight of the system.⁸⁹

3.4.2.2. Historical Setting

Jos Colijn⁹⁰ identifies four theological streams in the RCH before and directly after World War II. These are the following: 1. official theology of the church

⁸⁴ When describing the main characteristics of the theology of the serving church, primarily Bogárdi Szabó’s analysis is used. Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 66-177.

⁸⁵ Op. cit., p. 66.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Cf. Albert Bereczky, *A keskeny út [The Narrow Way]*, Budapest, 1953.

⁸⁸ Cf. Vilmos Vajta, *Die ‘diakonische Theologie’ im Gesellschaftssystem Ungarns*, Frankfurt a.M., 1987.

⁸⁹ The term ‘theological system’ is used for the sake of better reading, but still with some reservations (because of its fragmented character).

⁹⁰ Jos Colijn, ‘Kicsoda ellenünk?’ *Törésvonalak a második világháború utáni magyar református egyház- és teológiai történetben*, Kiskunfélegyháza, s.d., [1992].

leadership; 2. Barthianism; 3. historical Calvinism; and 4. Revivalism. If we take a look at the names of the key representatives of the ‘theology of the serving church’ it is apparent that this new (fifth) theological system had close links to Revivalism (e.g. János Victor, Albert Bereczky, Benő Békefi). It would go beyond the scope of our research to study the biographical and sociological reasons of this phenomenon. However, it is to be added that the representatives of the Awakening⁹¹ were bitterly separated along political lines. Actually, a deep schism can be observed within the ranks of the Revivalists, a part of the group would soon rise to positions of church government (Bereczky, Békefi), while others became directly or indirectly oppressed or even persecuted by the church leadership consisting of their former fellows (e.g. József Berényi, Béla Borbély, Dániel Szabó). (It is to be remarked that this absurd situation contributed a lot to discrediting the Awakening within and outside of the RCH.) The adherents of the Revivalist conviction organized several conferences and gatherings in 1946-47, in order to articulate their theological stance concerning the contemporary developments in the church and in the society. The most important of these meetings were held in Nyíregyháza (1st /1946/ and 2nd /1947/ Conference of National Reformed Free Council⁹²). According to Bogárdi Szabó, the political-theological orientation of those who later became leaders of the RCH was ‘ready’, already at these meetings.⁹³

The inner situation of the church changes in 1948 radically. On 30 April 1948 the Synod of the RCH issues a Declaration in which she offers her cooperation to the new Republic of Hungary. László Ravasz, the presiding bishop of the RCH chooses to resign in May, under direct pressure from the ranks of the Communist party. He was succeeded by Albert Bereczky, an emblematic representative of the Revival movement, in the office of bishop of the Dunamelléki (Danubian) Church District. On 7 October of the same year an Agreement with the Government of Hungary was signed, in which, among others, the church accepts the fact of the nationalization of her schools and the state promises to guarantee the freedom of (optional) religious education in all of the state schools. It was also promised that four historical educational centres of the RCH (Pápa, Sárospatak, Budapest and Debrecen) were allowed to function in the future, too. When the bishop of Debrecen, Imre Révész, who signed the document on behalf of the RCH, experienced that the state violated the Agreement constantly, he resigned, too. In 1949 János Péter was elected to be the new bishop of the Tiszántúli (Transtibiscan) Church District, a person with strong personal ties with the leading circles of the Communist party.⁹⁴ Alongside with these exchanges of the leading clergy, the former lay leaders of the church were replaced by persons loyal to the new state,

⁹¹ A movement of spiritual awakening (*lelki ébredés*) was experienced in the RCH during and after WWII.

⁹² Fazakas 2000, p. 23-26.

⁹³ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 68.

⁹⁴ János Péter was expelled from the office of bishop in 1956; then, after the end of the Revolution, he was invited by the District Council to return, which he did not accept. Later he filled diplomatic positions, including the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to the United Nations Organization.

too. In this situation it was the circle of the former Revivalist ‘opposition’ which gained total influence in virtually all spheres of life of the church.⁹⁵ The theology of the serving church was developed from this ruling ecclesial position. It was even more so, when, after 1957, Tibor Bartha, bishop of Debrecen, became the clerical president of the Synod of the RCH. It became the official theology of the RCH, about which no open debate was possible (except in the short period of 1956-57).⁹⁶ Those who questioned the fundamental elements of this theology were accused of ‘revolt against the Word of God’⁹⁷ and were stamped as ‘agents of the imperialists’. Bogárdi Szabó speaks about a ‘dishonest debate’ in which the ‘official’ theologians often referred to pieces of criticism which were not accessible for the church public,⁹⁸ simply because it was forbidden to publish them.

It is an interesting phenomenon that the theology of the serving church as a theological system disappeared from the scene very quickly after the political changes in 1989. After a weak attempt of reclaiming the key notions of this theology,⁹⁹ Elemér Kocsis (theological professor and bishop of Debrecen after Tibor Bartha) admitted (rather apologetically) that the specific context of the theology of the serving church was the Christian-Marxist dialogue, and after the fall of Communism had lost its relevance.¹⁰⁰ This shows clearly that the theology of the serving church was not carried by the *consensus ecclesiae*; that it was not built on firm theological foundations; and that it was much more a politico-theological ideology of a ruling ecclesial elite than a genuine theological system.

3.4.2.3. Key elements of the theology of the serving church, 1948-1968

Historical dichotomy

The theology of the serving church was born in the crisis of the post-war Hungarian life. Hungary, a country deeply rooted in the Western European culture and civilization, was occupied by an Eastern power, the Red Army of the Soviet Union. The loss of the war, and having been surrendered to forces which would endanger not only the sovereignty of the Hungarian state but ‘promised’ a total reconstruction of all areas of social life (Communism), caused a general sense of instability and uncertainty. The question was raised, ‘what happened to us’. The proponents of the theology of the serving church made an attempt to understand the contemporary

⁹⁵ This influence was limited though. László Ravasz points to the fact that the life of the local congregations could not be controlled fully by this ‘ecclesial dictatorship’. Cf. László Ravasz, *Emlékezéseim*, Budapest, 1992, p. 394. The theological developments in 1956 showed, too, that its not possible to speak of a *consensus ecclesiae* about the theological positions of the ruling ecclesial elite.

⁹⁶ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 66-67.

⁹⁷ István Török, *Kereszténységünk a szocializmus történelmi korszakában* (unpublished), p.3. Quoted by Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 120.

⁹⁸ Op. cit., p. 66-67.

⁹⁹ Elemér Kocsis, ‘Beszéd a Zsinaton’ in: *Református Egyház*, XLI/3 (1989), p. 50.

¹⁰⁰ ‘We used this theology mainly in the dialogue with Marxism’ – Elemér Kocsis, ‘Püspöki jelentés’ in: *Reformátusok Lapja* (3 February 1991), p. 3.

events of history, theologically. The hermeneutical key to this understanding was a twofold dichotomy, 'judgment – mercy' and 'past – present'.

When speaking about judgment and mercy, it is exceedingly apparent that a Pietistic terminology is implemented here. (However, this terminology was generally used in Pietism (and in Evangelical theologies) as individual categories). In the theology of the serving church the same categories were applied to corporate identities (the church, the nation). However, this way of usage is not unprecedented in the history of the RCH. In the time of the 16th century Reformation, the same pattern was used (e.g. by Gáspár Károli) to interpret history in the context of parallels of the fate of the biblical Israel and the Hungarian nation,¹⁰¹ the Hungarian nation sinned against God (religious deprivation and social injustice), God sent the 'pagan' (Muslim) Turks to Hungary as a punishment, the nation should repent and hope that God will remove the punishment from her (end of the Turkish rule). The theology of the serving church used this pattern of the Deuteronomist historiography and combined it with a sequence of argumentation based on the doctrine of general revelation. The logic is as follows:

1. The RCH was not faithful to the Lord in the decades before World War II. She was too much incorporated into the civic structures of the Hungarian establishment, she did not chose party with the poor, the underprivileged and the oppressed, she did not protest strongly enough against the persecution of Jews, she failed to proclaim the Gospel clearly and failed to call the nation to repentance and thus she failed altogether to fulfil her prophetic task.¹⁰²
2. God, the Lord of history, uses Communism as a means of discipline in order to call the church to repentance of her former sins and failures. Through the social program of Marxism-Leninism, the churches are taught to work for social justice.
3. The church must humble herself under the discipline of God and accept Communism as His instrument. She must give up any aspiration of power and influence in society and should be a follower of the *diakonos Christos*, the servant Christ. She should also make a clear decision to support the cause of social justice and world peace (which is in harmony with God's will). Thus the churches (and the RCH) should convert to Christ and to the neighbour.¹⁰³

As a conclusion, it was made clear that the 'past' (i.e. the period before and during the War) was under the judgment of God, and the 'present' (i.e. Communist rule) is an instrument of God which the church must accept humbly. The

¹⁰¹ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p.87.

¹⁰² This picture is very generalized. e.g. the RCH had a strong program of supporting Jewish citizens at the time of the Holocaust: the *Jó Pásztor* [Good Shepherd] Mission.

¹⁰³ 'Megtérés Krisztushoz és a felebaráthoz' [Episcopal Report in 1968] in: Tibor Bartha, *Ige, egyház, nép*, Budapest, 1972, p. 95-97.

spiritual/theological dichotomy of judgment-mercy directly leads to a historical dichotomy.

Bogárdi Szabó demonstrates that it was the theological notion of the ‘grace working from the outside’,¹⁰⁴ introduced by Victor,¹⁰⁵ which played a key role in the structure of the theology of the serving church.¹⁰⁶ Victor argues that in the context of general revelation God uses instruments in human history to instruct and correct the church. He sees Socialism as such an instrument which is in accordance with the will of God. Historical dichotomy is thus actualized as well as applied synchronically: the Socialist social order is ‘good’ and the Capitalist (‘imperialist’) is ‘bad’. Thus a hermeneutical key to interpret contemporary history is offered here, by which a political ideology (Communism) and an actual manifestation of a social order (the existing Socialism) is equated with the ‘will of God’.¹⁰⁷ It is only one step further that those who opposed this insight could be accused for revolting against the Word of God.

Selective Christology

Benő Békefi,¹⁰⁸ another proponent of the theology of the serving church, states in an article on ‘Our Diakonia as a Part of the Diakonia of Jesus Christ’¹⁰⁹ the following,

If the church understands that she exists in this world in order to be active in Christ’s diakonia, then the church will die while fulfilling this task. I am telling this as a fool, she will die and she will be needless at the end. Because the church is not there in order to guarantee her own existence for ever, but in order [to serve] through her sacrifice and through her participation in the suffering of Christ, the coming of the new creation in which there will be no temple [...] a city without a temple.¹¹⁰

Bogárdi Szabó convincingly demonstrates that in this argumentation (and at several other places) a selective Christology is used. The kenotic element of Christ’s earthly ministry is highlighted (suffering, passion and death), but His resurrection, ascension and glorification are ignored. As a result of this the ministry

¹⁰⁴ János Victor, ‘Kívülről befelé is munkálkodó kegyelem’ in: *Református Egyház*, IV/2 (1952), p.3.

¹⁰⁵ Professor of Systematic Theology at the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest and minister of the Budapest-Szabadság téri Reformed Church. An outstanding theologian with close links to the Awakening movement. For a detailed analysis of Victor’s oeuvre Cf. Sándor Gaál, ‘*Kezdeményező egyház*’, Debrecen, 2006.

¹⁰⁶ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p.70-85.

¹⁰⁷ Bogárdi Szabó makes the remarkable observation that although the question of *theodicea* is not even mentioned in this logic, the theologians of the serving church were actually struggling with that problem. Cf. op. cit., p. 96.

¹⁰⁸ Benő Békefi was the senior of the classis Nyírségi, theological professor in Debrecen, later bishop of the Dunántúli (Transdanubian) Church District.

¹⁰⁹ Benő Békefi, ‘Diakóniánk, mint Jézus Krisztus diakóniájának része’, in: *Református Egyház* III/18 (1951), p. 4-6.

¹¹⁰ Op. cit., p. 6.

of the church is also described as ‘a one-way kenotic movement towards the world’.¹¹¹ It is conspicuous that this ‘self-dissolving’ program of the diakonal church coincides with the Marxist utopia of the spontaneous disappearance of the religion in developed Communism!

Another problematic point here is the notion of the participation of the church in the Christ’s *diakonia*. In this case the unique character of the vicarious suffering, death (and then the resurrection!) of Christ – as classically taught in Reformed theology – is lost. In the same time the church is robbed of her own identity when her whole ministry is taken up in the concept of *diakonia*. It would mean that the church has no other function than to react to the needs of the world outside of her. Bogárdi Szabó says with Stephen Sykes that this constant ‘evacuation’ of Christ’s power leads to an ecclesial practice of letting the ‘world to set the agenda’.¹¹²

Ecclesiological exclusiveness

Another characteristic element of the theology of the serving church was its ecclesiological exclusiveness, which was articulated very clearly over against the associations and societies of inner and foreign mission in Hungary.

In the beginning of the 20th century many missionary societies and associations were established in Hungary, mainly under the influence of German Pietistic and Scottish Evangelical movements. Although most of these entities were founded and run by faithful members (and ministers) of the Reformed (and Lutheran) churches, their place in the church was not unproblematic. In the ranks of the church leaderships it was feared that these kind of organizations would lead to sectarianism, others hoped that exactly these societies would be the catalysts of the inner spiritual renewal of the churches. László Ravasz, when elected to the office of the Reformed bishop of Budapest (1921) declared a program of ‘making the mission ecclesial and the church missional’.¹¹³ In this spirit the links with several societies with a Reformed constituency were strengthened remarkably and some were virtually incorporated into the structure of the church (e.g. RKIE – Reformed branch of Hungarian YMCA, MRKSZ – Hungarian Reformed Society of Foreign Missions). Directly before and after the WW II a spiritual awakening movement was experienced in the RCH and through this organizations like the ‘Bethánia’ Association (Hungarian version of Christian Endeavour) became radically stronger by growing membership. The members of this Association (and of the several other, less influential ones) formed their own circles within the congregations, leading Bible studies and prayer groups of their own, but they usually attended the regular church services as well and remained faithful members of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches. However, their existence as *ecclesiolae* within the structure of the church led to growing anxiety among the leadership, based on the theological insight of the ecclesiological illegitimacy of such *Kerngemeinden* and also on their

¹¹¹ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 100.

¹¹² Op. cit., p. 104.

¹¹³ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 301-302.

(only partially realistic) fear of schisms. It was Sándor Makkai who, in the position of mission executive of the RCH, tried to integrate the membership of this associations and movements into the structure of the established churches without loosing their missionary impetus. However, his attempt was doomed to failure because of the brutal political oppression, by which all civic associations and societies were forced to stop functioning in the years of 1950-51.

In this context it was more than absurd that the proponents of the theology of the serving church were struggling with this question during the whole period under research. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the personal and sometimes psychologically determined factors of this phenomenon. We must confine ourselves to pay attention to what was published on this topic. A good example of this is the way Tibor Bartha expressed his conviction, that 'the Christians do not participate directly in the salvific work of Christ [sic!], but indirectly, in the fellowship of the church. [...] The Revelation informs us that the church is the mandatory of the Christian service.'¹¹⁴

Bogárdi Szabó directs our attention to the fact that a hierarchy of communication and of participation is applied here (Christ – church – individual) which is contradictory to the classical Reformed doctrine of the church.¹¹⁵

The consequence of this logic is that there was no room for any initiative from the 'grassroots level' of the church life and it was impossible to imagine that any organizations outside of the church could claim any 'mandate' of Christian ministry. We are confronted here with one of the (several) contradictions within the system of the theology of the serving church, on the one hand the churches total dependence on the secular history (and the worthlessness of the church itself) was taught (Békefi), the unconditional spiritual authority of the church is taught, too (Bartha), without discussing the other opinion.¹¹⁶

3.4.3. Critique of the Theology of the Serving Church in 1956

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 made it clear that the political ideal of building a more just society for the benefit of 'the working class' was an illusion and, in the same time, a cynical ideology to cover the reality of brutal oppression and dictatorship. Although the Revolution itself lasted only for a few days (23 October – 4 November 1956) its direct and indirect consequences could be felt on almost all areas of the political and social life of Hungary during the decades to come.

¹¹⁴ Tibor Bartha, 'A keresztyén szolgálatunk ekkleziológiai összefüggései' in: *Theológiai Szemle*, 1973/1, p. 9. Although this publication comes from after 1968, there are good reasons to suppose that these insights were characteristic of the whole period discussed.

¹¹⁵ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 137.

¹¹⁶ This is another example that the theology of the serving church was an ecclesio-political ideology to guarantee the rule of the ecclesial elite. Certain elements were utilized as they were needed to ideologize the actual questions.

The Revolution was a turning point in the history of the RCH, too. The fact that symbolic personalities of the church leadership were expelled from their office (bishop János Péter) or were asked to resign (bishop Albert Bereczky, Roland Kiss) and that the most influential bishop of the pre-war period, László Ravasz, was restored in his office, were signs that the membership of the church experienced the developments between 1948 and 1956 as a growing ecclesial dictatorship, too.

The Renewal Movement¹¹⁷ formulated its own program¹¹⁸ and other writings offered analyses of the theological development in the RCH.¹¹⁹ This critics unanimously pointed to the fact that the theological work of the RCH became distorted by 'alien', non-theological factors. They criticized the contents of the theology of the serving church on several points. In the centre of this critiques stood that the theology of the serving church equated the developments of the secular history with the active will of God, and as a consequence of this it equated obedience to God with the full acceptance and support of the new political regime. By this the general revelation was raised to the same level as the special revelation and the 'right' interpretation of history was made a criterion to the 'right' service of Christ. This way the general revelation (history) actually dominated special revelation.¹²⁰

Next to detailed criticism of the ecclesio-political and personal shortcomings of the church leadership of 1948-1956, these deep theological reflections were very important contributions to the development of the Hungarian Reformed theology in the 20th century, even if they were not allowed to be published in Hungary in the years to come. After the political changes in 1989-90, this theological insights helped to re-orientate the theological reflection within the RCH.

3.4.4. Mission in the Official Theology of the RCH, 1948-1968

Kool, when discussing the theological concepts of mission in the RCH in 1947-1952,¹²¹ demonstrates that three streams can be identified in defining 'what is mission'. Sándor Makkai, the mission executive of the Synod, made an attempt to create a theology of mission which is rooted in the reality of the church life. In the same time, he tried to mediate between the recently established church leadership and the representatives of the associations of the Awakening movement. It was László Draskóczy, former secretary of the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Missionary

¹¹⁷ For the history of the RCH in 1956 see: László Pap, *Tíz év és ami utána következett 1945-1963*, Basel, 1992.

¹¹⁸ 'A Magyar Református Egyház útja,' (1956), published in: *Református Egyház*, 1991/I, p. 4-10.

¹¹⁹ *Hítvalló nyilatkozat 1955-1956* [A Declaration of Confession], published in Hungary in: *Confessio*, 1989/2, p. 118-121; László Ravasz, *Memorandum, 1956*, published in: László Ravasz, *Válogatott írások*, Basel, 1988, p. 269-274; Ervin Vályi Nagy, *Isten vagy történelem, 1955* [God or History?], published in Ervin Vályi Nagy, *Minden idők peremén*, Basel-Budapest, 1993, p. 43-57; and several other contemporary publications.

¹²⁰ Cf. Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p.113-121.

¹²¹ Kool, 1993, p. 674-705.

Society (MRKSz – 1930-1936), who represented a rather radical Evangelical position on the definition of mission. At last, the new church leadership formulated its own understanding of what mission was, and this latter became the ‘official’ understanding of mission of the theology of the serving church.

3.4.4.1. Attempts at a Theological Definition of Mission

After the theological debate with János Victor in 1941, when Sándor Makkai was criticized by the Budapest professor of a too broad understanding of what mission was, he concentrated his attention on the question of role of the congregation in mission. In an article on ‘Present Meaning and Tasks of the Missionary Work of the Congregations’¹²² he distinguishes two branches of Christian mission: external mission, ‘among the souls externally not yet organized as a church and not belonging to the fellowship of the Christian church’ and internal mission ‘among souls born, baptized and organized already into a specific church, but not living any conscious Christian life or only hesitantly and backsliding’.¹²³ Makkai thus insists on his understanding of mission as taking place within the church. His key concept is the spiritual transformation of the congregation into a fellowship of committed believers.¹²⁴ The Holy Spirit uses missionary instruments in His transforming work, the ‘nucleus of believers’, or elsewhere ‘missionary nucleus’ (*Kerngemeinde*). He further divides the mission of the congregation into occasional and constant ministries. Evangelism, as a special, occasional ministry aims at the awakening of the faith of the members of the church who are not conscious Christians, and pastoral mission (or counselling) helps the edification and growth of the believers in faith. He expresses his conviction, that this process would lead to an inner, organic missionary renewal of the congregations. He concludes that mission should take place within the ranks of the church so that she would be able to fulfil her missionary task. He underscores the need ‘to evangelize the congregation by herself’.¹²⁵

Makkai aims at a threefold goal by his theological definition of mission. First, he intends to secure the primary place of the local congregation (thus, the church!) as the mandatory of Christian mission. Second, he intends to solve the underlying tension of Awakening/societies and institution/*Volkskirche*¹²⁶ by implementing the concept of ‘missionary nucleus’. Thirdly, he puts the topic of mission into the broader context of the Kingdom of God saying, that the goal of Christian mission goes beyond the salvation of the individual soul. Mission should assist people to convert to Christ and to be integrated into the serving fellowship of the church. This fellowship must be lived in the church ‘as a social life according to

¹²² Sándor Makkai, ‘A gyülekezeti missziói munka mai értelme és feladatai’ in: *Élő gyülekezet*, Budapest, 1948, p. 62ff. Discussed in detail by Kool in Kool, 1993, p. 676-680.

¹²³ Op. cit., p. 63. Translation: Kool.

¹²⁴ ‘*Atminősülés*’. Kool translates it with the term ‘re-qualification’. cf. Kool, 1993, p.677.

¹²⁵ cf. Kool, 1993, p.677.

¹²⁶ For the question of *Volkskirche* see: Fazakas 2000, p. 46-81.

the Gospel'¹²⁷ and it should also 'serve the world, [...] in the social and state system where God placed [her]'.¹²⁸

Kool describes Makkai's theological definition of mission as a 'unique Hungarian, all-encompassing concept'.¹²⁹ She assumes that 'its contents were defined as results of the way the mission work was practiced in the Hungarian context. Thus a strong contextualization resulted in this functional concept'.¹³⁰

In the years 1947-1948, László Draskóczy, a former secretary of the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Mission Society, member of the Revivalist opposition movement 'National Reformed Free Council', fiercely criticized Makkai's concept of mission in several articles.¹³¹ He confronts the Hungarian Reformed church public (and Makkai) with his provoking assessment of the missionary situation of the church, according to which the 'church should repent and confess with a grieved heart that all our boasting and [our] Mission Committee are *humbug* [i.e. nonsense, GL], because the Hungarian Reformed Church does not have any mission nor any mission responsibility'.¹³² He raises questions even about whether the Reformed Church in Hungary is a church at all and urges a double program: practical obedience to the Lord's Great Commission and deep theological reflection on the ecclesiological criteria of the (true) church.¹³³ He also took the local congregation as a starting point of his definition of mission, but he refused to follow Makkai's concept. Instead, he described the *whole* congregation as an 'active missionary fellowship',¹³⁴ using the church of Antiochia (Acts 13) as an example. He identifies the congregation with those who are conscious followers of Christ and are ready to serve Him in mission. With this, he denies the theological legitimacy of Makkai's concept of the 'missionary nucleus' within the institutional church.

It is apparent that Draskóczy's underlying theological concept is similar to the position János Victor represented in 1941, when debating with Makkai. Draskóczy refuses to make a functional distinction between the institutional church and the *Kerngemeinde*. For him – just as for Victor – the church is exclusively a theological-spiritual category in which the members are converted to Christ, reborn by the Holy Spirit and are committed to a conscious Christian life. Everything that is outside of this circle is 'non-church'. The church is identical with Makkai's 'nucleus'. Thus, missionary work is always done outside of the church, in the territory of the non-church/world, even if this 'world' can be found inside the

¹²⁷ Sándor Makkai, *Evangélizáció és gyülekezetépítés a magyarországi református egyházban* (unpublished), ZsL 2e f/9d XIV/15 (1949), quoted and translated by Kool. in Kool, 1993, p. 682.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Translation: Kool.

¹²⁹ Kool, 1993, p. 674-675.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ e.g. László Draskóczy, 'Indonézia és egyházunk' in: *Segítsetek*, 1947; László Draskóczy, 'A gyülekezet mint missziói munkaközösség' in: *Hajnal* (September 1948), p. 1-2; László Draskóczy, 'Amely egyház nem végez missziói munkát: halott!' in: *Református Híradó*, XXIII/5 (1948), p. 2.

¹³² László Draskóczy, 'Indonézia és egyházunk' in: *Segítsetek*, 1947, p. 2. Translation: Kool.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ László Draskóczy, 'A gyülekezet mint missziói munkaközösség' in: *Hajnal* (September 1948), p. 1-2.

formal boundaries of the RCH as an organization. The object of mission is ‘all nations’ (the ‘heathen’, Muslims, Jews), instead the congregation herself.

Although Draskóczy came from the ranks of the Revivalists, together with those who quickly occupied the leading positions of the Reformed Church in Hungary in 1947-1949 (Albert Bereczky, Benő Békefy, János Péter), his radical criticism on the contemporary church life and his concept of Christian mission in the ‘world’ made his (and his followers’) theological stance uncomfortable for the (new) church leadership and unacceptable to the political authorities.

3.4.4.2. Re-definition

As the official theology of the RCH became gradually a ‘mono-theology’ (Bogárdi Szabó) after 1948, there was less and less room for any theological discussion. The debate on mission in the church press (which was more a debate on missionary policy than a genuine theological one) dwindled and stopped, partially because most of the periodicals of the church and of the associations were forced to stop functioning. In the official church media (the weekly *Az Út* [The Way], the monthly *Református Egyház* [Reformed Church] and *Theológiai Szemle* [Theological Review]) a strong control of opinion – actually, a censorship – was introduced, thus the publications all represented the theological position of the church leadership.

In the years 1948-1950 it was Sándor Makkai, the mission executive of the Convent of the RCH, whose concept of mission was accepted as the ‘official’ position of the RCH. There was a strong hope that the RCH could start a foreign missionary activity (in cooperation with the Netherlands Missionary Council, NZR) in Indonesia. It was Hoekendijk, secretary of the NZR, who initiated this cooperation (cf. Chapter 7). In spite of a promising start, this common project of the NZR and the RCH failed due to political reasons.¹³⁵ Sándor Makkai supported this cause and hoped that this new ministry would have a reviving effect on the missionary consciousness of the RCH. The failure of this project in 1949 was a serious disappointment for him. Makkai’s other important project was the establishing of the National Reformed Missionary Work Fellowship (ORMM).¹³⁶ He hoped to integrate the rather fragmented circles of inner and foreign mission (associations, societies) in one single structure within the RCH. Ravasz’s concept of ‘making the mission ecclesial and the church missional’ was hoped to become reality. There was a twofold reason for this integration, first, Makkai was convinced that the sole mandatory of mission is the church, and the only *raison d’être* of the circles of Awakening was forming a ‘missionary nucleus’ within the church in order to ‘evangelize the church by herself’. This was thus a theological reason. Secondly, Makkai experienced a growing pressure by the state on all civic associations and he feared (with a good reason) of the approaching dissolution of these entities. By setting up a new, ecclesial structure for missionary work he hoped

¹³⁵ For a detailed discussion of this project see: Kool, 1993, p. 705-805.

¹³⁶ *Országos Református Missziói Munkaközösség*.

to offer a 'shelter' for those who would soon lose their 'own' organizations. By this he hoped to channel the forces of the Awakening into the institutional church in the hope that they might carry on their reviving ministry 'from inside'. Makkai's personal credibility and authority among the Revivalists played an important role in convincing the leaders of these associations and societies to give up their own organizations 'voluntarily', in the hope that they could continue their ministry under the umbrella organization of the ORMM. When, at the end of 1950, it became evident, that the new church leadership did not intend to let the forces of Revival continue their ministry within the church and that it strived for a radical *Umdeutung* (re-definition) of the concept of mission, Sándor Makkai had to be confronted with the fact that his theological concept of mission and his personal credibility had intentionally been misused by the church leadership. He resigned and his health was also broken under the psychological pressure he had to suffer.¹³⁷

After the failure of Makkai's concept, a new understanding of mission was gradually formulated by the leadership of the RCH. In what follows, the key elements of this new concept are demonstrated by analysing three official documents of the RCH from the 1950-1952 (Mission Ordinances 1950, 'A Fraternal Message' 1950, and Mission Ordinances 1952). After a short summary of the missionary concept of the Reformed Renewal Movement in 1956-57, a major article by Tibor Bartha is discussed on the theology of mission, in 1959. By analysing these selected documents, no comprehensive description of all publications on the topic of mission is aimed at, but the theological definition of mission in the system of the theology of the serving church is typically presented.

3.4.4.3. Mission Ordinances 1950

The General Convent of the RCH had issued new Mission Ordinances in 1950¹³⁸ (further MO 1950). Actually, the Convent did not formulate a totally new Ordinances, but a profound amendment of MO 1931. However, the changes were so extensive that it is legitimate to speak about a wholly new Mission Ordinances of 1950.¹³⁹ The MO was shortened radically, 19 paragraphs were omitted altogether from the text of 1931. In a short introduction to the MO 1950 the need for the modification is explained by the fact that 20 years had passed since the introduction of the MO 1931, and these two decades had brought about fundamental changes.

During this period, simultaneously and parallel with the great external changes, and – providentially – even in close relation to

¹³⁷ Kool, 1993, p. 699-700.

¹³⁸ 'Missziói Szabályrendelet. Szabályrendelet az egyetemes konvent 142/1931. sz. határozatával megállapított Missziói Szabályrendelet kiegészítéséről és módosításáról' in: *Református Egyház*, II/10 (1950), p. 10-13.

¹³⁹ Even the official terminology referred to it as such: Cf. 'A konventi elnökségi tanács határozata a 'Missziói Szabályrendelet' végrehajtására nézve [The Resolution of the Presiding Council of the Convent Concerning the Implementation of the Mission Ordinances], 215/1950-I. szám' in: *Református Egyház*, II/24 (1950), p.6.

them, our church has received new missionary instructions, powers and visions from her Head and Lord in His Word. This is the reason and that is why it is necessary to extend and to modify the Ordinances in the conviction that the Reformed church must altogether be transformed to a missional church, because this is the only way of life and of survival.¹⁴⁰

The introduction refers also to the changes caused by the dissolution of the associations and societies, as a reason why a new MO is needed. It is made clear, too, that the amendments of 1950 are looked upon as a first step on the way of creating a totally new Ordinances.

The text of MO 1950 is divided into four chapters and 18 paragraphs. Chapter I (§1-§3) contains 'General Principles',¹⁴¹ the second chapter (§4-§13) describes the 'Organs of the Missionary Work',¹⁴² chapter 3 (§14-§17) is about the 'The Ministry of the Branches of Missionary Work',¹⁴³ the last chapter (§18) is 'Final Resolutions',¹⁴⁴ describing the relationship of the MO 1950 to the MO 1931 and giving instruction to the implementation of the new regulations. As the text is not designed to offer an elaborate theology of mission, only a brief description of what mission is can be found in the text, especially in chapter 1.

§1 presents mission as the 'work of our church' which must be conducted 'according to the Holy Scriptures and in the spirit of our Confessions'.¹⁴⁵ Mission is derived from the nature of the church. No theological definition is offered here at all about what is the contents of mission, but in §1 b) the following description is given,

The following components belong to the missionary work of the church, evangelization, Biblical teaching, pastoral counselling of the individuals, of the families and of the congregations, charitable ministries (*diakonia*) and foreign mission (to the heathen and to the Jews).¹⁴⁶

It is conspicuous that – to the contrary of MO 1931 – no further description is offered, but detailed technical regulations follow which especially aim at the guaranteeing of the control of all the missionary work by the respective levels of the church administration. On the other hand §18 states that except of a concrete list of paragraphs, all other resolutions of the MO 1931 remain in effect, although they must be executed in 'according to and in the spirit of these new regulations'.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁰ MO 1950, p.10.

¹⁴¹ MO 1950, p. 10-11.

¹⁴² MO 1950, p. 11-12.

¹⁴³ MO 1950, p. 12-13.

¹⁴⁴ MO 1950, p. 13.

¹⁴⁵ MO 1950, p. 10.

¹⁴⁶ MO 1950, p. 10-11.

¹⁴⁷ MO 1950, p. 13.

However, it is still unclear what this means, because many paragraphs (actually §1-§18) are re-written wholly, but certain issues are not mentioned at all. It is not evident thus, whether the detailed description of home mission and the much less elaborate one of foreign mission were omitted now or they were still valid and applicable.

MO 1950 seems to bring about changes in the understanding of mission especially by the fact that it – for the first time in the history of the RCH – does not explicitly divide mission into home and foreign branches. However, while the term ‘home mission’ (*belmisszió*) is omitted wholly, there is (one single) reference to foreign mission (*külmisszió*) with the further description of it as ‘heathen mission’ (*pogánymisszió*) and ‘Jewish mission’ (*zsidómisszió*). That is why one is left with uncertainty of what is meant here. If it would be supposed, that the authors of MO 1950 left the definitions of MO 1931 intact by simply not referring to them, then only three new elements are found here, 1. the even stronger ecclesio-centredness of the concept of mission; 2. the explicit denial of the *raison d’être* of the ‘societies; and 3. the reference to mission to the Jews. On the other hand, if the other option (the substitution of the definitions of 1931 by a new one), an even less clear concept is found here, the regular activities of the church are referred to as ‘missionary work’, completed by a passing reference to foreign mission about which no further instructions are given in the text of MO 1950 at all. But even in this latter case one may stay with the conclusion that the underlying theological concept of mission is a radically ecclesio-centric one, which still applies the terms of all-encompassing mission which include all the regular activities of the church. Although, in the introduction it was declared that the aim of MO 1950 is the transformation of the RCH into a ‘missional church’, the text does not make it clear what does this mean. The omission of the term ‘home mission’ has not clarified the concept of mission, but had made it even more blurred. One intention is still apparent in the text, the wish of the church administration to control all the missionary activities of the church totally.¹⁴⁸ This latter aspect can be understood in the political context of Hungary in the late ‘40s and in the ‘50s, a forced dissolution of all the civic initiatives (associations, unions and societies) took place in 1950. The dissolution of the RCH-related religious (including missionary) societies happened in this context. At this point of time it was still open, whether the dissolution of these societies was an act of integration of them or a way of stopping their activities.

In the radically ecclesio-centric understanding of mission which included all the regular activities of the church the theological impact of Sándor Makkai is evident, who represented the same views on mission already before World War II and who was the executive for mission of the General Convent of the RCH since 1947. His ecclesio-centric understanding of mission shows interesting similarities to the concept of mission introduced to the ecumenical discourse on mission, especially since the World Mission Conference of the International Missionary Council in Tambaram, 1938. It may also be of interest that Hoekendijk’s

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 697.

understanding of the church as a ‘function of mission’ mediated by his articles published in Hungarian, by the impact of his lectures via the Hungarian participants at the courses of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey in 1947 (especially László Makkai) and by the lectures Hoekendijk held during his visits in Hungary in 1947 and 1948, may also have been inspiring for Sándor Makkai and other theologians in the RCH. These theologians had to struggle with two different problems, 1. the tension between their theological persuasions about the ecclesial character of mission and the fact the missionary consciousness was much stronger in independent societies ‘outside’ of the church; and 2. the growing control of the Communist state authorities on and in the church making almost all missionary activity virtually impossible. The practical consequences of this twofold pressure coincided in the fact of dissolution of the religious (missionary) societies in 1949. The tragic consequences of this step became evident very soon after the introduction of MO 1950.

3.4.4.4. A ‘Fraternal Message’

In the 15 December 1950 issue of the *Református Egyház*, the official organ of the RCH, a ‘Fraternal Message’ (*Testvéri Izenet* [sic]) was published¹⁴⁹ by the Presiding Council of the General Convent ‘to the ministers and presbyteries of our congregations, to the seniors and mission committees of our classes, to all the servants and members of our church’.¹⁵⁰ This resolution¹⁵¹ of the Presiding Council (consisting of the four bishops and lay presidents of the RCH) was an official theological declaration of the Reformed Church in Hungary, in the form of an open letter. The formal goal of the Message was to give instructions to the church members and officials concerning the implementation of the new (amended) Mission Ordinances of 1950. The relevance of this extensive document grew beyond its original purpose and it was later hailed as ‘...a milestone in the life of the church, as it summarizes all the results of the struggles and of the search of the preceding six years’.¹⁵² The literary genre of this document is difficult to identify, it combines the genres of an exhortation with those of an interpretation of history and of a theological essay. However, the purpose of the document can be described – instead of its rather resolute character – as apologetic, it is an attempt to explain to the grassroots of the church and to the public, why it was necessary to dissolve the

¹⁴⁹ ‘Testvéri Izenet [A Fraternal Message]’ in: *Református Egyház*, II/24 (1950), p. 3-6. (Hereafter: TI 1950). The Hungarian title of this document uses a strange wording: instead of the usual word for ‘message’ in Hungarian (‘*üzenet*’) the archaic ‘*izenet*’ is used, which gives the text a very pious air.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Resolution No. 214/1950-I.

¹⁵² Karl-Heinz van Kooten, *Misszió és diakónia* [Mission and *Diakonia*], A Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinatának Tanulmányi Osztálya, Budapest, 1983, p.30 (hereafter van Kooten 1983). K-H van Kooten’s doctoral dissertation, submitted to the Reformed Theological Academy in Debrecen in 1978, in German, was published in as late as 1983 (translated by Sándor Szathmáry). This short dissertation offers a brief summary of the *official* theological concept of the contemporary RCH without any critical reflection.

– partially very popular – (missionary) societies, and what was the reason of the apparent suspension of the missionary activity of these ‘fellowships’. This document does not offer any definition of mission in the strict sense of the word, but it gives a clear picture of what was the underlying theological concept of mission.

The Fraternal Message begins with long paragraphs of greetings, using Biblical terminology.¹⁵³ A confession of sins follows in which it is declared that the RCH became unfaithful to her Lord, but it is also confessed that the Lord remained faithful to the RCH throughout history, and He was ‘merciful in His judgement when rebuking us’.¹⁵⁴ Then, after the expression of gratefulness to God, the heavy responsibility of the church in fulfilling her ministry faithfully is stressed. This ‘way of obedience’ is repeatedly described as ‘a bold and trustful service of the rebuilding of our country and of the great cause of peace of mankind together with the peace of our fatherland, according to Gods will’.¹⁵⁵ The hope is expressed that the ministry of the RCH ‘may somehow be a service to the Christianity in the whole world’.¹⁵⁶ In what follows, a rather complicated reasoning is given to why the responsible leaders (‘watchmen’) of the church were entrusted with a special authority to safeguard the unity of the church and the proper use of the spiritual gifts.¹⁵⁷ After a long list of references to different conferences and to the work of study groups where and by which the problem of the place of the ‘fellowship’ within the church was studied theologically, an ecclesiological summary is given about the relationship of the concepts ‘ekklelesia’ and ‘koinonia’. The document sums up the results of this research in the following conclusion, ‘The Word of God teaches that all the blessings are given to the individual believer by the church, the ekklesia.’¹⁵⁸

The unfaithful past of the RCH is discussed again repeating the need of repentance from the sins of the past. Thereafter, the renewing effect of the revival movements of ‘almost half a century’ is praised as an instrument in God’s hand to return to the right path. However, it is stated that these revival movements ‘did not see their place in the church for a long time’.¹⁵⁹

God has shown His great mercy in the fact that He granted renewal and obedience in the faith, after the Liberation [i.e. by the Soviet Red Army in 1945, GL], and, to a large extent for the same reason, the groups of revival voluntarily gave up the structures of their separateness. The assemblies of the evangelistic associations declared their dissolution and their former members are ready for

¹⁵³ TI 1950, p. 3.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. Quotations, translation: GL.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ TI 1950, p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ Sic! ‘Isten Igéje azt tanítja, hogy minden áldást az egyéni hívő számára az egyház, az eklézsia nyújt.’

TI 1950, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹ TI 1950, p.5.

an obedient service – without any separate organization – in the Reformed Church which they had always been loving so much...¹⁶⁰

After this central statement in the Fraternal Message the main reason of the issuing of the document follows: The former members of the revivalist fellowships are required to say yes to the dissolution of their organizations even ‘in their hearts’, and all the separate gatherings of these fellowships are declared as forbidden, because this is the prerequisite of the incorporation to the body (the Body!) of the church. This requirement is theologically supported by the following statement, ‘According to the teaching of the Word, as understood and accepted in faith, the fellowship (*koinonia*) is an expression of the life of the church. [...] Thus, the fellowship is not the society of the believers – because that is the church – but the function of the living church ...’¹⁶¹

It is further argued that the church as such, in its wholeness represents the true *koinonia*, that is why the members express their belonging to the fellowship in the common worship services and in serving each other according to their gifts, under the authority and guidance and ‘caring control’ of the elders, deacons, ministers and the ‘responsible watchmen’ of the church leadership.¹⁶² The Fraternal Message is then concluded by a final exhortation of obedience to the Mission Ordinances 1950, according to the Instructions of Implementation attached to the letter and published on the same page.¹⁶³

The Fraternal Message offers a brief summary of the official theological position of the RCH, which later became known as the ‘theology of the serving church’. This theological system was only in draft in 1950,¹⁶⁴ but the basic structure of its logic is already present in this early document. The first presupposition of this theological system is that the RCH became unfaithful to her calling during her history. The second presupposition is that the revival helped the RCH to rediscover her own Biblical and Reformed identity. The third presupposition is that the cataclysms of World War II, the ‘liberation’ by the Soviet Army and the political changes caused by the Communists gaining total control in Hungary, were the instruments in God’s hand which gave a decisive impetus to the discovering of the sins of the past in the church and to start a new life. The fourth presupposition is that the church – as a sign of repentance – should say yes in faith to the new Socialist political system in Hungary. The conclusion of all these presuppositions is that the church, following Christ’s example, should be present in the society as a servant, serving the needs of the people and serving the universal good of the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ ‘A konventi elnökségi tanács határozata a ’Missziói Szabályrendelet’ végrehajtására nézve [Resolution of the Presiding Council of the Convent about the Implementation of the Mission Ordinances] 215/1950-I., in: *Református Egyház*, II/24 (1950), p.6.

¹⁶⁴ István Bogárdi Szabó argues that it was never completed as an elaborate theological system. Cf. Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 29ff.

mankind, the struggle for peace. The role of the revivalist fellowships, however important role they played in the renewal of the RCH, is a full integration to the wider, serving fellowship of the church. All attempts of preserving separate gatherings – even within the congregations – are looked upon as disobedience to the decisions made by the RCH, and – because these decisions were claimed to have been made under the guidance of the Word and the Spirit – ultimately they are considered as disobedience to God Himself.

It would of course not be legitimate to derive any ‘definition of mission’ from this document, but the following observations can still be made, which are directly related to the question. 1. The Fraternal Message displays a radically ecclesio-centric theology. In deliberations which even refer to the church as the entity which ‘gives blessings’ we find hints to an ecclesiology which even appears to go beyond traditional Protestant formulations. The deliberations in the Fraternal Message make it evident that the RCH looks upon mission as an exclusive task and obligation of the church. 2. In the Fraternal Message we see a change of terminology, in which the service of the people (e.g. in the postwar reconstruction efforts) and of the benefit of the mankind (identified as the ‘cause of peace’) is included to the newly discovered ministry of the church, interpreted as a result of the process of repentance from the (social) sins of the past. Although not expressed explicitly but a slight shift is taking place here to an (underlying) understanding of mission, which takes up these elements into a ‘new’ definition of mission.

3.4.4.5. Mission Ordinances 1952

The General Convent of the RCH issued new Missionary Ordinances on 29 February 1952.¹⁶⁵ As the brief introduction of the text states this new MO replace the MO 1950, which was actually a modification of MO 1931. The new document has not taken any element over from the preceding ones, it is a totally new legal text; however, similarities with that of 1950 can be discovered.

The MO 1952 is divided into four chapters, altogether 18 paragraphs (§). The chapters are the following: I. General Principles; II. The Organs of the Missionary Work; III. The Order of Missionary Service; and IV. Concluding Resolutions. The first chapter offers a theological foundation of what Christian mission means. The second and third chapters prescribe the structures of the official missionary work of the RCH. In these paragraphs a rather centralized structure is described, the different levels of church administration have the right to control the missionary (and other) activities at the local and regional church bodies. Even for a local church activity which does not belong to the regular life of the congregation, a permission of the presidency of the classis is required.¹⁶⁶ In the text terms like ‘consent’, ‘report’, ‘permission’ can repeatedly be read. It is conspicuous, too, that no activity is specified in the text: by this the church administration had a measure

¹⁶⁵ ‘Missziói Szabályrendelet [Mission Ordinances] 110/1950-V’ in: *Református Egyház*, IV/5 (1952), p. 6-8 (hereafter: MO 1952).

¹⁶⁶ §12, MO 1952, p. 7.

of freedom to permit all kinds of local and regional activities. On the other hand, this freedom meant, too, that the local and regional activities were fully dependent on the actual decision of the administration, which increased the personal power of those in leadership positions. The guidelines which were already set in the 'Fraternal Message' are put into practice by this Mission Ordinances. The total (and totalitarian) control of the missionary activity of the RCH became reality.

In paragraphs 1 to 5, under the title 'General Principles', a short description of mission is offered. The text begins with a general definition, 'Mission is the whole activity of life of the church, obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ, who sends her to witnessing service.'¹⁶⁷

The same paragraph goes on saying that the church fulfils her mission by the proclaiming of the Word, by administering the sacraments, by the works of charity and by the implementation of church discipline. Then a list of those activities are given, which belong to 'mission according to the full meaning of the word'.¹⁶⁸ The list overarches all the regular activities of the church, including evangelization, the latter without any further explanation. 'Foreign mission' is listed here, too, and this is the only place where it occurs in the whole text.¹⁶⁹ In §2 a further description is offered with references to biblical texts. The first reference is to John 20, 21b.¹⁷⁰ The interpretation underlines the Christ-like character of the sending of the church. The second reference is to Luke 22, 27b¹⁷¹ which is followed by a conclusion, 'The mission which is done properly builds the church in a way that in her, in her members and in her ministers the serving church is realized and activated which is prepared for all good deeds.'¹⁷²

The second part of the paragraph leads this logic further saying that the church is made able to serve by Christ and that in this way she becomes a benefit [for the people? GL] during the building of Socialism. The church is searching for what is good, and that is why she is committed to the 'renewed society defending peace'.¹⁷³ It is also stated that this commitment must be expressed in all kinds of missionary activity.

The MO 1952 is a watershed in the history of mission in the RCH. After the *coup d'état* of the Communists in 1948, Hungary became a totalitarian state where the actual power was exercised by the Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP), with an active support of the Soviet Union. Geopolitically, the Hungarian People's Republic turned to be a 'satellite state' on the westernmost periphery of the Soviet

¹⁶⁷ §1, MO 1952, p. 6; translation: GL.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ However, it is a remarkable phenomenon as such that the term 'foreign mission' could be included into this text, in spite of the generally hostile political sphere. Two interpretations are possible: either it was a part of a 'shop window policy' which could be demonstrated to the outside world, or the freedom of movement of the churches (including the RCH) was actually greater than it is generally thought. The question may be decided by further research of the archives of the State Bureau of Church Affairs (ÁEH) and of the archives of the Hungarian secret services.

¹⁷⁰ 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you' (John 20:21b NIV).

¹⁷¹ 'But I am among you as one who serves' (Luke 22:27b NIV).

¹⁷² Ibid.; translation: GL.

¹⁷³ Ibid.; translation: GL.

empire. The official ideology of the Party counted with a gradual decrease and eventual disappearance of the churches. In the first years after 1948 they looked upon the churches as hostile entities, against which the Party must fight (cf. 'fight against clerical reactionists'). Their official goal was to exclude the churches from the public life and diminish their sphere of influence. In order to achieve this goal they used two different policies. They dismantled the structures of the churches by which they had a contact with wider circles of the society, they forbade religious civil organizations (including societies of home and foreign mission), the church press was radically cut back and the total control on the church media (i.e. periodicals and a few radio broadcasts) were secured, church schools were nationalized. Parallel to this offensive anti-ecclesial policy, the state secured the leadership positions of a pro-Communist elite in the mainline churches. In order to do so they signed Agreements with the churches, the first of which was signed with the RCH in 1948.

As a result of the constant work of the 'revivalist' circles in the RCH, since the beginning of the 20th century, and because of the psychological shock caused by the two lost world wars combined with the loss of two-third of the territory of the historical Hungarian kingdom and also with the existential crisis of the wide spectrum of the society (loss of family members and of private ownership), a strong movement of 'awakening' emerged in the ranks of the RCH by the end of the World War II. The representatives of this movement accused the 'official church' of committing several grave mistakes and sins; one of them was that the RCH had not been ready to participate in the worldwide missionary endeavour of the Christian churches. They propagated a missionary renewal of the RCH. By 1948, the members of this 'evangelical opposition' occupied all the key leadership positions in the RCH. They got active support by the Communist authorities. This new church leadership continued the program of integrating missionary work (both home and foreign missions) into the structure of the RCH. Sándor Makkai, who started to work on this project already during the mandate of bishop László Ravasz, was responsible for the implementation of this plan. He initiated the setting up of a National Missionary Working Group (ORMM) as an umbrella organization of different movements of home and foreign mission. He also propagated the dissolving of the separate legal entities of the religious civil organizations promising that they may continue their activities within the RCH. The 'voluntary' dissolution of this organizations took place between 1948-1951. This program coincided with the homogenizing policy of the Communist totalitarian state, thus Makkai's program was welcome by these authorities. In the 'revivalist missionary' circles Makkai was looked upon as a guarantee of the goodwill of the church policy, hoping that the missionary work now might be an integral part of the ministry of the RCH. The so-called 'Fraternal Message' (1950) made an abrupt end of this illusion, the church leadership forbade any specialized activity of the members of the missionary societies. The 'people of the awakening' got paralysed by the lack of structures and of financial means, and by the lacking space for their work in their own churches. Makkai felt betrayed and his personal integrity was

deeply touched by this developments. He died in 1951 in deep distress and grave disappointment. The MO 1952 actually legalized the situation created by the developments since 1948. In 1952 the dismantling of all missionary structures outside and within the church was a *fait accompli*. The new MO introduced a system of multi-level control of missionary activities, which made it practically impossible to initiate any home and foreign missionary activity without the consent of the church leadership. The political control of the (missionary) activity of the church became a reality.

Theologically, the MO 1952 equated 'mission' with all the regular activities of the church. Further, it made '*diakonia* / service' a criterion of the authenticity of Christian mission, but, although indirectly, it linked *diakonia* to the necessity of a commitment to the 'building of a Socialist society'. 'Mission' became a rather frequently used term in the official theological discourse, but it was robbed of a great deal of its theological content, it could be used describing all the activities of the church, without any specific meaning and it might have been specialized on one single area, the work for the 'good cause of peace' and 'of the building of the 'new', 'Socialist' society'.

3.5. MISSION IN THE OFFICIAL THEOLOGY OF THE RCH AFTER 1956

The theological criticism on the theology of the serving church before, during and right after the Revolution of 1956, did not directly address the theological definition of mission, although indirectly they could have had far-reaching consequences on the theory and practice of mission in the RCH. However, after the defeat of the Revolution and after a short transitory period, the (partially new) leadership of the RCH began to 'reclaim the topics of the theology of the serving church'.¹⁷⁴ It was the bishop of the Tiszántúli (Transtibiscan) Church District, Tibor Bartha (elected in 1958), who played a prominent role in re-formulating this theology.¹⁷⁵

In fact, as Bogárdi Szabó demonstrates in his analysis, the key elements of the theology of the serving church remained unchanged.¹⁷⁶ As a consequence of the direct identification of the developments in secular history (i.e. the Socialist order) with the active will of God, the representatives of the Renewal Movement of 1956 could be accused – *horribile dictu* – of 'rebellion against the Word of God'. This way all theological criticism could be dismissed as 'rebellious' and thus ignored.

¹⁷⁴ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 121.

¹⁷⁵ Tibor Bartha was a professor of theology in Debrecen; bishop from 1958; Clerical President of the Synod of the RCH; member of the Parliament of the People's Republic of Hungary; and member of the Presiding Council of Hungary (a corporate body representing the highest political authority in Hungary, having no real political influence in the dictatorship). Tibor Bartha was celebrated to the extent of 'a personality cult' in the church until his retirement in the 1980s. e.g. he was often addressed as 'father bishop', a totally unprecedented practice in Hungarian Reformed circles. Cf. Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 122-123.

¹⁷⁶ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 124-125.

However, as again Bogárdi Szabó observes, the ‘apology’ over against this criticism was a constant part of the official theologizing of the age.

In an article on the ‘Theological Problems of Our Missionary Life’ (1959),¹⁷⁷ Tibor Bartha gives a summary of the official theological understanding of Christian mission in the RCH. This article is highlighted here as a typical example. As the theology of the serving church functioned as a ‘mono-theology’, the same ideas could be found in other publications before and after 1959, too, without any fundamental differences. Although this article is meant to be a theological one, the formal elements of a scientific publication are missing in the text. There is one single reference to another theological work – curiously enough to an article of Bartha’s predecessor in the bishop’s see, János Péter (p.130). The article is divided into four parts (although the wrong numbering in the text makes it difficult to reconstruct the original intention of the author). By closer reading it is evident that the paper begins with a rather lengthy introduction (pp.128-132), followed by a discourse on two main topics: 1. The Unbiblical Ideas on Mission (p. 132-137); and 2. The Biblical Foundations of Mission (pp. 137-142) and 3. Conclusions (pp. 142-143).

The introduction of the article refers back to the theological work of the RCH done before the Revolution in 1956. By this Bartha symbolically underscores the continuity of his theology with that of the period of 1948-1956. He denotes the events of 1956 as ‘that painful rebellion’ (p.132). He summarizes the results of the theological work in the RCH concerning the understanding of mission, saying that the most important conclusion of this reflection was that it is not legitimate to make any distinction of the regular life of the church and of her mission. Confirming this view, he argues with an – undefined – opinion, which would suggest, that the church had a ‘general mission’ (*küldetés*) and a ‘special mission’ (*sajátos misszió*) to fulfil. He denies both the idea of ‘balancing’ the two kinds of mission and the concept of the priority of the ‘special mission’ which he describes as ‘evangelism’. It seems that Bartha argues here with the traditional Revivalist opinion (represented by János Victor, László Draskóczy and others) without naming them. It would have been awkward to criticize János Victor whose concept of the ‘grace working from outside’ was the keystone of the theology of the serving church. Bartha shows a way out of this debate by saying that ‘[all] aspects of the functions, of inner growth, of edification of the church should be subordinated to the aspects of mission (*küldetés*)’ (p.131). Remarkably, in the following sentence he identifies this mission (*küldetés*) with ‘service’ (*szolgálat*), ‘With other words, within the fences [sic!] of the church, everything should happen for and in the perspective of service’ (ibid.). The introduction is concluded with a part which, for the first glimpse, seems to be a self-critical analysis of the practice of the RCH before 1956. But it is not. The logic is the following, the ‘painful rebellion’ of 1956 was only possible in the RCH because the leaders and ministers of the church were not committed enough to the ministry of preaching and they were ‘lazy’ in educating the members of the church

¹⁷⁷ ‘Missziói életünk teológiai problémáiról’ in: Tibor Bartha, *Ige, egyház, nép I.*, Budapest, 1972, p. 128-143.

so that they could themselves understand the 'will of God' (i.e. Socialism). Thus, the contents of the theology of the serving church were right, only its proponents were not committed enough to the 'good cause'.¹⁷⁸

After the introduction, a polemic part of the article follows, in which Barth argues with two kinds of 'unbiblical' and 'human' understanding of mission. After a short overview of the theological developments from the Reformation to Karl Barth (pp. 133-134), Barth first identifies the concept of 'Christian worldview' as the first danger. Without any further argumentation he declares that the missionary motivation of communicating a Christian worldview 'means practically, to a great extent, a confession of support to the social order of the past' [i.e. Capitalism] (p.136). He accuses these circles of being interested in the church only if she proclaims the ideals of the Christian worldview. The 'enemy' is not addressed directly, but one may think about the representatives of the so-called 'historical Calvinism', represented by Jenő Sebestyén, a Hungarian Reformed follower of Abraham Kuyper. The other danger is seen in the 'movement type' of Christianity which 'refers to the personal faith' (Ibid.). He criticizes the individualistic character of the approach, its lack of interest in the church as an organization (preferring the 'movement'), but the main point of his criticism is that this kind of Christianity does not accept the social calling of the church as a legitimate part of her mission. Here the theology of the Awakening is explicitly named 'the shortcomings of which are well known' (ibid.). This type of theology is also accused of opening up room in the church for 'sectarianism'.

After the two wrong understandings of mission are demonstrated, Barth turns to the Biblical foundations of mission (pp.137-142). In the first part, he quotes several verses of the New Testament in order to proof that 'the mission about which the Revelation speaks is primarily Christ's mission'. He concludes that the disciples participate in this mission 'on a secondary level' inasmuch they are in Christ (p.138) and that Christ is also an example of mission, especially in the kenotic aspect of His earthly ministry. The participation of the disciples in the authority of Christ is stressed, too. The argumentation goes on saying that in contrary to the misunderstanding that put proclamation and teaching into the centre of the missionary mandate of the church, participation in Christ's mission means concentrating on 'making disciples'. The proclamation itself should not be reduced to teaching, but the 'yes' of God to the world must be proclaimed, who reconciled the world with Himself in Christ.

The next part of the paper ('Christ is the living Lord of mission' p. 140-141) seems to be rather dysfunctional in the logic of the paper. It argues that the church in mission today must be open to the direct leading of the Holy Spirit. For the question why Barth had found it important to insert these paragraphs, one finds the key in his dismissal of 'traditionalism' and 'schematism' (p. 141). The idea, that the RCH got 'new vision' from the Lord after the Second World War is legitimized here.

¹⁷⁸ This is a rather tricky way of praising oneself while being self-critical at the same time.

The last part of the discourse on the biblical foundations of mission has the title 'Mission and Church' (pp. 141-142). The argumentation is short and direct, the distrust of the Revivalist theology in the church is rebuked and it is declared that 'we understand mission as a mandate and calling given to the church' (p. 142). It is concluded, that as mission is primarily Christ's mission, it is the church which participates in it on a secondary level. The individual believer only has a missionary mandate 'on a tertiary level', derived from the church. Instead of expecting repentance and conversion from the world, the church herself should repent and convert to Christ in order to be able to participate in His mission.

As a conclusion, Bartha summarizes the results of his argumentation, 'The Scripture teaches us to understand mission [...] as being sent by Christ in order to serve' (p. 142). This mission also means to give a 'sign to the world of God's love', without expecting the 'world to become church' (ibid.). This can not be fulfilled by 'evangelists', but by the renewed life of the local congregation. 'We would like to serve the process of the renewal of the congregation in her mission, in fulfilling all her tasks which we have discovered to be God's will, services to the benefit of the world, our people and to the peoples.' (p. 142).

Bartha's article typically demonstrates the understanding of mission within the framework of the theology of the serving church. It may be concluded that this theological definition of mission contains the following elements:

1. Christian mission is defined over against the understanding of mission in two characteristic theological streams of the pre- and post-war RCH, historical Calvinism and (Evangelical) Revivalism.
2. The understanding of mission in the theology of the serving church is described as *the* Biblical understanding, thus it claims exclusivity.
3. The definition of mission identifies the contents of Christian mission with the concept of the 'service to the neighbour'. This service is then further made identical with the service of the good cause of peace and that of the just society. The latter is equated with the 'existing Socialism' of contemporary Hungary.
4. Mission is directed to the church herself in the sense that the church should repent and convert to 'Christ and to the neighbour' (Bereczky).
5. The content of mission is thus the call to the church to repent and serve God's will, which is the building of the Socialist order.
6. The (instituted) church is the single mandatory of Christian mission; no individual or para-church initiatives are legitimate.

It can be concluded that a total *Umdeutung* of the definition of Christian mission took place in the RCH in the context of theology of the serving church. Following the basic pattern set by János Victor, according to which discovering God's active will in the developments of the secular history towards the building of the Socialist order (general revelation) is made a criterion for participating in Christ

(special revelation), the same criterion is applied to Christian mission, too. Mission is equal with the building of a congregation which is ready to serve the goals of the Socialist society. God's will is to be discovered 'out there', outside of church, in the world. The church must learn God's will in the arena of secular history and integrate it into her mission. 'The world sets the agenda'.

3.6. SECOND PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION?

It can be concluded that a fundamental re-definition of Christian mission took place in this period, a document of which is the Mission Ordinances of 1952. This document represents the official standpoint of the church on mission which differs radically from the one represented in the Mission Ordinances of 1931 and in the Article on Mission (1933/III).

As demonstrated above, in these documents from the 1930s, a spiritual concept of mission is described. The aim of mission is leading people to faith in Christ (evangelization), and helping the needy through charitable works (*diakonia*). In 1950-52, mission is defined as the mandate of the church to edify the church to be a serving community which is ready to serve mankind on the areas where God's activity can be discerned in the world, causes of peace and struggle for a just society. As these causes are best realized in the Socialist system, loyal service to this political order is integrated to the concept of mission.

As it was the case in the 1930s, here again an official document of the church, accepted and issued by the highest legislative body of the RCH, describes the way of thinking about mission in that church. The logical conclusion of this would be that – because this document represents a new paradigm of understanding of mission – the process must be described as a new paradigm shift that had taken place in the understanding of mission of the RCH. However, the situation is more complicated than that. On the one hand, these documents (including the MO 1950 and the Fraternal Message) do represent a theological view of the *leadership* of the RCH about the issue of mission.¹⁷⁹ These legislative decisions of the church influenced the practice of the missionary activities of the RCH fundamentally, the missionary societies were dissolved, home mission was put under strict ecclesial (and political) control and was practically stopped, and foreign mission was excluded from the activities of the church. In this sense the use of the term 'paradigm shift' seems to be legitimate. On the other hand, it is often stated that the official documents of the period did not represent the way of thinking of the members (including the majority of the clergy) of the RCH. Many of the pastors and members chose a *modus vivendi* of ignoring the official deliberations of the leadership of the church, sometimes to the extent of not even reading them.¹⁸⁰ In

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 21-26.

¹⁸⁰ János Pásztor emphasized the importance of this phenomenon, as a key element in understanding the functioning of the life of the RCH under the Communist dictatorship (interview with János Pásztor by GL, Budapest, 23 October 2006). Cf. Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 69.

this light it seems to be rather problematic to draw any conclusion concerning the real way of thinking about 'what was mission' in the ranks of the membership of the RCH, based on these documents. The publications during the Revolution of 1956 about mission show that the *real* missionary thinking of many (the majority?) of the members of the RCH was different from the official standpoint of the leadership.

A theoretical paradigm shift in the understanding of mission did take place in the period between the 1930s and 1950s, in the RCH. However, it must be added that, although this new missionary paradigm influenced all the aspect of the practice of mission in that church, it is not legitimate to suppose that this paradigm shift had taken place on the grassroots level of the RCH.

3.7. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

After this brief survey of the theological definition of mission in the Reformed Church in Hungary between 1903 and 1968 we may conclude that fundamental changes took place in that area.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries mission was mainly defined as ministry among the Hungarian Reformed *diaspora*, serving ecclesial, confessional, national and cultural ends. It was a contextualized concept of mission, theologically rather un-reflected and orientating on the empiric reality of the church.

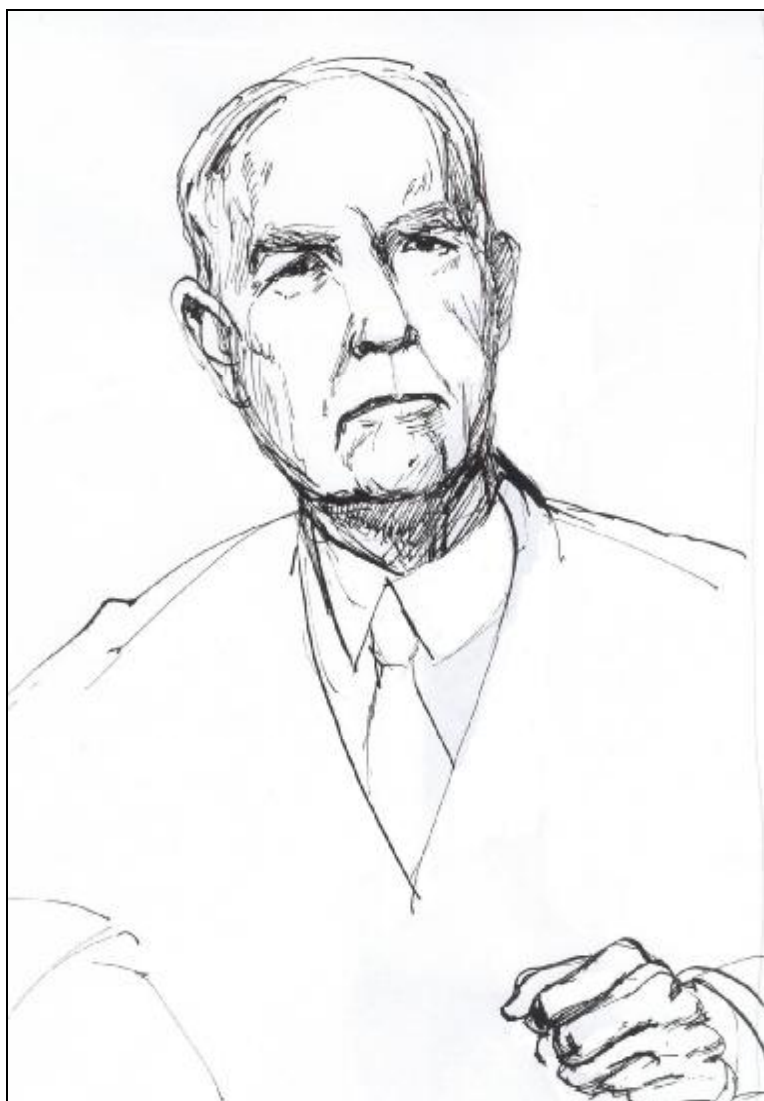
In the period before and after the First World War a growing influence of revivalist/Evangelical theology was experienced and more and more associations and societies of home and foreign mission were established in Hungary. In these circles mission was defined as converting individuals to Christ (*evangelization*) and the institutional church was seen as a 'mission field', consisting of many nominal Christian members and a few 'awakened' Christians. As early as in 1925, Gyula Forgács made an attempt to integrate the forces of the Revival into the church, following the concept of *ecclesiola in ecclesia* or *Kerngemeinde*. In the Ordinances of Mission of 1931 and in Article III of the Constitution of the RCH on Missionary Work (1933), the RCH integrated mission into the structures of the RCH, following Forgács's concept. We argued that a paradigm shift in the understanding of mission took place in the RCH.

Although the representatives of the different theological streams in the RCH formulated their own position on mission between the two World Wars (Jenő Sebestyén, László Ravasz, Sándor Virágh), it was Sándor Makkai, who developed a unique, contextual concept of mission in the late '30s. Makkai took the actual situation of the RCH as starting point and continued the tradition of denoting the regular activities of the church as (pastoral and congregational) mission. János Victor, the outstanding theologian of the Revival, exerted fierce criticism on Makkai's concept, accusing him of a lack of theological foundation of his definition of mission. He argued for a reduction of the scope of mission to the activities of the church which are directed outwards, to the world. It was János Victor, too, who

introduced the concept of 'grace working from outside' to Reformed theology, without drawing the missiological consequences of it.

After the radical political changes in Hungary in 1945-1948, the leading theologians of the RCH gradually developed a new theological system of the theology of the serving church. Although Sándor Makkai made theoretical and practical attempts to offer 'a shelter' to the manifold missionary activities, integrating them into the structures of the RCH, his project was doomed to failure. Although a hope of a radical missionary renewal of the RCH was present in the church (plans of mission to Indonesia, theological criticism of L. Draskóczy), the new (formerly Revivalist) leadership of the RCH introduced a new understanding of mission (Mission Ordinances 1950, 1952, Fraternal Message, Tibor Bartha), which identified mission with Christian *service* to the neighbour and to the mankind. In this logic, the acceptance, affirmation and service to the 'good cause of Socialism' was made a criterion for 'authentic' Christian mission. By this a second, theoretical paradigm shift in the understanding of mission took place, however, it is at least dubious whether this understanding represented the actual view of the grassroots level of church membership and clergy about mission. The deliberations of the Renewal Movement during the Revolution of 1956 show that there were alternative understandings of mission present in the RCH.

Our conclusion of this chapter is that three consecutive paradigms of mission can be identified in the RCH in the period of 1903-1968, which can be described by the key concepts of *diaspora*, *evangelization* and *service* respectively. The transition from one prevailing concept to the other can be described as paradigm shifts, although it can be used in the latter case only with a certain reservation. Although the three concepts differ from each other fundamentally, all three represent a way of theologizing which is very deeply influenced by the actual situation of the church. In these sense all the three paradigm of mission can be described as contextual understandings of what Christian mission is.



Graphics by Gábor Kustár

John Raleigh Mott (1865-1955)

4. JOHN R. MOTT AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

As demonstrated above, the idea of Christian mission was not alien for the Reformed Church in Hungary on the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Since the formation of the united structure of the RCH (Synod of Debrecen, 1881), annual mission reports can be read in the minutes of the General Convent of the church and in that of the different sessions of the Synod. These reports described missionary activities as ecclesial ministry in the Hungarian Reformed diaspora, with the aim of preserving and strengthening the Hungarian Reformed consciousness of those living scattered among other majority denominations (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox) and/or ethnic minority situations (Romania, Serbia, etc.).

Since the middle of the 19th century, a different approach on Christian mission began to make its way into the public life of the RCH. As Anne-Marie Kool¹ and Ábrahám Kovács² demonstrated convincingly, this new beginning in the theory and practice of Christian mission had a double source, the influence of the Württemberg Pietism, as mediated by the Archduchess Maria Dorothea (1797-1855) and her courtchaplain Johann Georg Bauhofer (1805-1864), and the impact of the missionary activity of the Free Church of Scotland among the Jews in Hungary. These two movements – though different in origin – converged in the formation of the German-speaking Reformed Affiliated Church in Pest (1864). In this community, the formerly Lutheran followers of the pietistic-evangelical form of Christianity (inspired by the Württemberg concepts) and the Hungarian Reformed friends of the Scottish Mission to the Jews united in their fervour for the renewal of Hungarian Protestantism and in their wish of awakening the missionary spirit of the Hungarian churches. As German was the most widely spoken language in the Pester Jewish community and among many of the original inhabitants of Pest, it was used as the common language. The members of this German Congregation were thus mostly of Hungarian, Jewish and British origin, and only a minority was German. It is noteworthy that Lutherans and Reformed were working closely together in this unique fellowship, though incorporated to the structure of the RCH.

The first leaders of the emerging new missionary movement in the RCH came forth from the community of this German Congregation, e.g. Theodor

¹ Kool, 1993, p. 98-187.

² Ábrahám Kovács, *The History of the Free Church of Scotland's Mission to the Jews in Budapest and its Impact on the Reformed Church of Hungary 1841-1914*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2006, p. 54-60.

Biberauer, Aladár Szabó, Aladár Szilassy, János Victor, Gyula Forgács and Aladár Szilassy Jr.³ These outstanding Reformed church members (clergy and laity) – inspired by the German *Innere Mission* movement of Johann Wichern, too – worked together in founding several organizations in order to promote the renewal of Christianity in Hungary. The first of these organizations was the *Protestantisches Waisenverein* (Protestant Association for the Care of Orphans).

One of the first organizations that sprung out of the fervent missionary spirit around the German Congregation was the Hungarian branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA, 1883)⁴ It was through this movement that the emerging Hungarian missionary movement was joined into the network of the international youth work.

The Hungarian movement started in 1883, although it was formalized legally as late as in 1892.⁵ This international youth movement (often denoted as the cradle of the modern Ecumenical movement) was a point of contact for the Hungarian Protestant churches with the international Christian student movements. Next to the already alluded influences of the Württemberg Pietism and of the Free Church of Scotland, the international youth and student movement became the third stream through which the RCH received crucial theological impulses to redefine her theological understanding of mission. The YMCA and the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF, 1895) created an ecumenical context for the emerging missionary renewal movement in the RCH, on the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. We hope to demonstrate in this chapter that the most important mediator of these impulses was Mott.

4.2. SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN R. MOTT (1845-1955)

John Raleigh Mott (1865-1955) was born on 25 May 1865 in Purvis, N.Y. in the USA, in a Methodist Christian family. He studied law at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. Influenced by the evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) and John Edward Kynaston Studd (1858-1944), a famous English cricket player, one of the 'Cambridge Seven', who devoted his life to missionary work and later became Lord Mayor of London, Mott gave up his career plans (he had intended to be a diplomat) and joined the staff of the YMCA. In 1888 he was appointed to be the students' secretary of the North-American YMCA. In the same year he became the leader of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (1888-1920). He was

³ Cf. Ábrahám Kovács, *The History of the German-Speaking Reformed Affiliated Church of Budapest 1858-1869*, D. Harsányi András Alapítvány Kiadványai 10, Debrecen, 2004, p. 104-138.

⁴ The YMCA was founded by George Williams (1821-1905) in 1844 in London. The movement, aiming at leading young urban people (especially apprentices and young blue-collar professionals) to a personal and active Christian faith (in evangelical shape), became a worldwide movement when the representatives of associations of several countries established a World Alliance of YMCAs, meeting on the occasion of the World Exhibition of Paris, France, in 1855. Cf. Bálint Kovács, *A Keresztény Ifjúsági Egyesület története 1883-1950*, KIE Szeniorok Pógyor István Baráti Köre, Budapest, 1998, p. 11-22.

⁵ Bálint Kovács, op. cit., p. 33.

present in the Vadstena Castle (Sweden), at the founding of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), and was elected to be its first general secretary. With Joseph Houldsworth Oldham (1874-1969) he initiated and organized the first World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh, Scotland, 1910), where he presided over the plenary sessions. He led the Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference (1910-1921). In the meantime he was elected to be the general secretary of the International Committee of the World Alliance of YMCAs. In 1920 he was elected to the presidency of the WSCF (1920-1928). It was under his leadership that the International Missionary Council (IMC) was founded (Lake Mohonk, USA, 1921), and he worked as its general secretary until 1942. In 1926 he was also elected to be the President of the World Alliance of YMCAs. He actively participated in the Life and Work (Stockholm, 1925) and Faith and Order (Lausanne, 1927) movements and played an important role in preparing the decisions of these two streams of ecumenical initiatives to form a Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches (Utrecht, 1939), of which he became a member. Honouring his life-time commitment to the cause of Christian unity, he was granted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946. In 1948, at the age of 83, he delivered the opening sermon at the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Amsterdam) and was elected to the honorary presidency of the Council.

Mott was well known as an international ecumenical and missionary statesman, who travelled the world extensively, organizing the youth and student movement, coordinating missionary efforts and establishing regional and national councils of churches. He is often praised as a Christian ‘world citizen’,⁶ a person incorporating the modern ecumenical missionary movement of the 20th century like no one else before. However, it was his commitment to the cause of Christian mission that was the basic motivation of his life work. As Oliver Tomkins puts it, ‘Mott was not at first particularly a champion of Christian unity, but his passion for evangelism made him one.’⁷

4.3. CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

4.3.1. *Christian Lifestyle*

Mott grew up in a devout Methodist family and his personal walk of life was deeply influenced by the well-known evangelistic preacher of the time, Dwight L. Moody. Mott experienced a religious conversion as a young student (under the influence of J.E.K. Studd). His understanding of Christianity was shaped by these experiences. His lectures, addresses and sermons⁸ demonstrate that he viewed Christianity

⁶ Cf. the title of one of his biographies: B. Matthews, *Mott: World Citizen*, Harper, London, 1934.

⁷ Oliver Tomkins, ‘Mott, John R.’, in: Nicholas Lossky et al (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, WCC- Eerdmans, Geneva-Grand Rapids, MI, 1991.

⁸ Published as Mott, *Addresses and Papers of Mott, I-VII*, Association Press, New York, 1947.

predominantly as a question of the human will,⁹ Christian life commences with a personal decision of devoting one's life to the following of Christ. Jesus Christ is not only a historical figure but a living reality with whom one can enter into a personal relationship. The Scriptures – being the inspired Word of God – play a crucial role in Christian life. It is reported about Mott that he himself read the Bible for his personal devotions regularly and that he promoted the organizing of Bible-study groups wherever he ministered. He looked at the Bible as a source of the actual leading of God through the Holy Spirit in the day-to-day following of the living, risen Lord Jesus Christ. Prayer played an important role in his understanding of Christianity, he prayed in a systematic way for private and professional issues, he often addressed the questions of prayer in his lectures and he organized prayer campaigns around his many worldwide journeys (he even published so-called 'prayer cards'). He laid also much emphasis on discipline in Christian life. He regularly observed the 'Morning Watch' (a systematic way of organizing an early-morning, private time of concentrated Scripture reading, devotion, meditation and prayer), and he composed lists of questions in order to organize his life and to keep his Christian faith in shape.

His concept of Christian mission can be understood against the background of this understanding of Christianity. Since Christian life was for him predominantly an individual, voluntary and practical question, his interpretation of what Christian mission is (or should be) was dominated by these factors. However, it needs to be mentioned that Mott never published any systematic theology of mission, although mission was the apex of his thought. It is still possible to draw the contours of his mission theology, based on his many publications and lectures about this topic.

4.3.2. Mission and Evangelism

Mott used the terms mission and evangelism as synonyms. The famous watchword of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Mission, which was made the slogan of the first World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh, 1910), used the term 'evangelization', 'Evangelizing the world in this generation'. For Mott mission meant to call the people of the world to personal faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Christian mission was aimed at personal decisions made by individuals (cf. 'the will'), to commit themselves to the following of Christ. Evangelism was understood kerygmatically, as the proclamation of the call of God, on the basis of the Biblical message. Mission was thus predominantly preaching, making the will of God known and leading people to a decision for Christ.

⁹ Cf. Mott, 'Religion Primarily a Matter of Will', in: Mott, *Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott, VI*, Association Press, New York, 1947, p. 54-58.

4.3.3. Understanding of Mission

Since the goal of mission-as-evangelism was faith in Christ, Mott's understanding of mission was christocentric. He confessed and proclaimed the traditional Trinitarian concept of God, in which Jesus of Nazareth was seen as God Incarnate, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. In his teaching he demonstrated Christ as a historical person, and he eloquently argued for the historicity of Jesus' resurrection, too.¹⁰ He preached the full, undeserved and unlimited atonement of Christ and the Reformation concept of justification by faith alone (*sola fide*).

It is also evident from his lectures that his Christology was exclusivist. He boldly spoke about his conviction that there is no other way of salvation for humankind except in Christ. Other religions are thus insufficient for the true, salvific knowledge of God. In this concept a certain triumphalistic trace of his Christology can also be sensed, his preference of militaristic terminology (cf. 'conquest', 'battle', 'strategy', 'forces', etc.) betray a view that look upon Christ as the One to whom is given all the power (*exousia*) in heaven and earth, and whose followers are deemed to eternal victory. In this concept agnosticism, atheism and other religions are on the recess and are bound to diminish and disappear, sooner or later. (We do not have room here to analyze the role of millennialistic theology in Mott's missionary concept).

4.3.4. Aim of Mission

The aim of mission by Mott is thus a conscious, voluntarily chosen, devout Christian life of the individual. This ideal Christianity is a practical or pragmatic one.¹¹ In this sense Christianity is a distinct lifestyle, characterized by moral integrity and an ethical concept of purity. Christian life is also described as a 'battle' against sin (cf. 'The Hardest Battle in a Student's Life'). Sin is defined in ethical categories, as contrary to the will of God, revealed in the Bible (Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount, household regulations). Sin is individual with consequences for the social life of the wider community. The ideal Christian is strong in his/her moral character, leads a pure and healthy life, and devotes him/herself to high Christian ideals. (Mott addresses e.g. issues of sexual ethics very often in his lectures). According to this concept social progress is achieved by individual moral and mental improvement. The individual believer is called to be a missionary him/herself – either as a clergy or as a lay person in his/her secular profession. The Church is understood as the sum total of the followers of Christ on the whole Earth. The institutional church is evaluated critically according to what extent she is instrumental for mission purposes. Believers are encouraged to be

¹⁰ Mott, 'The Power of Jesus Christ in the Life of the Student' in: Mott, *Addresses and Papers of Mott*, VI, Association Press, New York, 1947, p. 3-10.

¹¹ Gaál 2006, p. 31-32.

active members of their (mainly Protestant) churches and/or of voluntary missionary societies and associations.

4.3.5. Soteriological Understanding of Mission

The theological definition of mission as represented by Mott is a conservative evangelical concept, it rests on a high view of the Scriptures as the revelation of God; it is based on a classic Trinitarian *theologia specialis* and a conservative, exclusive Christology. Mission is interpreted in soteriological categories: its goal is to lead individuals to eternal salvation by faith in Christ. The form of mission is kerygmatic: it is equated with verbal proclamation. Mission and evangelism are used as identical concepts.¹²

4.4. CONTACTS WITH HUNGARY

C. Howard Hopkins, the author of the standard biography of Mott,¹³ mentions six visits paid by Mott to Hungary (1895, 1909, 1911, 1916, 1924 and 1928).¹⁴ Anne-Marie Kool supposes that he also made trips to Hungary in 1903 and in 1930.¹⁵ Moreover, from reports in the press it is evident that he has visited Hungary in 1913 as well.¹⁶ According to a letter, written by Mott to János Victor, dated 15 April 1927 in Zakopane, Poland,¹⁷ Mott must have visited Hungary in 1927, too. This comes to a total of ten (or eleven)¹⁸ visits.

Next to these visits he kept a correspondence with János Victor and with other Hungarian personalities (Aladár Szabó, Gyula Forgács). His relationship to Hungary is reflected in his annual (or quadrennial) reports as the General Secretary of the WSCF and he mentions Hungary – though sporadically – in his lectures and addresses. Here reference can only be made to trips and correspondence as far as they can be documented. First his contacts with Hungary before 1909 are discussed, then his important visit of 1909, and finally his contact with Hungary after 1909. Mott's visit to Hungary in 1909 is taken as a point of orientation because this visit was given a wide publicity in the contemporary Hungarian church media and also because this visit was reflected upon by several outstanding Hungarian Reformed theologians later.

¹² László Keveházi, *Tegyetek tanítvánnyá minden népet. Egyetemes missziótörténeti vázlat*, Evangélikus Sajtóosztály, Budapest, 2001, p. 123-124.

¹³ C. Howard Hopkins, *Mott (1865-1955). A Biography*, WCC-Willem B. Eerdmans, Geneva – Grand Rapids, 1979 [hereafter: Hopkins, 1979].

¹⁴ Hopkins 1979, p. 133; p. 336; p. 376; p. 465-466; p. 644; and p. 661-662.

¹⁵ Kool, 1993, p. 159.

¹⁶ [s.n.], 'Krónika. Mott János' in: *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap*, LVI/49 (1913), p. 769-770.

¹⁷ Letter by Mott to John [János] Victor, Zakopane, Poland, 15 April 1927, Ráday Levéltár, C/99.

¹⁸ It is possible that when Hopkins speaks of Mott's visit to Hungary in 1928, he actually means the one that took place in 1927. In this – very likely – case, there were no more than ten visits of Mott to Hungary.

4.4.1. *Contacts before 1909*

As far as it can be documented, Mott mentioned Hungary in a public report for the first time in 1897.¹⁹ In passing he notes that he had received information about the students' situation in that land. In a Report Letter about his visit to Europe the next year he writes about his impressions more extensively, 'There is a need of an apostle to the students of papal [sic!] Europe [...] France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Austria, *Hungary* and Italy.'²⁰ In the same letter he gives an evaluation of the situation of these countries, too, '[At] the universities of the six papal lands of the continent [...] there are fully 113 000 students. The vast majority of these students have broken loose from Roman Catholicism and are drifted into scepticism. They are also beset by the worst forms of temptation. At the present time there is no one man who is giving himself to the study of these problems of this great field and to the organization and direction of focus to help meet this terrible need.'²¹

It is obvious that Mott was already in contact with Hungary at that point of time. According to Hopkins, he travelled through Hungary in 1895.²² From other sources we know that it was Aladár Szabó, who first informed him about the situation of Christianity and that of the students in Hungary.²³ These contacts were further strengthened by personal encounters. A Hungarian student delegation participated at the WSCF Conference of 1899, held in Eisenach, Germany.²⁴ Although the WSCF General Secretary's reports demonstrate that Mott followed the development of the Hungarian student movement with a close attention, Hungary does not seem to play any central role in his oral and written reports. Kool supposes that there must have been a visit paid by Mott to Hungary in 1903.²⁵ We agree with Kool that no documentation of this visit is available, if it had ever taken place at all. It is, on the other hand, also possible that oral sources recalled encountering Mott in 1903, but not in Hungary, but at the 5th World Student conference of the WSCF (Soro, Sweden), in the same year.²⁶ In his report on the next conference (Zeist, Holland, 1905), Mott speaks positively about the developments of the Hungarian movement, 'Since the Soro Conference over two years ago, it has laid the foundations of two other national movements, those of

¹⁹ Mott, 'A Report of Mott, the General Secretary of the W.S.C. F. Presented at the Conference of the W.S.C.F., Williamstown, MA [USA], July 7-9, 1897', WSCF Papers, Record Group No. 46, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, Box 33, Folder 263 [hereafter: WSCF Yale R46].

²⁰ Mott, 'Some Impressions Made by the Recent European Tour. Report Letter Number XIV by Mott' [1898], Mott Papers, Record Group No. 45, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, Box 117, Folder 1933, p. 5-9 [my italics, GL]. [Hereafter: JRM Yale R45].

²¹ Ibid.

²² Hopkins 1979, p.133.

²³ Kool, 1993, p. 157-158.

²⁴ Mott, 'The Students of the World United. The World Student Conference at Eisenach. Some Achievements of the Year 1897-1898', 1899, WSCF Yale R46 B33 F262. On p. 11 Mott mentions that participants were present from Hungary, without giving name details.

²⁵ Kool, 1993, p.159.

²⁶ It is likely that there was a Hungarian delegation present at that conference. Unfortunately no names of the Hungarian participants are identifiable.

Italy and Hungary.²⁷ He mentions in passing the promising growth of work among female students in Hungary in the same Report.²⁸ He also mentions the name of 'Rev. Julius Forgacs' [i.e. Gyula Forgács], one of the leading figures of the evangelical revival movement in Hungary, for the first time in a letter to Arthur W. Davies (Great Britain) in 1906.²⁹

The results of the research of Mott's contacts with Hungary before 1909 can be summarized in the following way: Mott did have sporadic contacts with Hungarians since 1895, when he travelled through Central-Europe. It is remarkable that he makes a clear distinction between Austria and Hungary, although Hungary was part of the double Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Monarchy in these years (1867-1918). It is also interesting that Mott does not use geographical categories when discussing the Hungarian situation, he uses the term 'papal Europe', a part of which is Hungary. Two consequences may be drawn from this fact: 1. Mott does not look at the Roman Catholic Church as a partner in evangelizing the students but he speaks about its influence as a neutral fact, or – though indirectly – as a disturbing factor;³¹ and 2. for the same reason he looks at Hungary as it being a *terra incognita* with reference to Christian student work.

Hungary was present in Mott's thinking practically since the beginning of the foundation of the WSCF but, before 1909, this in majority Roman Catholic ('papal') country, played a rather peripheral, unimportant role in his global outlook.

4.4.2. Visit in 1909

Mott's visit to Hungary in 1909 made a great impact on the emerging Christian Student Work in the country and strengthened it in several ways. As Kool summarizes it, Mott gave an impetus to the more effective organization of the movement, initiated the publishing of a magazine devoted to the cause of Christian student work (*Diákvilág*) and helped by selecting a suitable person for the position of a general secretary. The impact of his visit was remarkable in an other dimension, too: on the one hand, he gave publicity to the Christian student work by the widely advertised and well-attended public addresses he made in the major university centers of the country, including the capital city Budapest. Another area of his influence was of personal nature, he caught the attention of several students of theology and of young theologians, who were to play an important role in the

²⁷ Mott, 'The World Student Christian Federation. A Decennial Review. Presented at the Sixth Conference of the World Student Christian Federation, Zeist, Holland, May 3-7, 1905', WSCF Yale R46 B33 F262, p. 5.

²⁸ Op. cit., p. 12.

²⁹ Mott's Letter to Arthur W. Davies, 1906, JRM Yale R45 B117 F1939.

³¹ To analyse the changes in Mott's relationship with the Roman Catholic Church goes beyond the scope of this study.

following years of the Reformed Church in Hungary (János Victor³², Imre Révész, Sándor Makkai, László Ravasz).

Mott already refers to his planned visit to Hungary in a letter in early 1908. On board of the RMS Adriatic, on his way back to New York after a visit to Europe, he writes the following, 'A year hence I ought to give several months to Europe.[...] I should in 1909 respond to the most pressing calls from Russia, Hungary,³³ Italy, Spain, Portugal.' Mott was present and presided over the Conference of the WSCF held in Liverpool, England on 2-7 January 1908. A small delegation of two representatives of the Hungarian Movement MEKDSZ also participated at the conference. The two delegates were József Pongrácz and János Victor, the latter a student of theology at the Budapest Reformed Theological Academy. On 9 February 1908 Victor reported about his Liverpool experiences in a lecture to the membership of the MEKDSZ. The lecture was published as a booklet in the same year. In this report Victor speaks about Mott enthusiastically, 'But the most unforgettable of all the speeches was the one by John Mott about 'Commitment', held on Saturday night.³⁴ I do not know what made a stronger impression, the power of his words or the weight of his personality. An English periodical was right remarking that John Mott incarnated all the spiritual contents of the whole conference.'³⁵

As Mott had promised to visit Hungary, the preparations of his tour were commenced in the ecclesial press in the country. Although the main emphasis of this European 'campaign' of the general secretary of the WSCF was laid on his visits to Russia and to the Latin countries (and Hungary appears to be just a transit stop on the way to the great Eastern orthodox empire)³⁶, the Hungarian Protestant press paid much attention to his approaching visit. On the front page of the new periodical of the London Tract Society, which, remarkably enough, was published under the title *Élet és Munka* [i.e. Life and Work], a lengthy article was published about Mott, the author of which used the pseudonym 'Studens' (it is more than probable that it was written by Victor). The article informs the reader about Mott's scheduled program in Hungary between 23 April and 3 May 1909 and describes the visitor in superlatives, e.g. as 'the great apostle of the modern age' or 'this man is blessed with divine powers'.³⁷ About Mott's ministry we read, 'His testimony awakens many young people so that they would take an account of their lives

³² To this topic see: Sándor Gaál, 'A család szerepe a misszióban. Képek a Victor család missziói szolgálatának történetéből', in, *Collegium Doctorum*, I/1 (2006), p. 85-90

³³ Mott's Letter to Mr. Dodge, 23 January, 1908, JRM Yale R45 B117 F1939, p.2.

³⁴ 4 January 1908.

³⁵ János Victor íj, *A Liverpooli Diákgyűlés, 1908. január 2-7*, Különlenyomat, PEIL, Budapest, 1908, p.15 [translation: GL]. Victor follows the rules of contemporary Hungarian scholarship and translates Mott's name into the Hungarian language: 'Mott János'.

³⁶ Cf. Mott Itineraries 1908-1909 Card: 'April 1909: Among the students of Hungary, Germany and Italy', WSCF Yale R46 B43 F352. Mott published 'itinerary cards' about his worldwide travels in order to keep his constituency informed about his activity, and he made prayer support and fund raising effective by this means.

³⁷ Studens [János Victor?], 'Mott R. János' in: *Élet és munka*, I/1 (March 1909), p 1-2.

without any hesitation and reluctance in order to make a decision on which their eternal life depends, whether they commit their lives to Christ or not.³⁸ One of the most prominent Protestant periodicals, the *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* [Protestant Paper for Church and School] informed its readers about Mott's visit as well.³⁹ The London Tract Society published a booklet in Hungarian under the title 'John Mott and the Christian Student Movement'⁴⁰ in order to make his person and his work known for the Hungarian public. Several other periodicals announced his approaching visit to Hungary as well.

4.4.2.1. Program in 1909

Mott arrived in Hungary on 22 April 1909 from Halle, Germany⁴¹, and started his series of lectures in the same evening. Large posters were published in the public areas and at the university campuses in Budapest. One of these posters is preserved in the Yale Divinity School Library, the text of which (originally in Hungarian) reads in English as follows:

Public Student Assembly. John Mott (from New York), the general secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, who has visited 2000 universities and colleges in 40 countries in the past 20 years, and who is worthy to be called the spiritual leader of one million students, will visit the students of Budapest as a part of his European tour. He is going to deliver lectures on 23, 24 and 25 April [1909], exclusively for students. The theme of his lecture which will be held exactly at 7 pm on Friday, 23 April in the Great Hall of the New City Hall (Váci Street 62), is 'The Hardest Battle In A Student's Life'. The lecture will be delivered in English and translated into Hungarian. Women are not allowed to participate at the lectures.⁴²

Small leaflets were published with the title 'Invitation', with the same text (with one sentence added, 'Entrance is free').⁴³ Mott delivered three lectures,⁴⁴ 'The

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ PEIL LII/8 (1909), p.123-124, under the heading 'Egyesület' [Association].

⁴⁰ s.n. [Gyula Forgács?]: *Mott János és a keresztyén diákmozgalom*, Londoni Traktátus Társulat, Budapest, s.d. [1909].

⁴¹ In Halle, Germany, Mott gave lectures at a conference which was attended by Gustav Warneck, too.

⁴² The original Hungarian text of the poster: 'Nyilvános Diákgyűlés. Mott János (New Yorkból), a keresztyén diákszövetségének főtitkára, a ki 20 év óta folytatott munkájában 40 országnak mintegy 2000 egyetemét és főiskoláját látogatta meg, a kit méltán neveznek egy millió diák lelki vezérének, európai körútjában Budapest diákságát is meglátogatja és ápr. 23, 24, 25-én előadásokat tart kizárólag diákok számára. Április 23-án pénteken este pont 7 órakor az Újvárosház nagytermében (Váci-utca 62) tartandó előadás tárgya: 'A legnehezebb küzdelem a diák életében'. Az angol előadást magyarra tolmácsolják. Az előadásokon nők részt nem vehetnek.' JRM Yale R45 B152 F2325.

⁴³ 'Meghívó', JRM Yale R45 B152 F2525.

⁴⁴ [s.n.]: 'Mott János Budapesten' in: *Ébresztő*, 1909, p. 87.

Hardest Battle in the Student's Life', 'Spiritual Atrophy', and 'The Answer of Students to Jesus Christ's Call'. (We may suppose that he held the same lectures at the other universities).

Mott remembers his Budapest visit in the following way, 'In the midst of all the distractions of the capital, Buda Pest [sic] the large city hall was filled three nights – Roman Catholics and Jews being the large majority. Almost the entire audience stayed to the after meetings. On the last night over one hundred tarried for a third address and after that seventy-five of their number between ten and eleven o'clock walked a mile to another hall that they might receive further instructions.'⁴⁵

The American guest visited four other university centers, too, after the Budapest lectures he travelled to the Western border of Hungary and delivered lectures to the students of the Lutheran Faculty of Sopron. He was accompanied by Gyula Forgács to this tour. Between 29 April and 3 May Mott visited three campuses in the Eastern part of the country, Sárospatak, Debrecen and Kolozsvár.⁴⁶ János Victor accompanied him as an interpreter and guide in these three cities.⁴⁷

On 4 and 5 May 1909 a smaller conference was held for student leaders in Budapest. In a still unpublished, hand-written notebook of Mott, preserved in the Yale Divinity School Library,⁴⁸ the program of the conference and the full list of the participants can be found. According to this extremely interesting document, the conference was attended by 40 men (and no women). 35 of them were students from 8 universities and theological academies (in brackets we give the number of the participants from each city), Budapest (15), Kolozsvár (3), Debrecen (3), Sárospatak (4), Eperjes (2) Pozsony (1), Sopron (4), Pápa (3). The large majority of the participants were students of theology (26), the others were students of law (2), medicine (2), philosophy (2), pedagogy (2).⁴⁹ Among the participants we read names of students who became important leaders in the RCH in the coming decades, e.g. János Victor (Budapest), Lajos Imre, Imre Révész and Béla Kenessey (Kolozsvár).⁵⁰ Under a separate heading Mott lists five 'graduated men',⁵¹ also, among them Gyula Forgács (Budapest) and József Pongrácz (Komárom). The name of four professors are noted as well [Károly] Pröhle (Lutheran professor of theology, Sopron), Béla Nagy (Reformed professor of theology, Sárospatak), Lajos Csiky (Reformed professor of theology, Debrecen),⁵² Charles [Károly] Nagy (reformed professor of theology, Kolozsvár).⁵³

The conference itself lasted for 1 ½ days, from 2.30 pm on Tuesday 4 May to the late afternoon or evening of the next day. The goal of the gathering was to

⁴⁵ Mott's letter to unknown addressee, London, June 17, 1909. JRM Yale R45 B117 F1943.

⁴⁶ Kolozsvár (Cluj- Napoca) belongs to the territory of Roumania since 1920.

⁴⁷ Studens [János Victor]: 'Mott R. János' in: *Élet és Munka*, I/1 (1909), p. 1.

⁴⁸ Mott's Notebook Hungary 1909, JRM Yale R45 B185 F1325.

⁴⁹ The area of study of one of the participants is not identifiable.

⁵⁰ Op. cit., p. 4.

⁵¹ Op. cit., p. 6.

⁵² It is characteristic of Mott's accuracy and of his pastoral mindset that he noted next to Lajos Csiky's name the following: 'man who has lost wife'. Ibid.

⁵³ Op. cit., p. 7.

train leaders for the Hungarian Christian Student Movement. The topics discussed were the following, 'Secret of the Success and Failure of the Local Student Christian Movement', 'How to Awaken and Maintain Interest in B[ible] S[tudy]', 'How to Discover and Train Leaders', 'What Should Characterize Us as Leaders', 'Survey of the Student Field of Hungary', 'The Next Summer Conference', 'How [to] Enter the WSCF', 'What Shall We Do As We Return From This Conference'. Under the title 'The Student Movement in Hungary', the following topics are put by Mott (using abbreviations): 'Com' [Communications?], 'Secy' [Secretary?], 'Office', 'Lit' [Literature?] and 'Confs' [Conferences?]. The meeting was finished by a lecture (or devotional) under the heading 'Alone with God'.⁵⁴

Mott made detailed notes about the statistical data of the students of Hungary, a list of number of students, broken down by area of study, the number of high-school students, and the proportion of the Protestant students at the universities and theological faculties (in the year of 1907) can be read in the notebook, too.⁵⁵

From all these data the conclusion can be drawn that the purpose of Mott's visit was double. First, it was evangelistic. In public meetings he delivered evangelistic addresses, in order to call students to personal faith in Jesus Christ and to revive the faith of nominal Christians. The second goal was practical: he made serious efforts to strengthen the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Students' Federation (MEKDSz) as an organization. His public meetings at the universities gave unprecedented publicity to the movement. The conference at Budapest helped to enthuse and train students to work as voluntary leaders of the local and of the national student movement.

4.4.2.2. Hungarian Ecclesial Press

As already alluded above, Mott's visit of 1909 was well prepared in the ecclesial press in Hungary. Even during his stay in Budapest and in the other Hungarian academic centers, his activity was reported in different periodicals. The most important of them may be the lengthy article by János Victor which was published in two parts in the 18th⁵⁶ and 20th⁵⁷ volume of the prestigious and widely read periodical *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* [Periodical for Protestant Church and School].

The first part of the article is quite a polemic one, Victor refutes the objections raised (by undefined adversaries) against organizing a Christian Student Movement in Hungary. One of his arguments is that the Christian Student Movement had been very powerful in the Far Eastern countries, especially in China,

⁵⁴ Op. cit., p. 3. There is one hardly legible line in the program of the conference. It may read: 'Our Responsibility to Learn Fellow Students'. Another abbreviation is also difficult to understand: 'Adv's of Dif's'. Does it mean: 'Advantages of Differences'? Ibid.

⁵⁵ Op. cit., p. 2. No sources are given.

⁵⁶ János Victor, 'Mott János' in: PEIL LII/18 (1909), p. 279-281.

⁵⁷ János Victor, 'Mott János' [II.], in: PEIL LII/20 (1909), p. 314-317.

Korea and Japan. He introduces Mott as the one who was responsible for this success. After a very brief biographical introduction Victor describes the general secretary of the WSCF as an outstanding strategist of Christian mission, 'He has discovered, with the sharpness of the eye of a commander, the key places through which the students - the future leaders of the awakening millions - can be influenced by the gospel. He has mobilized all the spiritual, mental and material resources at these places for the sake of the Christian Student Movement.'⁵⁸ Victor quotes – as far as it is documented, for the first time in Hungary – the famous watchword of the SVM, 'to evangelize the world in this generation'. Referring to Mott, Victor interprets the watchword quite literally, 'It is not impossible and that is why it is our obligation to achieve the goal, to reach all the inhabitants of the Earth with the gospel of God in the lifetime of this present generation.'⁵⁹ Mott's work is presented as successful, 'This alarm had not sounded in vain. The North-American Student Movement has already sent out more than 5000 of the very best of the nation to the battlefield of foreign mission.'⁶⁰ The first part of the article is concluded by an appraisal of Mott's personality. Victor introduces the American guest to the Hungarian Protestant public as a person with 'a great organizing talent', and with 'an unprecedented knowledge of the students', a man with a 'wide horizon' and characterized by 'humbleness' at the same time.⁶¹ The author underscores that Christian mission is in the centre of Mott's vision, and that he does everything for the 'triumph of Christ'. As an apology for the enthusiastic nature of this introduction, Victor uses the parallel of the beauty of God's creation and he compares 'this outstanding human soul' (i.e. Mott) to 'great mountains' and 'endless seas'⁶² that proclaim the glory of the Creator. In his description Mott is the ideal type of the reborn Christian, transformed by God's grace. In the second part of the article (two weeks later),⁶³ Victor reports about the events of Mott's visit to Budapest, Sopron, Sárospatak, Debrecen⁶⁴ and Kolozsvár. When evaluating the results of Mott's visit, Victor states, 'It is positive that Christ's call to the Hungarian students has never been proclaimed with as much publicity, and with as much living, convincing power and with such persuasion before [as by Mott].'⁶⁵ 'Power' is the central theme of Victor's article. He explores the reason why Mott's impact was sensed so powerful by his audience, and concludes that the 'secret' of the American guest had five aspects, his simple and concentrated rhetoric, the high academic quality of his speeches, especially on the field of psychology, his decades

⁵⁸ Op. cit., p. 280.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Op. cit., p. 314-317.

⁶⁴ It is interesting that Victor makes one single critical remark in his whole article: he criticizes the organizers of Mott's visit to Debrecen for the lack of good preparations. Op. cit., p. 315.

⁶⁵ Op. cit., p. 315.

of experience, his pragmatic approach and ‘the power of the divine Spirit who holds this person and is operating through him’.⁶⁶

Another important article was published directly after Mott’s 1909 visit in the official periodical of the Erdélyi (Transylvanian) District of the RCH, the *Református Szemle* [Reformed Review], written under the pseudonym ‘Aleph’; according to Sándor Gaál⁶⁷ the author was László Ravasz, a young teacher of theology in Kolozsvár, who became later bishop of the Dunamelléki District of the RCH (1920-1948 and 1956).⁶⁸ ‘Let us memorize this name [of Mott], because it is not impossible that our grandchildren will hear it in religious classes already in the primary school[...]’⁶⁹ – Ravasz begins his article with these enthusiastic words. After a short introduction to Mott’s biography and a short report of his visit to Kolozsvár, he analyses the contents of the lectures delivered by the American visitor. Interestingly enough, he puts the concept of ‘power’ to the center of his appraisal. When searching for an answer to the question, ‘What is the source of this man’s terrific power’,⁷⁰ he points to his convincing rhetoric style, too. Nevertheless, he finds the main reason in two aspects of Mott’s message, his christocentricity and his concentration on the practical consequences of the Christian faith in one’s life, ‘John Mott incarnates a new principle that can alone renew and regenerate religious life, practical Christianity’.⁷¹ Practical Christianity as presented by Mott – according to Ravasz – means a Christian ‘direction of life’, and a kind of Christian religiosity which is based on personal experience. The result of such a religion is a Christian personality. Ravasz emphasizes the individual character of Mott’s message, ‘It is not our goal to do politics, to create theories or promote Socialism, but to let the individuals experience Christianity as the truth of their existence.’⁷² On the other hand, it is remarkable that the term ‘mission’ does not occur in Ravasz’s article.

The same periodical published Mott’s lecture on ‘Spiritual Atrophy’ (though under a different title) in two parts.⁷³ Two other lectures were published by the MEKDSz in separate booklets the next year, ‘The Hardest Battle in a Student’s Life’,⁷⁴ and ‘The Power of Jesus Christ in the Student’s Life.’⁷⁵ Mott’s book on the decisive hour of Christian missions was published in Hungarian several years later.⁷⁶

⁶⁶ Op. cit., p. 316.

⁶⁷ Gaál 2006, p. 29.

⁶⁸ Aleph [László Ravasz], ‘Mott János’ in: *Református Szemle*, II/16 (1909), p. 249-252.

⁶⁹ Op. cit., p. 249.

⁷⁰ Op. cit., p. 250.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Op. cit., p. 251.

⁷³ s.n. [John Mott], ‘Mott János előadása (külön előadás a teológusok részére)’ in: *Református Szemle* II/17 (1909), p. 270-272 and II/18 (1909), p. 288-291. The name of the translator is not given. It is likely that the Hungarian version of this lecture is based on a stenographed note. The lecture was interpreted on the premises by János Victor.

⁷⁴ János [John] Mott, *A legkeményebb küzdelem a diák életében*, MEKDSz, Komárom, 1910.

⁷⁵ János [John] Mott, *Jézus Krisztus hatalma a diák életében*, MEKDSz, Komárom, 1910.

⁷⁶ János [John] Mott, *A keresztyén missziók döntő órája*, MEKDSz, Budapest, 1913.

A year after Mott's visit to Hungary, István J. Kovács, in his report about the first World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh, 1910), evaluates the impact of the Hungarian campaign of General Secretary of the WSCF with the following words, 'his [Mott's] visit to Hungary last year left a blessed imprint in the souls of hundreds of students and he opened up new horizons.'⁷⁷

It is to be concluded that Mott's visit to Hungary was covered extensively in the Hungarian Reformed church press. Victor (and Forgács) did their best to prepare the visit by placing articles in key ecclesial magazines and periodicals. The Scottish Mission in Budapest, with the assistance of the London Tract Society, supported the emerging Hungarian Evangelical Christian Students' Federation (MEKDSz) to propagate Mott's visit. The media attention was kept alive also after the program, and the most influential protestant periodicals reported about the public lectures of the general secretary of the WSCF. The reactions were overwhelmingly positive, even among those who did not belong to the circle of the 'revivalists', (e.g. László Ravasz). Mott's lectures, published in Hungarian, reached a wide circle of Hungarian students via the growing network of the MEKDSz.

4.4.2.3. Mott on the 1909 Visit

In a letter to an unknown addressee, dated on 17 June 1909 in London,⁷⁸ Mott devotes several paragraphs to his visit to Hungary in the same year. Although we know about at least one visit paid by Mott to Hungary before (1895), he begins his report with these words, 'Hungary was an entirely new field to me.'⁷⁹ In what follows he gives a brief statistical description of the situation of students in Hungary and an introduction to the ecclesial life. He states that the majority of the inhabitants are Roman Catholic and that the proportion of the Lutheran and Reformed affiliates is the highest compared to any other Roman Catholic land. He notes that there is a high number of Jews in Hungary, too. In reference to the situation of the Protestant churches he is rather critical, 'Unfortunately, however, the Protestant churches are too largely characterized by a formal and dead orthodoxy and by a chilling rationalism, - with the result that very many of their members, including an alarming proportion of the theological students, are slaves to the grossest forms of temptation.'⁸⁰ The difficulties of the student work are described by using a hard terminology, '[...] the problems incident to reaching of the Roman Catholics and Jews and incident to the race antagonisms for this land is in the heart of what has been well called the whirlpool of Europe - forced me to the conclusion that Hungary is a field as difficult as any I have visited in Asia.'⁸¹

⁷⁷ István Kovács, 'Az edinburghi világmissziói konferencia I.' in: *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap*, LIII/26 (1911), p. 279.

⁷⁸ JRM Yale R45 B117 F1943.

⁷⁹ Op. cit., p. 2.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Op. cit., p. 2-3.

These sentences of Mott betray his image of Hungary in general and that of the situation of Protestantism in that land, in particular. It seems that Mott looked at the country as dominated by Roman Catholicism, having a remarkable proportion of Jewish inhabitants and a – though numerically strong – spiritually ‘dry’ and ‘dead’ mainline Protestantism. He speaks about Roman Catholicism as a social group, as ‘difficult to reach’ as the followers of Judaism. Roman Catholicism is described again as a target group of evangelization and not as a partner. The comparison with Asia strengthens the reader’s impression that Mott looked at Hungary as a ‘mission field’.

Mott’s impressions about his visit were by and large positive and he evaluated it as successful, ‘Large numbers while I was in Hungary gave their names indicating their desire to form Bible circles to study Christ that they might come to know Him.’⁸² He mentions the crowded student gatherings and the Budapest leadership training conference, as well. The selection of a ‘strong man’ to the task of a travelling secretary (i.e. János Victor) is described as well as the initiation of a Christian periodical for students in Hungary (later, *Diákvilág*). Although he found the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Students’ Federation in a weak condition, he expresses his hopefulness about its future, ‘My belief is that it is possible to develop in Hungary an aggressive [sic!] movement which will not only deeply influence the life of that nation but which will also help to establish similar work among the students of the Balkan states.’⁸³

His experiences in Hungary in 1909 convinced Mott that the Student Movement based on the revivalist circles of Hungarian mainline Protestantism may grow to play a double role in the future, to ‘influence the life of the nation’ (cf. ‘home’ mission) and to spread the gospel to the neighbouring Balkan states (cf. ‘foreign’ mission). It is remarkable that this twofold goal was characteristic of the emerging Hungarian Protestant missionary movement in the following decades.⁸⁴

4.4.3. *Contacts after 1909*

4.4.3.1. Visits 1911-1930

After 1909 Mott visited Hungary again several times. His visits were usually brief and the great-scale evangelistic campaign of 1909 conducted by him was not repeated again.

In a letter of 11 February 1911, Victor expresses his pleasure that Mott was planning to travel through Budapest on his way back from the WSCF Conference of that year (Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey).⁸⁵ Although his visit turned out to be a

⁸² Op. cit., p. 3.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 193ff.

⁸⁵ *Letter by John [János] Victor to Mott*, Budapest, 11 February 1911 (unpublished), WSCF Yale R46 B185 F 1317.

very short one, the Annual Report of the MEKDSZ about the academic year of 1910/11 finds it worthwhile to praise it as an ‘outstanding event’.⁸⁶

In 1913, two articles in the prestigious weekly *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* report about Mott’s stay in Hungary in that year.⁸⁷ We read that Mott spent only one day in the Hungarian capital and met student delegates from the seven colleges and university faculties from all over the country.⁸⁸ His program consisted of seven (!) lectures about the following topics, Bible study, personal counselling, the character of the student, the role of enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, finances, the fulfilment of the watchword ‘evangelizing the Hungarian students in this students’ generation’.⁸⁹ He met the Board of the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Students’ Federation at a separate meeting, and delivered a public address at an evening tea party about The Decisive Hour of Christian Mission. The anonymous author of the report (Victor?) concludes, ‘The Hungarian Protestant Churches should participate in the missions, too...’⁹⁰ Applying the stylistic elements characteristic of the contemporary Hungarian Protestant ecclesial journalism, the author describes Mott with superlatives. He is presented as the ‘Napoleonic [sic!] figure of modern Christianity’ and as a ‘powerful personality’ whose address was ‘great’ and whose witness was ‘irresistible’.⁹¹ Another article (by an unknown author) in the same issue of the periodical describes him as ‘one of the greatest, genuinely American representatives of modern Evangelical Christianity, an astonishingly eloquent and powerful fighter of Evangelical Christian imperialism [sic!]’.⁹² The conclusion of this article is similar to the preceding one, ‘Mott [...] expressed by his visit that he finds the mission that is waiting for us, Hungarian Protestants, to be fulfilled in the near future, very important.’⁹³

As a travelling permit issued by the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Consulate General in New York documents it, Mott travelled later through the Double Monarchy in 1916.⁹⁴ In a report letter to his American constituency on his trip to Russia in 1916, he mentions Hungary only in passing.⁹⁵ It is also known that he travelled through Hungary on 22 April 1924.⁹⁶

⁸⁶ *A második diáknevezdek küszöbén. A MEKDSz jelentése az 1910/11-ik tanévről*, Eperjes, 1911, p.18.

⁸⁷ [s.n.], ‘Mott János Budapest’, in: *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap*, LVI/49 (1913), p. 778; and [s.n.], ‘Krónika. Mott János’ in: *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap*, LVI/49 (1913), p. 769-770.

⁸⁸ Budapest, Pápa, Debrecen, Kolozsvár, Sopron, Selmeczbánya, Sárospatak [s.n.], ‘Mott János Budapest’, op. cit., p. 778.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² ‘... az ev.ker. imperializmus bámulatos ékesszólású, hatalmas harczosa’, op. cit., p. 769.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Document No. 6027, dated in New York, on 27 May 1916 (in German); JRM Yale R45 B153 F2548.

⁹⁵ Mott, *Report Letter on a Trip to Europe and to Russia* (on board of SS Oskar II, Atlantic Ocean), 3 August 1916; JRM Yale R45 B118 F1917.

⁹⁶ *Letter by B.R. Barber to the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, D.C.*, New York, 16 May 1930; JRM Yale R45 B154 F2560.

Mott paid a short visit to Hungary in 1925 as well, about which we know from a letter by Mott addressed to Victor⁹⁷ that it had been planned a long time before and the goal of it was a brief and intensive consultation with the leaders of the Hungarian Christian Student Movement. He delivered a lecture on 21 May 1925 about 'Opportunities and Challenges'.⁹⁸ His next visit to Hungary was in 1927. From a letter by Mott to Victor we know that he spoke at a conference and Victor served as his interpreter. Mott expressed his regrets that he had had no time to meet the representatives of the Student Movement because of his busy schedule.⁹⁹ According to Kool, he delivered a public address on the missionary situation in China.¹⁰⁰ Hopkins refers to a visit to Hungary in 1928, too.¹⁰¹ According to an itinerary of Mott (published in order to inform his constituency in America about his ministry), he planned to stay on 24-25 April 1928 at the address Főherceg Sándor street no. 28, in Budapest.¹⁰²

Very little is known about Mott's last visit to Hungary. The popular missionary periodical *Hajnal* reports briefly that Mott spoke in Budapest about his experiences in Asia, on 5 March 1930.¹⁰³

Mott visited Hungary (at least) eight times (1895, 1909, 1911, 1913, 1916, 1925, 1927, 1930). It is possible that other brief visits took place in 1903, in 1924 and in 1928. He was one of the most frequent foreign visitors¹⁰⁴ in the circles of RCH between 1909 and 1930, and he was a link to the emerging ecumenical movement for the revivalist circles of the RCH. First the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Students' Federation (MEKDSz), later the revivalist/missionary circles (some of whom occupied leading positions in the RCH by the 1930s) had access, predominantly through Mott, to the worldwide ecumenical context of their ministry.¹⁰⁵

4.4.3.2. Correspondence

From Hungarian sources we know that Mott had a more or less intensive contact with Hungary between 1895 and 1930 thus it could be legitimately supposed that he

⁹⁷ Mott to János Victor, New York, 15 January 1920, Ráday Levéltár C/99.

⁹⁸ *Hajnal* XI/6 (1925). Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 424.

⁹⁹ Mott to János Victor, Zakopane, Poland, 15 April 1927, Ráday Levéltár C/99.

¹⁰⁰ Kool, 1993, p. 424. Kool puts the date of this address as 10 May 1927. However, it is likely that the visit of 1927 took place before 15 April 1927, as Mott in his letter (*ibid.*) dated on that day in Poland, refers *back* to his recent experiences in Budapest.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Hopkins. *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Itinerary of J.R. Mott until 7 May [1928?]; JRM Yale R45 B224 F3483. The itinerary card is preserved in a folder consisting of photos of Mott's participation at the IMC Conference in Jerusalem (1928). It is likely that Mott stopped in Budapest on his way back home from the conference.

¹⁰³ *Hajnal* XVI/3 (1930), p. 4. Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 424.

¹⁰⁴ Further research could establish evidence, but it seems that there was no other person from abroad who visited the RCH as frequently and as regularly as Mott did in the period between 1895 and 1930, as a non-private visitor.

¹⁰⁵ Mott had of course several contacts outside the RCH, too, especially with the Lutheran Church in Hungary. The study of these contacts is beyond the scope of this work.

was keeping a regular correspondence with Hungarian counterparts, especially with his colleague and interpreter János Victor. However, the section of correspondence of the excellently organized and fully catalogued Mott Papers, held at the Yale University Library, Divinity Library Special Collections (New Haven, CT, USA) has no evidence of any correspondence with Hungarian persons.¹⁰⁶ The WSCF Archives¹⁰⁷ at Yale University and the János Victor Papers¹⁰⁸ at the Ráday Archives, Budapest, Hungary¹⁰⁹ hold sporadic items of the correspondence between Mott and Victor¹¹⁰ (altogether 12 items)¹¹¹. It is not clear why we do not find any pieces of this exchange of letters among the Mott Papers. It is possible that – contrary to the widespread opinion in Hungarian Reformed circles¹¹² – the personal ties between Mott and Victor were not as intensive as supposed and the correspondence between them was less frequent than expected. Another explanation might be that (a part of) the correspondence was deliberately destroyed or hidden by Mott (or his descendants) in order to conceal evidence of Victor's intensive international relationships as a safety measure to protect the latter who lived under Communist dictatorship in the last years of his life. However, no evidence whatsoever can be established to prove this latter hypothesis. It is positive, on the other hand, that there were more letters, written by Victor to Mott, than what we have now in the different archives.¹¹³

The contents of the correspondence betray a certain progress in the nature of the relationship between Mott and Victor. While the letters from before the First World War are more formal and businesslike in character, the later phase of the correspondence witnesses of a more personal relationship. (E.g. in a letter of 1 May 1920, Mott concludes his letter to Victor like this, 'I am more eager to see you than I can possibly express.'¹¹⁴ In 1927, Mott finishes his letter by these warm words, 'faithfully your friend'.)¹¹⁵ On one occasion, Mott even refers to a personal problem of Victor (the general secretary of the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Students' Federation was about to leave his office due to financial constraints) and offered his

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Martha L. Smalley, *Guide to the Mott Papers*, Record Group No. 45. Yale University Library, Divinity Library Special Collections, www.library.yale.edu/div/, I. General Correspondence.

¹⁰⁷ Yale University Library, Divinity Library Special Collections, Record Gr. No. 46.

¹⁰⁸ I express my thanks to Sándor Gaál, associate professor of missiology, Debrecen, Hungary, who generously shared with me the results of the research he made in the Victor Papers.

¹⁰⁹ Victor János iratai (1903-1954), Dunamelléki Református Egyházkerület Ráday Levéltára. C/99.

¹¹⁰ János Victor signed his letters to Mott as 'John Victor', according to the customs of his time, when it was usual in Hungary to translate foreign first names. It is sure that any references in Mott's writings to 'John Victor' imply the Hungarian Reformed professor.

¹¹¹ For the full text of a part of this yet unpublished correspondence, see Appendix I.

¹¹² Cf. 'These two great men [i.e. Mott and Victor] formed a friendship with each other for life', István Draskóczy: *A Magyar Evangéliumi Keresztény Diákszövetség Története 1903-1928* [The History of the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Student Federation], unpublished manuscript. Personal archives of Mrs. István Draskóczy, 1977, p. 12 (translation: Kool), quoted by Kool, 1993, p. 209.

¹¹³ E.g. 'Your good letters have been recieved...', *Letter by Mott to János Victor*, London, 1 May 1920, Ráday Levéltár C/99 [italics: GL].

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *Letter by Mott to János Victor*, Zakopane, 15 April 1927, Ráday Levéltár C/99.

help.¹¹⁶ These more hearty formulations or the fact that Victor's letters to Mott (the few of them which are preserved) are longer and more detailed than a usual official letter, leads us to the conclusion that the personal relationship between Mott and Victor was deeper than mere collegiality.

The topics addressed by Mott and Victor in their correspondence are neither personal nor theological in nature, but they predominantly cover issues of organization and of technical and administrative details of the international relationships of the MEKDSz. (E.g. the question of membership of MEKDSz in WSCF,¹¹⁷ or participation of Hungarian delegates at different WSCF conferences.)¹¹⁸ Another important topic that dominates the correspondence right after the First World War is the situation of Hungary and of the Hungarian Protestantism before and after the Paris Peace Treaties of 1920,¹¹⁹ and the difficulties the Hungarian movement had to face during the short-lived Communist dictatorship in 1919. A unique document of this turbulent period of the Hungarian history is the 35 page-long [!], yet unpublished, hand-written letter of Victor to Mott from 1919.¹²⁰

Theological issues are rarely touched in the correspondence. From certain formulations it can be concluded that there must have been a kind of theological consensus between Mott and Victor. For instance, as early as in 1911 Victor thanks Mott for a copy of his 'Decisive Hour [of Christian Mission]', and he adds, 'I hope we shall find some way in which to utilize it for our beginning mission study.'¹²¹ We see here that Victor takes it for granted that Mott knows about his plan to initiate a mission study group and it is also made evident that Mott's book will be used as a resource material for that.¹²² At another place Victor speaks about the situation of the Hungarian Christianity, and writes in the following way, 'The watchword is given out 'Hungary must be Christian', which of course would be a splendid thing if the word be used *in our sense*.'¹²³ Here we see another example that Victor took it for granted that their understanding of Christianity was identical. From this point of view, it is theologically interesting to mention that Victor expresses his conviction that it is the mandate of Hungarian Protestantism to evangelize South-Eastern Europe. He argues, '...what would it mean for the

¹¹⁶ Letter by Mott to János Victor, New York, 6 April 1920, Ráday Levéltár, C/99.

¹¹⁷ Letter by János Victor to Mott, Budapest, 8 February 1911, p. 4, WSCF Yale R46 B185 F1317; and Letter by Mott to János Victor, Madras, 15 November 1912, Ráday Levéltár C/99.

¹¹⁸ e.g. Letter by Mott to János Victor, [without place data], 2 May 1912, Ráday Levéltár C/99; or Letter by Mott to János Victor, London, 4 July 1923, etc.

¹¹⁹ Hungary lost two-thirds of its territory and more than 50% of its population according to the Versailles Peace Treaties of 1920. (The Peace Treaty between Hungary and Entente was signed on 14 June 1920 in the Petit Trianon Palace of Versailles; hence the usual term 'Trianon Peace Treaty'. Cf. Ignác Romsics: *Magyarország története a 20. században*, Osiris, Budapest, 2005)

¹²⁰ Letter by János Victor to Mott, The Hague, 17 December 1919, WSCF Yale R46 B185 F1317.

¹²¹ Letter by János Victor to Mott, Budapest, 8 February 1911, WSCF Yale R46 B185 F1317.

¹²² Mott's book was published in the Hungarian language in 1913: János [John] Mott: *A keresztyén misszió döntő órája*, MEKDSz, Budapest, 1913 (translation: János Victor).

¹²³ Letter by János Victor to Mott, The Hague, 17 December 1919, p.19, WSCF Yale R46 B185 F1317 [italics: GL].

endeavors of evangelizing South-America if in the midst of its neglected masses [...] there would be at least one nation into the fabric of which there had been interwoven a history of Protestant Churches? Would that not be an invaluable vantage ground from which to spread evangelical influences? This is just offered by Hungary in South-Eastern Europe...' Here we see again a point which had been also represented by Mott already ten years before, 'My belief is that it is possible to develop in Hungary an aggressive movement [...] which will also help to establish similar work among the students of the Balkan states.'¹²⁴ These statements imply two presuppositions, both theologians look at the Balkans as a mission field, and both take it for granted that Protestantism should make efforts to extend its sphere of influence to that area. These again betray a theological definition of mission which identifies mission and evangelization (the goal of mission is the conversion of the individual) and an understanding that looks at Roman Catholicism, at Eastern Orthodoxy as objects (not as co-subjects) of mission. It seems that Victor and Mott shared these convictions.

The elements of the correspondence between Mott and Victor, which is accessible for research, bear witness of two aspects which are relevant for our study. First, they document a deep personal relationship between the two men and a theological consensus about the understanding of mission. Secondly, they are evidences of the commitment of the Hungarian Reformed representatives of the revivalism to the international Christian fellowship offered by the WSCF and also of the fact that Mott was a prominent link between the Hungarian Reformed Church and the emerging ecumenical movement of the first half of the 20th century. Here we may trace the roots of the phenomenon that the revivalist/Evangelical branch of the RCH was later especially in favour of the activities of the World Council of Churches.

It is interesting to note that Mott's contacts with Hungary faded away after 1930. We do not know of any further visit paid by him to the country and the correspondence misses too (at least it is not accessible for research at this moment). The reason for this is unknown, but it may be at least partially explained by the simple fact that after 1928 Mott resigned from his position of the presidency of the WSCF and his interest and energy was concentrated on the activities of the International Missionary Council. As Hungary did not play a major role in the worldwide missionary endeavour, this country lost relevance for this great global strategist of world mission.

Mott's contacts with Hungary were loosened to such an extent that in a Book of Congratulations, offered to Mott on the occasion of his 70th birthday by the World Alliance of YMCAs in 1935, which consists of contributions from all over the world, including Central and Eastern European countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Hungarian YMCA is not even mentioned, and no letters of congratulations from Hungary are included.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ *Bound volume of letters to Mott from 1935 YMCAs worldwide on the occasion of his 70th birthday*, 1935 (unpublished manuscript), JRM Yale R45 B101 F1786.

4.5. IMPACT

Mott's ministry was highly appreciated and praised by his contemporaries in Hungary. As demonstrated above, he was presented in the contemporary Reformed ecclesial press as an outstanding representative of 'modern Evangelical Christianity'. Superlatives were used abundantly to describe his qualities, and he was set forth as an example of a devout Christian leader. These formulations are perceived as exaggerations by today's readers, but they still witness of an altogether positive image of Mott, expressed according to the cultural patterns of the beginning of the 20th century.

Even the Hungarian state expressed her appreciation to Mott. A decoration, the Star of the Hungarian Red Cross, was conferred to Mott by Count László Széchenyi, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Hungary to the United States, on 20 February 1923, in New York.¹²⁶

Mott's contacts with Hungary were especially intensive between 1909 and 1930. After that date his ties with the Central European country became loose and virtually disappeared. However, in 1955, the year of his demise, a public memorial speech was delivered by the Hungarian Reformed bishop Albert Bereczky at the General Assembly of the Hungarian Ecumenical Council of Churches (Budapest, 25 February 1955). In this lecture Bereczky also remembered János Victor and described him as a 'pioneer of Hungarian ecumenism'.¹²⁷ The text of the lecture was published in the official periodical of the RCH in the same year.¹²⁸ Mott's impact on the RCH, and especially on its theological concept of mission, can be observed in several areas.

The first area is his *literary* impact. As demonstrated above, Mott's visits to Hungary (especially his visit in 1909) were covered extensively by the contemporary ecclesial press and several of his lectures and works were published in the Hungarian language. Although it is difficult to measure, it is likely that his articles, lectures and addresses influenced the thinking of many members, pastors and theologians who were interested in the issues of Christian mission and ecumenism.

Another area of influence was *organizational*, his indirect impact through the Hungarian YMCA (KIE) and, even more, through the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Students' Federation (MEKDSz). It is well documented that the new concept of Christian mission, which became dominant in the RCH by the beginning of the 1930s, was initiated and mediated by the para-church organizations, established by the revivalist circles of the RCH. The YMCA (KIE) and the Student

¹²⁶ Letter by Nicholas Roosevelt to B. R. Barber, Budapest, 20 December 1930, JRM Yale R45 B154 F2560.

¹²⁷ *Meghívó*, Magyar Egyházak Ökumenikus Tanácsa, Budapest, 15 February 1955, Zsinati Levéltár, 11f 9d.

¹²⁸ Albert Bereczky, 'Victor János és Mott János emlékezete', in: *Református Egyház*, 1955/5, p. 211.

Movement were two of these organizations. They played an important role in raising missionary consciousness in the RCH, through their conferences, local groups and media activity. Their twofold goal was the transformation of the RCH from the inside into a fellowship of devoted followers of the Lord Jesus Christ (home mission) and to make the RCH join to the worldwide efforts of fulfilling the Great Commission (Mat 28,18-20) by converting the non-Christians to Christian faith (foreign mission). Mott, as the general secretary of the WSCF and (later) of the IMC, played an important role in organizing and strengthening the Hungarian Christian Student Association (MEKDSz). Especially by his 1909 visit, he helped to build an effective organization, supported its leaders by training and strengthened its evangelistic character by conducting public evangelistic meetings for students in five academic centers of the country. By these, he created a point of contact for the RCH to the worldwide Christian Student Movement, to the global Protestant missionary movement and to the emerging ecumenical movement. He played an unprecedented role in putting the revivalist renewal movement of the RCH into an ecumenical context.

The third area of his impact was *personal*. He influenced the way of thinking and of the theological orientation of several persons (students and young pastors), especially by the impressions he made on them in personal encounters. In this respect his visit of 1909 was of special significance. It is of course very difficult to make any kind of estimation about the measure of influence exerted by a public address or by an evangelistic sermon. Although the contemporary media reported about his great impact, the superlative formulations fashionable of the age conceal the true nature of the perception of Mott's lectures. However, personal memoirs of several leaders of the RCH do give an account of how they experienced the impact of the American speaker.

Mott's influence is most evident in the life and thinking of Victor. It was through the encounter with the General Secretary of WSCF in 1908 in Liverpool that woke enthusiasm in the young student of theology to commit himself fully to the ministry among the students. Mott was also involved in the process of Victor's appointment to the position of travelling secretary of the Hungarian Evangelical Christian Student Federation (MEKDSz) in 1909. As demonstrated above, they kept a more or less regular correspondence that witnesses of a fundamental consensus on the theological understanding of mission between the two men. They met more than ten times in Hungary, abroad and at international conferences. Sándor Gaál, in his dissertation on the missiological oeuvre of Victor, identifies the following areas, where the influence of Mott can be clearly discerned in the thought of the Hungarian theologian, the definition of evangelization, the concept of practical Christianity, the concept of universality and of world Christianity, the concept of 'modern evangelical Christianity', and the idea of the 'decisive hour' of Christian mission.¹²⁹ Gaál concludes: 'Next to the sphere of his family, it was J. R. Mott [...] who influenced János Victor's understanding of mission fundamentally...'¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Gaál 2006, p. 24-35.

¹³⁰ Op. cit., p. 24.

Victor, a professor of philosophy (1925-1932) and of systematic theology (1949-1954) of the Budapest Reformed Theological Academy, an author of numerous books and articles, an editor of several periodicals (among them of the *Református Egyház*, the official organ of the RCH, 1949-1954), a minister of an inner city Reformed Church in Budapest and Chief Clerk (i.e. vice-bishop) of the Dunamelléki Church District (1945-1954)¹³¹ was an influential scholar and church leader in the RCH. He is often praised as one of the most outstanding theologians of the RCH in the 20th century.¹³² The impact of Mott on his life, integrated into his own theological thinking, was mediated to the wider public of the RCH, through his publications and through his ministry as a pastor.

In 1909, László Ravasz, a young teacher of the Reformed Theological Institute at Kolozsvár (today, Cluj-Napoca, Roumania), published an appraisal, under the pseudonym Aleph, of Mott's visit to his city.¹³³ In this article Ravasz highlighted the concept of practical Christianity, as presented by Mott, as the future of the church and as the single possible way of renewal. In his memoirs, he revisits his experience of Mott's visit and tells the reader that it was Mott who helped the young theologian to open up his mind towards revivalist/Evangelical influences.¹³⁴ The future bishop of the Dunamelléki Church District (of Budapest, 1920-1948 and 1956), the president of the Synod of the RCH, one of the most important ecclesial leaders of the RCH in the 20th century gained crucial impulses from Mott which helped him to understand and to appreciate the revivalist movements within the RCH. His program of the integration of the para-church missionary and evangelistic societies into the RCH¹³⁵ then helped this church to gather inertia and inner strength before the testing times of the Communist dictatorship.

Imre Révész, a student of theology of the Reformed Theological Institute at Kolozsvár in 1909, was also deeply impressed by Mott and by his interpreter, Victor. According to his memoirs Mott helped him a lot to move from an abstract-philosophical Christianity to a personal Christian spirituality.¹³⁶ Révész, as bishop of the Tiszántúli Church District (of Debrecen, 1938-1949) and as a renown church historian was thoroughly influenced in his spirituality by Mott.

In his masters thesis on the correspondence between Albert Berczky and Karl Barth, Douwe Boelens calls our attention to the fact that another bishop of the RCH in the 20th century, Albert Berczky, was influenced by Mott, too, '...tijdens zijn theologische studie te Pápa was hij [Berczky] sterk beïnvloed door János

¹³¹ Op. cit., p. 219.

¹³² Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 70-74, and Gaál 2006, p.13.

¹³³ Aleph [László Ravasz], 'Mott János' in: *Református Szemle*, II/16 (1909), p. 249-252. The same article was published again by him in his collection of essays: László Ravasz, *Az emberélet útjának felén*, Minerva, Kolozsvár, 1925, p. 87-91.

¹³⁴ László Ravasz, *Emlékezéseim*, Budapest, 1992, p. 112.

¹³⁵ Cf. Kool, 1993, p.306ff.

¹³⁶ Imre Révész, *Vallomások*, Református Zsinati Iroda Sajtóosztálya, Budapest, 1990, p. 31-35.

Victor en John Mott, die beiden evangelisaties gehouden hadden voor de studentenbond waarvan Bereczky lid was geweest.¹³⁷

Sándor Makkai, one of the leading missionary theologians of the RCH in the 20th century, who himself was positively influenced by his personal encounter with Mott in 1909,¹³⁸ looking back to the beginnings of the emerging missionary movement in that church, evaluates Mott's impact in the following way, 'We know it today, that the missionary consciousness and activity of our church were initiated by persons who were influenced by him [i.e. Mott] and whose sense of responsibility [for mission] was awakened.'¹³⁹ His opinion is echoed by Hoekendijk as well who, when reporting about his visits to Hungary in 1947 and 1948 to the IMC, writes the following, 'Especially the visits of John Mott to Hungary brought a revival of missionary spirit in student circles.'¹⁴⁰

4.6. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

At the end of this chapter the following conclusions can be made. The concept of mission in the RCH was defined in ecclesial, confessional and national categories on the turn of 19th and 20th centuries. A group of theologians and lay church members – influenced by the traditions of German Pietism and Anglo-Saxon Puritanism, began to form a nucleus within the church, and – supported by the Mission to the Jews in Budapest of the Free Church of Scotland – gradually established their own congregation within the structure of the RCH, the German-speaking Reformed Affiliated Church. The members of this group identified themselves as Revivalists. They followed a conservative, Evangelical theological line and propagated a concept of mission that consisted of elements like the conversion of the heathen (foreign mission), and conversion of the nominal members of the mainline churches (home mission). At the beginning of the 20th century, para-church organizations were established by Reformed (and Lutheran) revivalist church members and ministers in order to find means for achieving their missionary goal. Some of these organizations joined wider international alliances. The first of them was the KIE (BRIE), the Hungarian branch of YMCA (1883). The Hungarian Evangelical Christian Students' Federation (MEKDSz) grew out of the student work of the Hungarian YMCA (since 1898) and it became independent organizationally in 1907.

¹³⁷ Douwe Boelens, *Brieven tussen Oost en West* (unpublished manuscript), Doctoraalscriptie, Gereformeerde Theologische Universiteit te Kampen (Oudestraat), 1988, p. 13.

¹³⁸ Sándor Makkai, 'Vallásos fejlődésem' in: Károly Fekete ifj., *Egyházunk egyik ébresztője: Makkai Sándor*, Budapest, 2001, p. 92.

¹³⁹ Sándor Makkai, *Az egyház missziói munkája*, Budapest, 1938, p. 298 [translation: GL].

¹⁴⁰ Hoekendijk, *Report on the Missionary Movement in the Reformed Church in Hungary*, (unpublished), JCH-A-C16, p. 5.

Mott, the General Secretary of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) was in touch with the Hungarian Student Movement since 1895. He visited Hungary at least ten times in the period between 1895 and 1930 and several of his works were published in the Hungarian language. His visit of 1909 received wide media attention and his public evangelistic addresses made a lasting, positive impact on many of his listeners. The results of this visit (and of his continuous relationship to Hungary) were that the Christian Student Movement broke out of its isolation and gained wider acceptance in the RCH; the Evangelical understanding of 'practical' Christianity became more accepted dissociating itself from its former sectarian and unhealthy image. Through spiritual impact, Mott influenced future leaders of the RCH in a fundamental way. He raised the missionary awareness of the RCH, setting forth a double aim of mission, the inner spiritual renewal of the church and participation of the RCH in the worldwide missionary endeavour of Christianity. He called the attention of the RCH to her immediate missionary responsibility on the Balkan. By his constant mediation between the World Alliance of YMCAs, the WSCF and the MEKDSz, he helped the Hungarian organization join the international network of Christian youth and student organizations. He introduced key Hungarian representatives of the Revival movement – especially János Victor – to the emerging ecumenical movement.

It was not Mott who initiated the fundamental reorientation of the theological definition of mission in the RCH, which took place gradually between 1903 and 1933. The Evangelical concept of mission was already represented by the Revivalists, organized around the Scottish Mission and the German Reformed Congregation. However, Mott introduced a third theological tradition (next to German Pietism and Scottish Puritanism), that is, American Evangelicalism to the RCH. Through his widely accepted authority, through his rhetoric ability, and by his spiritual suggestiveness, he helped to prepare the ground for the wider acceptance of an Evangelical redefinition of mission in the RCH. This fundamental redefinition took place alongside the keynote publications by Szabó (1909) and Forgács (1925) and gained full ecclesial acceptance by the introduction of the Mission Ordinances of the RCH (1931) and was finally legalized by the codification of the Article on Mission of the Church Order of the RCH (1933/III.). By this a paradigm shift in the theological definition of mission took place in the RCH, an ecclesial, confessional and national understanding of mission was replaced by a missionary concept that defined mission as the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ calling heathen and nominal church members to individual conversion. Mott was instrumental in the process of this paradigm shift and he created a point of contact between the emerging modern ecumenical movement and the RCH.



Graphics by Gábor Kustár

Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965)

5. HENDRIK KRAEMER AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965) is often celebrated as one of the most important Protestant missiologists of the 20th century.¹ His best known book, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (1938) is a unique work itself. It was written as a preparatory study for the 3rd World Missionary Conference (Tambaram, India, 1938), and as such it is the only monograph in the history of the ecumenical movement which was written by a single person as a preparation of a major ecumenical gathering. His direct and indirect impact can not be overestimated.

Kraemer is considered to be one of those theologians, who applied the Barthian thought to missiology. Although it is often stated that the later Kraemer's position was closer to Emil Brunner's theology than to Karl Barth's, it is still true that Kraemer was an adherent of the 'theology of the crisis'.

The impact of Karl Barth's theology was very strong in the theological developments in the Reformed Church in Hungary. Barthianism was one of the most important theological streams in the RCH before the Second World War and it became a constant frame of reference for the 'official' theology after the War. (It would go beyond the scope of this study to analyse to what extent Barth's thought was used or misused by the theologians of the time.) An attempt to apply Karl Barth's theology to missiology in the Hungarian context was made by Sándor Virágh, general secretary of the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Missionary Society (MRKSz). His works demonstrate that there was certain awareness among the Hungarian Reformed theologians of the missiological importance of the 'theology of the crisis'.

In what follows here below, an attempt is made to explore whether the thought of Kraemer – an outstanding Barthian missiologist – had played any role in the mediating of Barthianism to the theology of mission in the RCH.

5.2. A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF HENDRIK KRAEMER (1888-1965)

Kraemer was born on 17 May 1888 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands in a family of low social status. He was partially brought up in an orphanage of the Netherlands Reformed Church.² He attended the Missionary Training Institute of the NRC in

¹ Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the 20th Century*, Cambridge, 1994.

² *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk*.

Oegstgeest, he studied Javanese languages and culture at the University of Leiden, and Islam in Cairo. First he worked for the Dutch Bible Society (1922-1937) in the Dutch East-Indies. In 1936 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Utrecht. From 1937 to 1948 he served as a professor of sociology of religion at the University of Leiden. He was commissioned to write a preparatory study for the Tambaram Conference of the International Missionary Council (1938) about the relationship of Christianity and world religions, which became his best known book under the title *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. During the Second World War he was interned by the Nazi authorities to a concentration camp (St. Michielgestel) because he protested against the removal of Jewish colleagues from the faculty. After the war he was the member of the Dutch delegation to Stuttgart where the new Council of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) was formed. He was involved in the establishing of the Dutch social-democratic political party (Labour Party – PvdA) after the Second World War. Later he served as the first director of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey (1948-1955) where he gave lectures to international groups of students (predominantly lay members of churches from all over the world). In the last period of his active life he was involved in the work of the Institute ‘Kerk en Wereld’ (Church and World) in Driebergen, The Netherlands. He died on 11 November 1965 in Driebergen.

5.3 KRAEMER AS A MISSIONARY THEOLOGIAN

Kraemer is often celebrated as one of the most important Protestant missiologists of the 20th century.³ Although he was trained as a linguist and a historian of religion, he himself confessed that Christian mission was the ‘passion of his life’. He published many articles and several books on a wide range of topics, but he gained international reputation by his unique work on *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (1938) written as a preparatory volume for the 3rd World Missionary Conference (1938, Tambaram, India). According to Jan A. B. Jongeneel there are two other works, which can be denoted as his ‘great books’: *Religion and the Christian Faith* (1956) and *World Cultures and World Religions, The Coming Dialogue* (1960).

Kraemer’s point of departure was the Laymen’s Missionary Inquiry led by W.E. Hocking, the results of which were published under the title *Rethinking Missions* (1932)⁴. This Inquiry concluded that Christian mission should give up its original intention to convert adherents of other religions to Christianity; instead, mission should aim at the harmonious co-existence of world religions in order to promote world peace.

³ J.J. Visser, ‘Introductie’ in: *Documentatieblad voor de Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Zending en Overzeese Kerken*, IX/2 (2002), p. 1.

⁴ William E. Hocking, *Re-thinking Missions: A Laymen’s Inquiry After One Hundred Years*, Harper&Brothers, New York, 1932.

Kraemer's discourse is based on a clearly Barthian thesis. His axiom is similar to the great Swiss theologian's, revelation in Christ is a purely divine act and it stands diametrically opposite to all kinds of religion, including Christianity. There is thus a qualitative difference between faith in Christ and religious practices. Faith in Christ is thus a challenge to all religions. The high cultural, artistic and even spiritual achievements of the religions are appreciated by Kraemer and all religions are treated with due respect, nevertheless he insists that Christianity has no other choice than to call every person to faith in Christ, the unique incarnation of God. This mandate is the basis of the apostolicity of the Christian Church, and this is the foundation of her mission. He misses this apostolic consciousness in the Hocking report and in the contemporary ideas of 'one world religion' (as an ethical essence of all higher religions etc.).

Kraemer's definition of the 'world' is remarkable, too. He breaks with the concept of geographical dichotomy, according to which the world would be divided into a 'Christian West/North' and a 'Non-Christian East/South'. He speaks about one, 'Non-Christian world', and argues that the church is in a missionary situation in the secularized West/North, too.

Jongeneel argues⁵ that this missionary commitment is the central element in Kraemer's theology and – although his terminology had been changing during the years – this understanding of the apostolicity of the church always remained Kraemer's primary interest.

5.4. KRAEMER AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY

The theology of Karl Barth had a very strong impact in the Reformed Church in Hungary in the 20th century. It was one of the theological streams which could be identified in the RCH before the Second World War (next to historical Calvinism, revivalism and Reformed orthodoxy). Barth himself played an active role in the post-war history of the RCH and his theology became a constant frame of reference for the official theology of the church.⁶ Kool demonstrates that the Barthian influence can be detected also in the development of the theology of mission in the RCH, especially in the works of Sándor Virág.⁷ It is thus legitimate to raise the question whether Kraemer, one of the most important interpreters of the Barthian thought in missiology, had any impact on the development of the theology of mission in the RCH. In what follows, an attempt is made to describe the reception of Kraemer in Hungary and to find out on what kind of areas he had a discernible impact.

⁵ Jongeneel 2002, p. 44.

⁶ The question of the legitimacy of this frame of reference falls beyond the scope of this study.

⁷ Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 313-919.

5.4.1. Hungary in Kraemer's Works?

As we take an overall look at Kraemer's publications, it becomes evident that Hungary does not occur in the title of his works. A closer survey of his most important books delivers the same result. The catalogue of the Hendrik Kraemer Archives does not contain any reference to Hungary, or even to Hungarian names. A survey of bibliographical databases on the World Wide Web results in the same, rather disappointing way. It is conspicuous that the region of Central and Eastern Europe is altogether missing from (otherwise astonishingly wide) horizon of Kraemer. It can also be remarked that the intellectual confrontation with the issue of Communism as an ideology is also underrepresented in his oeuvre.

It can be concluded that the issue of Central and Eastern Europe, and Hungary as a part of it, fell outside of the scope of Kraemer's scholarly and even of his personal interest. In the matter of its reasons we can only undertake some very cautious suggestions. It is likely that there is a sheer biographical reason for this absence, as far as it is documented, Kraemer never visited Hungary and he never had any deep personal contacts with Hungarian persons. Another reason might be that his interest was directed to the issue of Eastern religions already at a very early stage of his life. His specialization in the Javanese religions and in Islam resulted in an orientation to the Far-East and especially to Indonesia. As a professor of religious studies in Leiden, he was interested in the theoretical questions of the history of religion and of Christian mission, and he was actively involved in the renewal of the Netherlands Reformed Church (*Kerkbouwactie*). Although he had contacts with East-Germany (Hendrik Kraemer-Haus is East-Berlin) he did not get in touch with the issue of Hungary.

5.4.2. Personal Contacts

A. Th. van Leeuwen, in his popular biography of Kraemer,⁸ does not mention any professional or scholarly contacts with Hungary or Hungarians. He does describe an occasion when Kraemer, in the capacity of director of the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, got in touch with a Hungarian person. Using it as an example of Kraemer's pastoral commitment to his students, van Leeuwen gives an account of a story (or rather an anecdote) in which a Hungarian female student of one of the courses was involved in a complicated love affair (caused by a dubious behaviour of a fellow student) and the director invited her to stay in his family house for a period of time in order to help her to escape the stressful situation.⁹ As no name and reference to the date of the course is provided, it is not possible to identify the persons involved in this case. Kraemer's family have no personal memories of any contacts with Hungary or with Hungarians either.¹⁰

⁸ A. Th. van Leeuwen, *Hendrik Kraemer, dienaar der wereldkerk*, Ten Have, Amsterdam, 1959.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 161.

¹⁰ Interview (on the telephone) with Mrs. Kraemer (daughter of Kraemer), June 2003.

An in-depth study of the Hendrik-Kraemer Archives¹¹ has delivered no evidence of any personal contacts between Kraemer and Hungarian (Reformed) personalities.¹²

On the other hand, it is documented that Kraemer did meet leading Hungarian Reformed personalities at ecumenical gatherings. Kraemer participated at a conference of the National Ecumenical Executives, held 28-29 January 1948 in Geneva, Switzerland, where László Pap, a Hungarian Reformed professor of theology was present, too.¹³ Kraemer met Hungarian representatives at the pre-assembly meeting of the Study Department of the WCC (Woudschouten, the Netherlands, 1948.), too, Béla Vasady, László Pap and Barna Nagy (Reformed professors of theology).¹⁴ Barna Nagy was a member of the committee – led by Kraemer – on ‘The Training of the Laymen of the Church’ at the Amsterdam Assembly of the WCC, 1948,¹⁵ too. Although these persons played important roles in the ecclesial, theological and ecumenical life in Hungary, no evidence can be found of any personal interaction with Kraemer.

5.4.3. *The Reception of Kraemer's Theology in Hungary*

In 1943 a book review was published in a smaller Hungarian Reformed theological journal about the German edition of Kraemer's *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.¹⁶ The author, László Gilicze, celebrates the book as a great survey of the situation of the Christian mission in the contemporary world. After briefly describing the contents of the main chapters of the work, Gilicze offers some evaluating remarks, too.¹⁷ In these he points to the fact that Kraemer breaks with the tradition of the ‘history of religion’ school in his discourse on the relationship between the Christian faith and world religions. According to Gilicze, Kraemer denies any religious evolution theory. Instead, he argues that Christian faith is radically different and Christianity ‘has the obligation of bearing witness about the cross of Christ and about the Kingdom of God’.¹⁸ He summarizes Kraemer's concept of mission in the following way, ‘The goal of Christian mission is the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ to all nations, because God intends to send His message to all nations without an exception.’¹⁹

¹¹ Hendrik Kraemer's personal archives (HK-A), deposited in the Archives of Utrecht (Utrechts Archief (UA), 1102, Doos 615-672).

¹² ‘Correspondentie’, HK-A 90 –1 (UA 651), Map 9, 11, 12; and ‘Stukken op het gebied van kerk en oecumene’ HK-A 85-2 (UA 628), Map 5-10.

¹³ HK-A 85-2 (UA 628), Map 9.

¹⁴ HK-A 85-2 (UA 628), Map 9.

¹⁵ HK-A 85-2 (UA 628), Map 6.

¹⁶ László Gilicze, ‘Hendrik Kraemer: Die Christliche Botschaft in einer Nicht-Christlichen Welt, Zürich, 1940’, in: *Református Theologia*, I/1 (1943), p. 41. (I am grateful to the late Professor József Barcza for calling my attention to this article).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

In this book review Kraemer is described as a missiologist and his concept of mission is highlighted. The author understood clearly Kraemer's intention to break with an evolutionist concept of religions and – without mentioning his name – he identified Kraemer's concept of mission as Barthian. Gilicze's article could have been a promising beginning of an authentic theological reception of Kraemer in the Hungarian Reformed theology; however, this reception has never been realized.

The next reference to Kraemer in the Hungarian Reformed theological literature is seventeen years later, in 1960. It is a book review again,²⁰ György Benke gives a review on Kraemer's *Die Kommunikation des christlichen Glaubens*.²¹ According to Benke, Kraemer is 'a well-known Dutch theologian'.²² He describes his book as a 'methodology of evangelism' with a wider outlook. The strength of Kraemer's work is that he focuses on an often-neglected aspect of the communication of the Christian faith, the importance of the target-group of this communication (as Benke puts it, not only the '*Kommunikation von*' but also the aspect of '*Kommunikation zwischen*' is underscored).²³ Without direct references to the book, Benke describes the main argumentation of Kraemer. His point of departure is the importance of the language, starting from the creating word of God, the *logos*. The Fall destroyed the direct communication between God and humankind which again destroyed the communication between persons and persons, peoples and peoples (Tower of Babel). In Christ God restores the communication with his creatures and salvation means a total restoration of horizontal and vertical communications in order to achieve 'wholeness' according to God's original intention. All modern attempts to create a global language (e.g. Esperanto) is – theologically speaking – a secular expression of the longing for this ultimate wholeness. The Christian church should communicate God's restoring will in Christ to the whole world in order to fulfil her mission. Secularization can be a help for Christianity in this process of communication because the church as a minority in a secular society can communicate the Christian message authentically (D. Bonhoeffer is referred to here). The church can build a bridge to the secular society by following Jesus Christ the Lord on His way of humble service.

Benke introduces Kraemer again as a missiologist and refers to his concept of the communication of the Christian faith with consent. According to his demonstration of Kraemer's thought, the Dutch theologian fits in the official theological line of the contemporary RCH saying that the authentic presence of the Christian church in the secular society is humble service. In this way Kraemer is – unintentionally? – used as a frame of reference to legitimate the official concept of mission in the RCH, in which mission and (political) diakonia are identical.

²⁰ György Benke, 'Hendrik Kraemer, *Die Kommunikation des christlichen Glaubens*' in: *Református Egyház*, XII/2 (1960), p. 24.

²¹ Hendrik Kraemer, *Die Kommunikation des christlichen Glaubens*, Zwingli Verlag, Zürich, 1958.

²² Op. cit., p. 24.

²³ Ibid.

In the next year two articles of the *Theologiai Szemle* (theological periodical of the Hungarian Ecumenical Council of Churches) dealt with Kraemer's works. Sándor Béla Nagy published a book review²⁴ of the French translation of Kraemer's *Religion and the Christian Faith*.²⁵ Nagy introduces 'professor Kraemer' to his readers as 'a historian of religion who, nevertheless, intends to direct attention to mission by his whole scholarly work'.²⁶ He gives a detailed overview of the contents of the Dutch theologian's book and highlights its theological message: the relationship of the Christian faith to other religions is determined by the apostolic character of the church. This means that the church has a *kerygma*, a message to proclaim to all peoples regardless their political, social and religious status. 'The proclamation of God's message does not only happen by words but by deeds also. The church expresses her faith by her service (diakonia) [...] and so she fulfils her divine mission...'²⁷

Nagy speaks about Kraemer with great respect and he obviously agrees with his propositions. It is remarkable that he describes him as a historian of religion with a missiological emphasis in his work. It is conspicuous though that his interpretation of Kraemer's concept of mission makes the reader think that Kraemer would identify that fulfilment of the missionary mandate with the diakonia of the church. However, Kraemer emphasizes both aspects of the proclamation (word and deed).²⁸ It seems to be Nagy's intention to prove that Kraemer's concept of mission is in line with the official theology of mission of the RCH.

In the next volume of the *Theologiai Szemle*, Elemér Kocsis published a long article about 'Christianity and World Religions'.²⁹ The article describes the 'Crisis of Christianity and of her Mission',³⁰ and speaks about 'The Renewal of the Non-Christian Religions'.³¹ Under the latter heading he describes the situation in general, then he gives an introduction to the contemporary condition of Islam, of Hinduism and of Buddhism. He closes his article with some theological remarks concerning the nature of Christian mission. It is obvious that Kocsis's article is largely based on Kraemer's works. He refers to three of them in the notes, *Die christliche Botschaft in einer nicht-christlichen Welt*,³² *De godsdiensten der wereld*,³³ and *Religion und christlicher Glaube*.³⁴ He praises Kraemer as 'the most outstanding Christian

²⁴ Sándor Béla Nagy, 'Vallás és keresztyén hit' in: *Theologiai Szemle* IV/9-10 (1961), p. 302.

²⁵ Hendrik Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith*, Lutherworth Press, London, 1956. In French: Hendrik Kraemer: *La foi chrétienne et les religions non chrétienne*, Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel et Paris, 1956.

²⁶ Op. cit., p. 302.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Cf. Jongeneel 2002, p. 38.

²⁹ Elemér Kocsis, 'Keresztyénség és világvallások' in: *Theologiai Szemle* IV/11-12 (1961), p. 345-350.

³⁰ Op. cit., p. 345.

³¹ Op. cit., p. 345-350.

³² Op. cit., p. 350. Notes: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 44 and 45 (German version of *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*).

³³ Ibid. Note 19 (published in 1955).

³⁴ Ibid. Notes: 24, 25, 26 and 37 (German version (1959) of the *Religion and the Christian Faith* (1958)).

scholar of religion in our age'³⁵ and later mentions that Kraemer deals with theological issues raised by the renaissance of world religions 'with brilliant scholarship'.³⁶ However, Kocsis goes beyond Kraemer's theology of mission in his missiological conclusions. He argues that God's salvific will is present in the non-Christian religions and in the secular philosophies (sic!) in a concealed way. This is based on a Christocentric and universal biblical understanding.³⁷ 'Mission is the witness, by the whole Christian life, of Jesus Christ who liberated us and others from egoism and made us able to serve. What is the way of the Christian testimony today? By living our common humanity we should work together with adherents of non-Christian religions and of secular philosophies in saving the life of the humankind and in making it more beautiful.'³⁸ It is clear that Kocsis intentionally uses his discourse on the relationship of Christianity and world religions to establish a new concept of Christian mission. This concept includes the notion of the 'presence of God's salvific will', not only in the non-Christian religions but in 'secular philosophies' (i.e. Marxism-Leninism?), too. The conclusion is that the proper fulfilment of Christian mission does not mean 'greedy proselytism'³⁹ but 'working together' with adherents of other religions and with secular philosophies (including Marxism-Leninism?) for the benefit of mankind. It is conspicuous that Kocsis does not refer to any of Kraemer's works when summarizing his missiological conclusions.

Kocsis demonstrates a deep knowledge of Kraemer's oeuvre and he gives an in-depth introduction to his thought in this remarkable article. However, without directly referring to the Dutch theologian, he – just as Benke and Nagy – makes the reader think that the theology of Kraemer supports his missiological conclusions which legitimates a politically loaded understanding of mission of cooperation with the Socialist state ideology.

Kocsis briefly returns to the discussion of Kraemer's works in 1965, in an article on 'Recent Publications on the Science of Religion'.⁴⁰ Kraemer is dealt with under the heading 'Christianity and the Religions'.⁴¹ His position is described as 'practical', based on the notion of incomparability of religions. However, Kocsis does not offer any appraisal of the Dutch theologian's works here; he confines himself to the description of his theological position.

³⁵ Op. cit., p. 346.

³⁶ Op. cit., p. 349. Cf. note 50.

³⁷ Op. cit., p. 350.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. 'mohó prozelitizmust'.

⁴⁰ Elemér Kocsis, 'Az újabb vallástudományi irodalomból' in: *Theologiai Szemle* VIII/1-2 (1965), p. 47-51.

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 49.

5.5. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

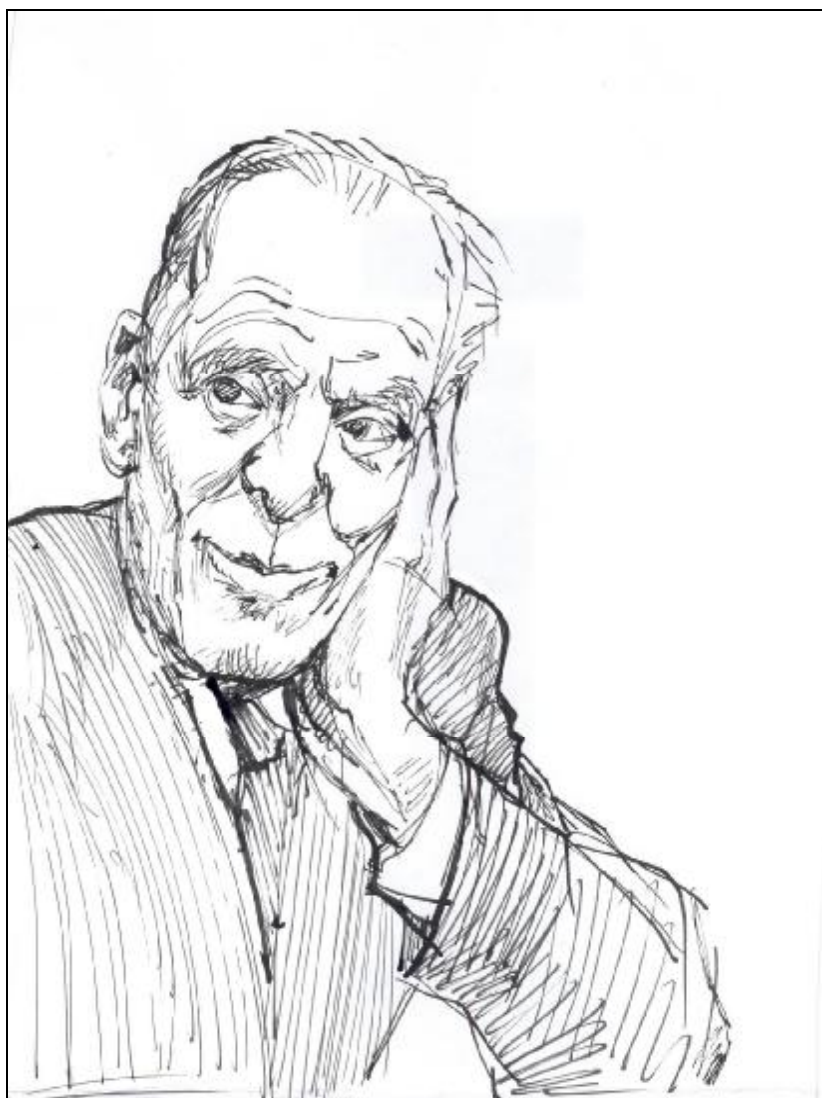
In this chapter an attempt was made to describe the reception and a possible impact of the outstanding Dutch missiologist, Hendrik Kramer in and on the RCH. Our hypothesis was that he – as a Barthian missiologist – could have been a link between the missiological developments in the Ecumenical movement and those in the RCH, where Barthianism gained much respect already before the Second World War and where dialectic theology became a constant frame of reference for the radical theological reorientation of that church after the War.

The research made in primary and secondary sources (published and unpublished) delivered meagre results. No personal relationship of Kraemer to Hungary was found documented. Although he led several courses in the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, it was not he but his predecessor in the position of study director, Hoekendijk, who exerted evident impact on the theological thinking of the RCH (especially through the publication of his lectures by László Makkai and by his personal visits to Hungary). Kraemer participated at gatherings together with Hungarian Reformed theologians and ecumenical personalities, but no personal interaction between them can be documented.

In the period between 1938 and 1968, only five major references were discovered in the Hungarian Reformed theological periodicals. Three of them are reviews of his books. One article briefly describes his theological position as a scholar of religions, and one article offers a deeper look into his theological and missiological thinking.

It can be concluded that Kraemer's oeuvre was known in the official theological circles of the RCH in the period of 1938-1968. He was praised as an outstanding historian and scholar of religion and his missiological position was known as well. However, a tendency of a one-sided interpretation of his theology of mission can be discovered (Benke, Nagy, Kocsis). Whereas Kraemer consequently emphasizes both the proclamation and the action character of Christian mission over against world religions, the Hungarian Reformed theologians highlighted only the latter aspect of his theology, stressing the diakonal nature of mission. Kocsis goes even further by using Kraemer's concept of the crisis of Christian mission as an argument to establish a new concept of mission which legitimates the cooperation between the church and the Socialist state ideology.

Kraemer did not play an important role as a theologian in the RCH and his impact can not be described as strong. However, he was respected as an outstanding Reformed theologian and an attempt was made to use (misuse?) his theology to legitimate the missiological concept of the theology of the serving church in the Reformed Church in Hungary.



Graphics by Gábor Kustár

Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985)

6. WILLEM A. VISSER 'T HOOFT AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a short biography of Visser 't Hooft is offered, followed by a general introduction to his theological oeuvre. A detailed description of his contacts with the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) is divided into four sub-chapters (Contacts before the Second World War; Contacts after the War until 1956; Contacts in 1956; After the Revolution). In the last part of the chapter the results of the research are summarized and final observations are made.

6.2. SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF WILEM ADOLF VISSER 'T HOOFT (1900-1985)

Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft¹ was born on 20 September 1900 in Haarlem, The Netherlands. He came from the background of a smaller Dutch Protestant denomination, the Remonstrant Brotherhood. After completing theological studies in Leiden he was ordained as a minister of the Netherlands Reformed Church (later of the National Reformed Church of Geneva, too). After concluding his studies in 1924 he began to work for the World Committee of YMCA as a staff person, in Geneva. He served as a personal assistant to Mott during the YMCA world conference in Helsinki, Finland, 1926. He wrote his dissertation about the social gospel movement and received his doctorate from the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. In 1932 he was appointed to work as the general secretary of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF). He attended the Oxford conference of Life and Work in 1937 as the member of the steering committees, and the Edinburgh conference of Faith and Order in the same year, as the member of the executive committee. At the joint meeting of the two movements in 1938, in Utrecht, when the decision was made to establish the World Council of Churches, he was appointed to be the general secretary of the Provisional Committee. He was one of the main organizers of the world conference of Christian Youth (Amsterdam, 1939). During the Second World War he was active in supporting refugees fleeing

¹ Ans van der Bent, 'Visser 't Hooft, Willem Adolf' in: Nicholas Lossky, Jose M Bonino, John Pobee, Tom F. Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright and Pauline Webb (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva, 2002, p. 1195-1197.

from the National Socialist dictatorships and served as a liaison between different resistance movements ('the Swiss Road'). He was elected to the office of general secretary of the World Council of Churches in 1948 and served the WCC in this position until 1966. He led the WCC during its formative years and shaped and influenced its form and content. During his office period the merger of the International Missionary Council and the WCC was completed in 1961 and the major Eastern Orthodox Churches (including the Orthodox Church of Russia) entered the WCC in the same year (3rd General Assembly, New Delhi, India). These two developments were the fruits of Visser 't Hooft's personal commitment and they are often looked upon as his most important achievements. After his retirement in 1966 he was elected to honorary president of the WCC. He remained active in the ecumenical movement and published several books on issues related to the history of the ecumenical movement. He died in 1985, in Geneva.

6.3. VISSER 'T HOOFT AS AN ECUMENICAL AND MISSIONARY THEOLOGIAN

According to Ans J. van der Bent, one of his biographers, Visser 't Hooft did not consider himself to be an original and creative theologian,² 'he continuously underlined his dependency on mainstreams of theological thought.'³ Van der Bent also denotes him as an 'eclectic' theologian.⁴ However, he appreciates his originality in the way Visser 't Hooft integrated the elements of different theological streams into an 'ecumenical mosaic of theology'.⁵

If we take an account of the theological streams which influenced Visser 't Hooft's thinking, we must rely mostly on his biographical data. According to his memoirs, the first theological impulses were received from the minister of the Remonstrant Brotherhood, a liberal theologian of Hegelian convictions. During his theological studies in Leiden Visser 't Hooft got under the influence of the Student Movement (NCSV), where he was confronted with a personal spirituality instead of a philosophy of religion and with an Evangelical theology. After have moved to Geneva as a staff member of the World Alliance of YMCA and later of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), he was dropped into the middle of a theological conflict between the eschatologically oriented, passivist German and a socially oriented, activist Anglo-American wings of the youth movements. In the beginning he made attempts to play a mediating role between the two. During this time he got acquainted with Barthian theology, and gradually became its convinced proponent. He devoted his doctoral dissertation to a critical analysis of the theology of the North-American Social Gospel movement (in 1928); later he published articles on the early Barthian theology (one of the first introductions to the Barthian

² Ans J. van der Bent, *W.A. Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985). Fisherman of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva, 2000 (Van der Bent 2000), p. 25.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

thought in the French language was written by him). Next to his many administrative and organizational obligations he also took time and energy to reflect theologically on the issues facing the ecumenical movement in his major works (*None Other God* – 1931, *The Kingship of Christ* – 1948, *The Renewal of the Church* – 1956, *The Pressure of Our Common Calling* – 1959). In his later years he mainly published about the history of the WCC (*Memoirs* – 1973, *The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches* – 1982).

Francois C. Gérard, who wrote a dissertation about Visser 't Hooft's theological oeuvre,⁶ identifies the concept of the 'renewal of the church' as the *Leitmotiv* of his theology.⁷ According to Gérard's interpretation of the Visser 't Hooftian thought, the background of his theological concern is the apparent collapse of Western Christendom and of the failure of the traditional churches to fulfil their mission in the Post-enlightenment Western culture. The precondition of the renewal is a Christological reorientation of the life of the church. Gérard argues that Visser 't Hooft is a Barthian⁸ in his radically theocentric way of thinking, and in his Christological concentration. This Christ-centred universalism is a constant characteristic of his thinking, which, on the one hand, makes him think globally and comprehensively about the mission of the church but, on the other hand, prevents him from supporting any syncretistic tendencies. The way of renewal of the church is its repeated repentance and conversion (*metanoia*) to the Lord, according to the Old Testament patterns of the history of Israel.⁹ The church should seek the will of God, and the unity of the church (or as Gérard puts it, its 'wholeness') is one of the most evident of God's will revealed, among others, in John 17. Thus the renewal of the church and the struggle for deep, true and visible unity of the churches are mutual conditions.¹⁰ The main concern of Visser 't Hooft's innumerable speeches, public addresses, lectures, editorials and articles, the unity of the churches is placed thus in the wider context of the renewal of the church. The churches should live out unity in fulfilling their mission in the world. The church 'is to be involved in the divine enterprise of salvation, in the service of Christ to all men'.¹¹ The true nature of the Kingdom of God must be showed to the world in humble service to all kinds of – individual and structural – needs of the mankind. In this sense 'The *raison d'être* of the church is to serve'.¹² In his book on the *Pressure of Our Calling*¹³ he devotes a whole chapter to the issue of the service of the church.¹⁴ His discourse is strongly dependant on Hoekendijk's theological

⁶ Francois C Gérard, *The Future of the Church. The Theology of Renewal of Willem Adolph Visser 't Hooft*, Pittsburgh, 1974 (Gérard 1974).

⁷ Op. cit., p. 5.

⁸ Op. cit., p. 182.

⁹ In the Deuteronomistic historiography.

¹⁰ Gérard's analysis is very helpful to understand Visser 't Hooft's theological thought; nevertheless, he seems to depict Visser 't Hooft as an Evangelical theologian (without explicitly denoting him to be one). Van der Bent's assessments give a more complex picture of Visser 't Hooft's thinking.

¹¹ Gérard 1974, p. 95.

¹² Quoted by Gérard 1974, p. 95.

¹³ Willem A. Visser 't Hooft, *The Pressure of Our Calling*, London, 1959 (Visser 't Hooft 1959).

¹⁴ Visser 't Hooft 1959, p. 45-61.

concept of calling of the church as *kerygma/martyria*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*.¹⁵ He argues that *diakonia* is characteristic of the internal life of the church as well as of the presence of the church in world. He also touches on the problem of the relationship of *diakonia* to Christian mission, saying that *diakonia* is the primary form of the presence of the church in the society, but ‘we should always be ready to give an account of our faith when we are asked to do so’.¹⁶ In one of the concluding remarks of this chapter he uses the following formulation, ‘The ecumenical movement should help the churches to be servant churches in the society in which they live’.¹⁷ Renewal, unity and social service belong closely together in Visser ‘t Hooft’s ecclesiological concept.

Van der Bent summarizes Visser ‘t Hooft’s theological thought in the following four theses:

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ is unique; God’s revelation rebukes all human fantasies of God and humanity; an ‘ecumenism of world religions’ leads to nowhere.
2. God reveals himself in history, in historical acts. Consequently the relation of political and history to theology is vital.
3. As the universality and unity of humanity are God’s will, all anti-democratic forces (national socialism, communism etc.) must be resisted.
4. The unity of the church must serve the poor, the marginalized and the destitute.¹⁸

In his short appraisal of Visser ‘t Hooft’s theological legacy, Van der Bent also directs the attention to some open questions about his thought. He asks whether the supreme goal of the unity of the churches in Visser ‘t Hooft’s thinking was not determined by a hidden – unconscious – ecclesiological triumphalism.¹⁹ He also exerts some criticism on the apparently exclusivist nature of Visser ‘t Hooft’s thinking about the Bible and about the uniqueness of Christ over against other world religions. The problem of Visser ‘t Hooft’s strong personality is also raised, and it is questioned to what extent his theological thinking was biased by his lack of direct experience in local church ministry²⁰ and by his well-off, white, Dutch family background.²¹

¹⁵ He refers to Hoekendijk on op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁶ Op. cit., p. 57.

¹⁷ Op. cit., p. 58. A term is used here – ‘serving church’ – which was dominant in the contemporary theology of the Reformed Church in Hungary, without any reference to it.

¹⁸ Van der Bent 2000, p. 32.

¹⁹ Van der Bent 2000, p. 41 ff.

²⁰ He was aware of this problem. In a personal letter to Hoekendijk he turns down an apparent informal approach to accept an invitation to be an ecclesial professor (*kerkelijke hoogleraar*) in Practical Theology (in Utrecht?), by referring to his lack of experience in the local congregation. *Letter to Hoekendijk, 16 December 1953*, in JCH-A, Correspondence Hoekendijk – Visser ‘t Hooft, deposited by P van Gurp, No. 80 (photocopy, originals in WCC-A, Geneva (unpublished)).

²¹ A comprehensive theological analysis of Visser ‘t Hooft’s oeuvre is still to be undertaken.

According to Van der Bent, Visser 't Hooft 'became a bridge-builder of what was later called horizontal and vertical theology'.²² His mediating function continued when the tension grew in the WCC around the 'proclamation' and 'social action' character of Christian mission. In his Memoirs, he describes himself as a theologian in a mediatory role, 'My own writings on theological matters are not original contributions to theological thought but interpretations across confessional and linguistic frontiers of thoughts which I have picked up from theological pathfinders'.²³

Visser 't Hooft was more an ingenious ecclesial diplomat than an original theologian. However, his diplomatic and organizational efforts to achieve the visible unity of the churches of the Globe were motivated by deep theological convictions, his Barthian Christological concentration and his commitment to the renewal of the church in fulfilling her divine calling to be a demonstration of the true nature of the coming Kingdom of God, by the means of humble service in the world.

6.4. VISSER 'T HOOFT AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY

When trying to explore the interaction between Visser 't Hooft and the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), one is confronted with a methodological problem. In the Archives of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva, Switzerland, among the materials of the General Secretariat, there are two files where documents related to contacts with the RCH are preserved. Under the heading 'Country files and Correspondence, Hungary, 1932-1957'²⁴ there are 12 folders consisting of general correspondence with Hungarians Under the heading 'Correspondence, Member Churches 1938-1993', four folders consist of material concerning the RCH.²⁵ In the index of the general correspondence of the General Secretariat 34 Hungarian names can be found.²⁶ All this material shows that the WCC General Secretariat had extensive contacts with Hungary, among others, with the RCH. Visser 't Hooft, as general secretary, was involved directly in the majority of these contacts. The majority of the documents found in the files of the General Secretariat are of

²² Van der Bent 2000, p. 27.

²³ Visser 't Hooft, *Memoirs*, Geneva, 1973 (Visser 't Hooft 1973), p. 351.

²⁴ WCC-A-301.4391.1. The folders are the following: 1. General Papers I. 1944-1951; 2. General Papers II. 1944-1951; 3. Church and State I. 1945-1950; 4. Church and State II. 1945-1950; 5. Protestant Churches I. 1944-1950; 6. Protestant Churches II. 1944-1950; 7. Study Group 1943-1948; 8. Evangelism and National Reformed Free Council; 9. Ecumenical Cooperation 1944-1950; 10. Minority Problem 1946-1947; 11. Reconstruction 1946-1947; and 12. Youth 1943-1948.

²⁵ WCC-A-42.4.042, folders 4, 5, 6 and 7. Curiously enough the correspondence with the RCH from the years 1956-1957 is not present in this material.

²⁶ WCC-A-42.005 to 42.086. These names are the following: Balogh, Baltazar, Békefy, Bereczky, Bónis, Budai, Fehervany [sic! correctly: Fehérvári, GL], Ferencz, Gyözy [sic. correctly: Györy, GL], Imre, Jánossy, Kállay, Kulifay, Makkai, Makray, Molnár [Prague, GL], Ordass, Pákozdy, Pálffy, Pap, Radvánszky, Raffay, Revez (sic! correctly: Révész, GL), Szabó, Szécsy, Tavasgy [sic! correctly: Tavaszy, GL], Teleki, Turóczy, Varga, Vargha, Vassady, Vásárhelyi, Zsindeley [sic! correctly: Zsindely, GL].

technical and administrative nature.²⁷ A detailed research of this material may have relevance for the history of the RCH in the 20th century in general. However, this present study concentrates exclusively on Visser 't Hooft's relationship with – and eventual influence on – the RCH. Thus the scope of this study is confined to Visser 't Hooft as a person, and it is not intended to offer a comprehensive description of the history of the complex relationship of the WCC and RCH in the period researched. On the other hand, it is evident that Visser 't Hooft as a person can not be separated from his capacity of being the general secretary of the WCC for almost three decades. His contacts with Hungary were mainly official ones, and he was present (personally, in correspondence and in publications) as the chief representative of the WCC. In the light of this dilemma, the following method is chosen,

An attempt is made to describe Visser 't Hooft's personal contacts with the RCH and his eventual impact on it, and the wider setting of his activity (in the history of the Ecumenical movement or in the history of the RCH) is only described when needed in this context.

6.4.1. Contacts before the Second World War

Visser 't Hooft visited Hungary for the first time in 1923.²⁸ As a student of theology²⁹ of the University of Leiden, The Netherlands, he joined the Dutch Student Christian Movement (NCSV) and filled different positions in the organization, including that of the acting general secretary in 1922.³⁰ In 1923, the European Student Relief Conference was held in Paráds, Hungary. Visser 't Hooft was the chairman of the program committee, thus he was responsible for running the conference. In his *Memoirs* he mentions two issues which were characteristic of that meeting, the growing tension between France and Germany about the French occupation of the Ruhr Region and its repercussions among the German and French delegates and the issue of 'anti-Semitism in several Central-European countries'.³¹ He does not mention any contacts with Hungarians or Hungarian churches (except 'a picnic in the woods with a gypsy band, with our unsuccessful attempts to dance the 'Czardas' in a true Hungarian style').³²

There is little known about the next documented visit³³, which took place sometime between 1932 and 1939.³⁴ Visser 't Hooft was invited in 1924 to work for

²⁷ The material of Visser 't Hooft's private correspondence – also present in the WCC Archives in a closed section – was, unfortunately, not accessible for this research.

²⁸ Visser 't Hooft 1973, p. 13-14.

²⁹ For a shorter period of time he studied law, too. Cf. op. cit., p. 8-9.

³⁰ Op. cit., p. 12.

³¹ Op. cit., p. 13.

³² Ibid. Correctly: 'csárdás'.

³³ Visser 't Hooft must have visited Hungary in 1925, too, maybe on a private journey. Cf. WCC-A-994.1.00, Map 1, 'Travel itineraries': '15-23 May 1925: Budapest, Hotel Gellért' (unpublished).

the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva. In 1932, he was also elected to be the general secretary of the World Student Christian Federation. When remembering this period of life in his *Memoirs*, he very briefly speaks about ‘an opportunity [...] of international healing ministry’,³⁵ which took place ‘when Yugoslavia and Hungary were on the brink of war’.³⁶ He writes, ‘I crossed the border with a letter from the Serbian to the Hungarian Student Christian Movement. When we opened it, we found that it contained only the text of the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John – and this was just the right word in this situation’.³⁷ Although no further details are known about this quite remarkable visit, it is the first indication in Visser ‘t Hooft’s *Memoirs* of a direct, personal contact with Hungarian Protestants.

The next occasion, when it is documented that Visser ‘t Hooft met a representative of the RCH was the First Ecumenical Youth Conference, held in 1939, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. This was the last large-scale ecumenical gathering before the outbreak of the Second World War. Visser ‘t Hooft played a prominent role in preparing and running the conference.³⁸ It was in Amsterdam where Visser ‘t Hooft met the delegate of the RCH³⁹ to the meeting, László Pap,⁴⁰ who became later his most important Hungarian Reformed contact person and even a personal friend.⁴¹ They remained in touch also during the war, and Pap even sent a greeting telegram to Visser ‘t Hooft on the occasion of arrival of the liberating armies to the Netherlands in 1944.⁴²

From this data it can be concluded that Visser ‘t Hooft had contacts with Hungary already before the Second World War. However, these contacts were occasional and sporadic. The fact that he got acquainted and became friends with the Hungarian Reformed professor of theology László Pap at the Ecumenical Youth

³⁴ There were several crises in that period between Hungary and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Visser ‘t Hooft may have meant 1932 (the Zagreb Manifesto of the Croats) or 1934, when King Peter I of Yugoslavia was assassinated in Marseilles, France. (It is possible – though not likely, because the chapter is about an earlier period of time – that he speaks about a later crisis, in 1941, when Germany unilaterally attacked Yugoslavia and Hungary annexed the region Vojvodina (Vajdaság), which had belonged to Hungary until the end of the First World War.) Because these data, present in the WCC Archives, indicate that Visser ‘t Hooft stayed in Budapest in 1934, we suppose that this visit took place in that year. cf. WCC-A-994.1.00, Map 1, ‘Travel itineraries’: ‘28 November – 1 December 1934, Budapest’ (unpublished).

³⁵ Op. cit., p. 33.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Visser ‘t Hooft 1973, p. 100-104: ‘Youth Meet at the Eve of the War’.

³⁹ László Pap, *Tíz év és ami utána következett 1945-1963*, Bern-Budapest, 1992 (Pap 1992), p. 11-12.

⁴⁰ László Pap (1908-1983) was professor of Old Testament Studies and Dean of the Budapest Reformed Theological Academy; leader of the Hungarian Ecumenical Reconstruction Office; and vice bishop of the Dunamelléki (Danubian) Reformed Church District. He was present at the Amsterdam (1948) and at the Evanston (1954) meetings of the WCC, and was elected member of its Central Committee (1948-1961), but he was hindered by the Communist authorities from participating at its meetings. He played a prominent role in the renewal movement in the RCH in 1956. He was forced to resign from all his positions in 1957 and served as a minister in a small rural congregation in Murga. He retired in 1963.

⁴¹ A part of Visser ‘t Hooft’s correspondence is present in the WCC Archives: 42.0063-64; however, the most interesting material may be in the private files of Visser ‘t Hooft, not yet accessible for research.

⁴² Pap 1992, p. 24.

Conference, 1939, Amsterdam, turned out to be important for his future contacts to the RCH.

6.4.2. *Contacts after the Second World War until 1956*

The leadership of the Reformed Church in Hungary – with László Ravasz as presiding bishop – issued a memorandum about the danger of Communism ('Bolshevism') for Europe. The memorandum was sent to the Secretariat of the WCC (in process of formation) by an official delegation (Géza Soos and Elek Boér) in 1943. Visser 't Hooft met the delegation but refused to receive the document formally⁴³ because he considered it to be too mild in its formulations on National Socialism and exaggerating about the wickedness of the Communist ideology and practice. Pap remarks 'The mistake of course was that Boér and Soos did not understand that it was in Geneva that Visser 't Hooft was reading the Memorandum and was listening to them, and Visser 't Hooft did not understand that it was Hungary that they spoke about, where the sphere is wholly different'.⁴⁴ This conflict already sheds light on Visser 't Hooft's relationship to the pre-war leadership of the RCH and especially to bishop Ravasz, he saw Ravasz as a conservative leader, linked too much to the pre-war political system in Hungary. In 1943, the predecessor of the Hungarian Ecumenical Council of Churches was established in Hungary as the Hungarian Committee of the Universal [sic!] Council of Churches (*Az Egyetemes Egyháztanács Magyarországi Bizottsága*). The founding document was signed by Bishop László Ravasz (RCH) and Antal Radvánszky (general inspector of the Lutheran Church in Hungary). The two secretaries were Lajos Ordass (Lutheran) and László Pap (Reformed).⁴⁵

In 1945 Pap received a formal appointment from the WCC Secretariat to set up an Ecumenical Office for Reconstruction in Budapest. From this time on Pap was the primary contact person of the WCC in Hungary. Pap visited Switzerland in early 1946⁴⁶ in order to discuss the issues of reconstruction and of the ecumenical relationships. In his report on his conversation with Visser 't Hooft⁴⁷ he describes him as very much interested in the situation of the RCH. However, he criticized Ravasz's position about the persecution of the Jews in Hungary⁴⁸ and asked

⁴³ The document is still present in the WCC Archives: WCC-A-42.4.042.

⁴⁴ Pap 1992, p. 14.

⁴⁵ János Pásztor, 'A magyar egyházak és az ökumenikus mozgalom' in: <http://oikumene.meot.hu> (15.08.2006), 3.

⁴⁶ Op. cit., p. 20-33.

⁴⁷ Op. cit., p. 24.

⁴⁸ Ravasz, as *ex officio* member of the Higher Chamber of the Hungarian Parliament, voted for the first and second 'Jewish Laws' (1938/X and 1939/IV) which, in a discriminative way, limited the access of the Jewish population to higher education and to certain professions (*numerus clausus*). However, he protested against the third Jewish Law (ghettoization) and against the deportation of the Hungarian Jews, and issued a circular letter to the Reformed congregations condemning the persecution of the Jews. He was also instrumental in setting up the 'Jó Pásztor' [The Good Shepherd] Ministry of the RCH in order to support and save Hungarian Jews. cf. László Ravasz: *Emlékezéseim*, Budapest, 1992.

‘whether there are any signs of repentance in our church [the RCH] and whether we recognize that it is not possible to continue our life where it was broken in 1944’.⁴⁹ It is also interesting to remark that Visser ‘t Hooft was inquiring about the possibilities whether the RCH would use the opportunity of the Russian occupation to seek contacts with the Russian Orthodox Church.⁵⁰ During a second meeting, Visser ‘t Hooft expressed his concerns that the RCH ‘is still very conservative, had not learnt from her past and, for this reason, was not lively enough’.⁵¹

Pap and Visser ‘t Hooft remained in close contact in the following years. In 1947, following a suggestion of Pap, Visser ‘t Hooft was elected to be honorary professor of the Budapest Reformed Theological Academy.⁵² Pap visited Geneva again in the same year and invited Visser ‘t Hooft to deliver his inaugural lectures as honorary professor in Budapest.⁵³ This visit took place at the very end of the same year (9-15 December 1947).⁵⁴ He and his wife were the guests of the family Pap, and after he festively delivered his inaugural lectures he visited Debrecen, Miskolc and Sárospatak, accompanied by László Makkai. He met Albert Bereczky⁵⁵ – as far as it is documented, for the first time – who was then struggling with ill health. Visser ‘t Hooft organized a vacation period for him in Switzerland in order to help his recovery (January 1948). Pap reports here about an interesting meeting which sheds light on the way Visser ‘t Hooft might have had direct influence on the course of events in Hungary. According to Pap, Visser ‘t Hooft held the ‘leadership of the Lutheran Church far too conservative’⁵⁶ and asked the Reformed professor to organize a meeting for him with ‘leftist thinkers from the Lutheran Church’.⁵⁷ The meeting took place in Pap’s home, but without his

⁴⁹ Pap 1992, p. 24.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Op. cit., p. 28.

⁵² Van der Bent 2000, p. 22 and Pap 1992, p. 50 (this was the first honorary title granted to Visser ‘t Hooft).

⁵³ Pap 1992, p. 50.

⁵⁴ Op. cit., p. 52.

⁵⁵ Albert Bereczky (1893-1966) was a Reformed minister and an outstanding representative of the revivalists of the RCH. He was active in saving persecuted Jews during the Second World War. After the War he entered politics, from 1945 he was member of the National Assembly, from 1947 of the Parliament. In 1945-1946 he was state secretary of the Ministry of Public Education and of Religious Affairs. In 1947 he was chairman of the parliamentary Committee of Foreign Affairs. He was bishop of the Dunamelléki Church District (1948-1958), a leading representative of the RCH in ecumenical meetings, and a proponent of the cooperation with the Communist state. His critics accused him of introducing an ecclesial dictatorship in the RCH.

⁵⁶ In 1947 the four bishops of the Lutheran Church in Hungary were the following: Dezső Kuthy (Dunáninneni District); Lajos Ordass (Bánya District); Zoltán Turóczy (Tiszai District); and Béla Kapi (Dunántúli District). The general inspector (lay president) was Count Albert Radvánszky. Of these persons it was Béla Kapi, Dezső Kuthy and Albert Radvánszky who were active in the pre-war period. Turóczy was arrested by the Communists in 1946 and, after being released, he was under police observation. Ordass was a man of international recognition: later the WCC protested against his imprisonment in a made-up trial in 1948.

⁵⁷ Pap 1992, p. 52.

presence. From the Lutheran side László Dezséry,⁵⁸ László Benczúr and Vilmos Gyöngyösi participated at the meeting. Pap recalls that later Dezséry told him that 'Visser 't Hooft encouraged them to go to the left.'⁵⁹ Although Pap expresses his doubts about this,⁶⁰ Benczúr confirmed that the general secretary supported a 'leftist' turn in the Lutheran Church.⁶¹

Another incident shows also that in these years Visser 't Hooft thought in quite positive terms about the possibility of constructive cooperation with the political authorities in Hungary.⁶² When Pap visited Visser 't Hooft again in January 1948, he reported to the general secretary⁶³ about the atrocities and attacks that the Ecumenical Reconstruction Office had suffered in the preceding months.⁶⁴ Pap describes Visser 't Hooft's reaction as follows, 'He got extremely angry and reproached me for not doing my best to work together with the government organs.'⁶⁵

. As already mentioned above, Visser 't Hooft had serious reservations about Ravasz. He greeted thus warmly the election of Bereczky as a successor of Ravasz and he even made an attempt to informally influence the RCH to include him in the delegation to the first Assembly of the WCC, Amsterdam, 1948.⁶⁶

It was during the Amsterdam Assembly that the leaders of the WCC received news from Hungary about the arrest of the Hungarian Lutheran bishop Lajos Ordass. Since Ordass was an official member of the Assembly (delegated by the Lutheran Church in Hungary), some participants wanted to bring this issue to the plenary. According to Pap's memoirs, it was Visser 't Hooft who resisted to do so in order to avoid diplomatic calamities. However, the first meeting of the Central Committee – Pap was elected to be a member of it –, held in Woudschoten, addressed the issue and sent letters of protest about this issue to the Hungarian authorities. In order to protect him, Pap was asked not to participate at the meetings when the Ordass issue was discussed.⁶⁷

Visser 't Hooft made it also clear that the WCC did not intend to get involved in direct political actions. When Bereczky asked him to arrange an entrance visa to Switzerland for János Péter, who was to attend the First Word

⁵⁸ László Dezséry (1904-1977) was later bishop of the Déli District of the Lutheran Church in Hungary (1950-1956).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Benczúr confirmed this in an interview to Kool (unpublished typescript, generously shared with the author by Prof. Kool, Budapest-Pápa, Hungary).

⁶² These authorities were formally democratically elected. However, the Communist party had growing political influence which led to their total seizure of power in 1948.

⁶³ Pap 1992, p. 58.

⁶⁴ Op. cit., p. 54-57. A member of staff, János Hartai, was put under pressure by the Communist-controlled secret police in order to force him to give secret reports about the activities of the office. He resisted and Pap helped him to escape the undercover police agents.

⁶⁵ Op. cit., p. 58.

⁶⁶ Pap 1992, p. 72.

⁶⁷ Op. cit., p. 73.

Peace Congress in Paris,⁶⁸ Visser 't Hooft declined the request saying 'that there is no way from Paris to Geneva...[and that] the World Council of Churches rules out any cooperation with the Partisans of Peace'.⁶⁹

In the meantime Pap was put under political pressure both by the Communist authorities and by the leadership of the RCH. As a consequence of this he resigned from his position of the leader of the Ecumenical Reconstruction Office and handed it over to László Makkai on 1 September 1949.⁷⁰ This way he was removed from the ecumenical contacts and he was not allowed to participate at the meetings of the Central Committee of the WCC and of the Executive Committee of the World Presbyterian Alliance.⁷¹

At the Toronto meeting of the Central Committee in 1950, where Bereczky was present on behalf of the RCH (instead of the member Pap), a communiqué was issued about the questions about the Korean war, denoting North-Korea as an aggressor. Bereczky – following the intentions of the Hungarian authorities – condemned this formulation, resigned from his membership in the Committee on Churches and International Affairs (CCIA) and threatened that the RCH would leave the WCC. Karl Barth criticized Bereczky's position in a letter to him. Visser 't Hooft made Barth's position on the issue public (against Barth's will) and used it to combat Bereczky's position.⁷² This is the first sign that Visser 't Hooft, who had fully supported Bereczky and his line in 1947-1948, changed his approach and began to be more critical about the leadership of the RCH.⁷³ Since this incident, the Hungarian Communist authorities stamped Visser 't Hooft as a person representing a policy which was contradictory to the Hungarian interests. They tried to influence the developments within the WCC – via the representatives of the Hungarian protestant churches – in order to 'promote [...] the isolation of the military [sic!] politics of Visser 't Hooft, Lund-Quist [...], bishop Bergrav and bishop Nygren'.⁷⁴

This setting changed again in 1954, when the political situation in Hungary became more flexible after Stalin's death and because of the – temporary – fall of the Communist dictator Mátyás Rákosi. The first Imre Nagy-government intended to loosen its grip on the churches (without giving up total control of the churches by the State Office for Church Affairs (*Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal – AÉH*). The AÉH 'reactivated' Pap on the ecumenical scene in order to create a counterweight against the pro-Rákosi hardliners of the RCH, represented by the bishop of Debrecen, János

⁶⁸ Organised by the pro-Soviet organization of the 'Partisans of Peace' (from 1950: World Peace Council) in April 1949.

⁶⁹ Pap 1992, p. 80.

⁷⁰ Op. cit., p. 82.

⁷¹ Later: World Alliance of Reformed Churches – WARC.

⁷² Cf. the confidential report of Horváth, the president of the AÉH for the leadership of the Communist Party (MDP) about this issue (1951). Published by Gyula Bárczay in the Appendix of Pap's memoirs in Pap 1992, p. 320-324.

⁷³ This might have been also influenced by Barth's growing criticism of Bereczky, too.

⁷⁴ This rather naive formulation is quoted from Horváth's same report, published as an Appendix in Pap 1992, p. 324.

Péter. Pap also was involved in the preparations of Visser 't Hooft next visit to Hungary.

The goal of the visit of the general secretary of the WCC and of G.K.A. Bell, Anglican bishop of Chichester, co-president of the Council was to discuss the preparations to the 2nd General Assembly of the WCC, which was to be held later in the same year in Evanston, USA. Although Pap was pushed to the forefront of the ecumenical relationships again, he describes this act later as 'for the show'.⁷⁵ According to Pap, Péter and the AÉH officials had a hidden agenda for this meeting with the prominent leader of the WCC, they made an attempt to gain the support of the WCC for the World Peace Council's activities. This attempt failed totally (Pap, 'a *fiasco*').⁷⁶ Pap describes an incident which also demonstrates that Visser 't Hooft's formerly supportive attitude to the 'new' leadership of the RCH (Bereczky, Péter) began to change. Pap recalls that at an extremely abundant reception offered by the RCH leadership to honour the ecumenical guest, Visser 't Hooft used sharp and pithy words 'almost to the extent of a harsh offence'⁷⁷ in his address to the participants and – though in a humorous form – he condemned the luxury of the occasion.

The changing political sphere made it possible for Pap to be a member of the Hungarian delegation to the Evanston Assembly of the WCC in 1954, and he was re-elected as a member of the Central Committee, too. At this meeting, Visser 't Hooft and Pap had a chance to meet in private again, and the Hungarian professor gave him a detailed description of the ecclesial situation in Hungary.⁷⁸

Visser 't Hooft visited Hungary in September 1955 again, on the occasion of the festivities around the centenary of the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest. He greeted the Academy on behalf of the WCC. This visit turned out to be of utmost importance. During the festivities young Reformed ministers secretly handed over a very critical document, the Declaration of Faith (*Hitvalló Nyilatkozat*)⁷⁹ which was created by young ministers and lay church members about the theological and ecclesio-political situation in the RCH. Visser 't Hooft received a copy of the Declaration from József Siklós, on the street, in front of the Kálvin Téri Reformed Church in Budapest.⁸⁰ After the celebrations Visser 't Hooft visited Debrecen,⁸¹ too. Here he was informed – again in secret – by theological students that two young ministers – Péter Fekete and Tibor Kovács – were arrested and were being held in custody because they criticized the theology and practice of church

⁷⁵ Pap 1992, p. 100.

⁷⁶ Op. cit., p. 101.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Op. cit., p. 108-109.

⁷⁹ The Declaration of Faith was published in Hungary legally for the first time 34 years later, in 1989 in *Confessio*, 1989/2, p. 118-121. Published again in Ladányi 2006, p. 101-105. The authors were: Zoltán Szabó, János Pásztor, Mikós Molnár, Tivadar Pánczél, István Debreczeni, Loránt Hegedűs, Gyula Bárczay, Géza. Németh, Sándor Dizsery and Árpád Hatolkay (?). It was translated to German by Zsigmond Ritoók. cf. Ladányi 2006, p. 48.

⁸⁰ Ladányi 2006, p. 48.

⁸¹ Debrecen is a traditional centre of Hungarian Calvinism, with a Reformed College since 1538. In 1955 it was the see of Bishop János Péter.

leadership, especially that of Péter. According to Pap, Visser 't Hooft asked Bereczky and Péter about this matter and both denied knowing anything about the issue. Pap recalls that Visser 't Hooft called the two bishops 'liars' in a private conversation with him.⁸²

The declaration and the issue of the imprisonment of the ministers shed light on the true nature of the policy of the RCH leadership. As Géza Németh, one of the authors of the Declaration puts it, 'From this moment on the World Council of Churches had no excuse to accept these lies [of the leaders of the RCH] any more. Mr. Visser 't Hooft did not let the Hungarian Liberation Movement down...'⁸³

6.4.3. Contacts in 1956

The Central Committee of the WCC held its meeting in August 1956 in Galyateto, Hungary.⁸⁴ It was for the first time that the Central Committee convened in a Communist-led country. In the context of a more open political situation in Hungary, the Government paid much attention to this meeting, and of course used it as a demonstration of the religious freedom in the country.

In order to achieve this, the Communist authorities were ready to make certain concessions in ecclesio-political areas, László Ravasz, Reformed bishop in retirement was allowed to visit the meeting and to talk to the leaders of the WCC. Parallel to the official program there were confidential negotiations about the full rehabilitation of Lajos Ordass, former bishop of the Lutheran Church in Hungary, who was sentenced to jail for alluded financial mismanagement in a politically motivated made-up trial in 1948. Visser 't Hooft took part at these negotiations with the president of the State Office for Church Affairs. Although no full agreement was reached between the negotiating parties, a legal process of rehabilitation was started and it was concluded with positive results within the next two months.⁸⁵ Visser 't Hooft remembers the hospitality of the Hungarian hosting organizations with warm words in his Memoirs and quotes László Pap saying, 'I can testify that your coming and living with us has made a very big impression on our congregations.'⁸⁶

The staff of the WCC experienced the Hungarian Revolution of 23 October 1956 as fully unexpected.⁸⁷ Although Visser 't Hooft met Pap once again in Geneva at the beginning of October, he did not see any signs that a revolution was about to come. As the news of fighting arrived in Geneva, the WCC immediately began to

⁸² Pap 1992, p. 130.

⁸³ Géza Németh, 'Persecution, Resistance, Betrayal: The Liberation Theology in the Reformed Church' in: József Pungur (ed.), *An Eastern European Liberation Theology*, Calgary, 1984.

⁸⁴ Visser 't Hooft 1973, p. 298-299.

⁸⁵ Op. cit., p. 299.

⁸⁶ Ibid. Quoted by Visser 't Hooft without reference.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 'a complete surprise'.

organize a relief action, through Vienna. Visser 't Hooft sent a telegram to Pap with the following words,

Have been thinking and praying for Hungary and its churches. Hope new period beginning. We stand ready to help. Inform us needs. Strength to you personally. Visser 't Hooft.⁸⁸

Pap describes this message that it was 'though short still the warmest' of all greetings he got during the Revolution.⁸⁹

Visser 't Hooft had three telephone talks with Pap during the days of the Revolution, which became extraordinarily important for the developments after the Revolution. The first talk took place on 31 October 1956. Visser 't Hooft remembers this talk in the following way, 'I had a telephone conversation with Professor Pap in which I asked two questions, What can the World Council do to give effective help to people in need? And what is happening in the life of the church? Pap urged us to intensify the relief programme and told me what changes were being made in the leadership of the church.'⁹⁰ The next morning, 1 November 1956, there was a second telephone conversation between Visser 't Hooft and Pap.⁹¹ During this talk Pap read to Visser 't Hooft a letter from Ordass (who was rehabilitated as a bishop) and explained the developments in the RCH to him, including the possible leading role of Ravasz. Pap asked Visser 't Hooft not to send any relief transports to Hungary before the situation would be somewhat settled.⁹² (A relief transport did arrive from Vienna in the same evening.) These two talks took place before the first meeting of the Renewal Movement (that started about 90 minutes after the second talk to Visser 't Hooft). That meeting invited Ravasz and Janos Kardos⁹³ back to the leading positions of the RCH. Pap was later accused of sharing the names of the new leadership with Visser 't Hooft before they were actually appointed.

During the following days more news reached Geneva about changes in the leadership of the churches in Hungary which created an optimistic sphere in the WCC headquarters about the future of the Hungarian churches. Visser 't Hooft recalls,

What we heard, gave us the impression that a day of renewal had come to the churches in Hungary. So I sent several messages of sympathy and encouragement in which I spoke of the new era opening up in the life of the churches of Hungary. These messages were published and the German

⁸⁸ Pap 1992, p. 204.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid. and Pap 1992, p. 176-177.

⁹¹ Visser 't Hooft 1973, p. 301.

⁹² Pap 1992, p. 178.

⁹³ Janos Kardos was elected to the position of the lay president (chief curator) of the Dunamelleki Church District in 1948 with an overwhelming majority of the votes, but he was not allowed by the Communist authorities to be inaugurated into his office because he was the attorney of Lajos Ordass.

edition of the Ecumenical Press Service quoted also a remark which I had made to the staff – namely, that I was glad that the meeting of the Central Committee in Hungary had helped to prepare for that new day.⁹⁴

Both his encouragement and his latter remark were repeatedly quoted after the revolution⁹⁵ as an evidence that the WCC and Visser 't Hooft personally had been directly involved in the preparation of the revolution and exerted influence on the developments in the RCH (and in the Lutheran Church) during the revolutionary days.

This remark [about the role of Galyateto 1956], which of course referred to the impact which our meeting had made on the life of the churches, was later misinterpreted in Hungarian political circles and taken to mean that our meeting paved the way for the political uprising in the country. It was certainly a fact that the Galyateto meeting had been an opening of windows, but it was also a fact that none of the participants had conceived the meeting as an attempt to set the stage for the overthrowing of the regime.⁹⁶

Pap talked to Visser 't Hooft for the third time on 3 November. After an earlier meeting with Zoltan Tildy, minister of state of the Hungarian government, Pap requested Visser 't Hooft (and through him the WCC) to take diplomatic steps in order to support the recognition of the neutrality of Hungary by the UN and by the Western governments. Pap also shared the message of the recently founded, ecumenically minded Association of Christian Youth in Hungary (*Keresztény Ifjúság Szövetsége – KISZ*⁹⁷) addressed to the Christian youth of Europe and America (the message was immediately published and distributed by the WCC staff).⁹⁸

After the occupation of Budapest by the Soviet army on 4 November 1956 the communication lines between Hungary and the WCC were broken for a longer period of time. The WCC made efforts to support the Hungarian refugees in Austria and issued a communiqué of solidarity with the Hungarian churches, dated on 5 November.⁹⁹ The Central Committee of the WCC later gave its full approval of the actions of the general secretariat and the chairmen during the Hungarian crisis.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Visser 't Hooft 1973, p. 300-301.

⁹⁵ Pap 1992, p. 179.

⁹⁶ Visser 't Hooft 1973, p. 301.

⁹⁷ Cynically enough the youth organization of the Communist party used the same abbreviation after the Revolution: KISZ (1957-1989).

⁹⁸ Pap 1992, p. 187.

⁹⁹ 'Christians throughout the world are profoundly shocked and sorrow-stricken at the tragic reversal suffered by the Hungarian people, who had clearly asserted their desire for freedom and independence in national and church life. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and the General Secretary call to the attention of the member churches the immediate relevance of certain statements in appeal to churches and governments adopted by the Evanston Assembly. They refer particularly to the claim that fear and suspicion cannot be replaced by

6.4.4. *Contacts after 1956*

The aftermath of these actions was so severe due to the accusations by the Hungarian political authorities that the Executive Committee, on its meeting in February 1957, decided to take steps to normalize the relationship between the WCC and the Hungarian government. A meeting in person was organized with Visser 't Hooft and Eugene C. Blake representing the WCC and Janos Horvath, president of the State Office of Church Affairs, representing the Hungarian government. This confidential meeting took place in Prague.¹⁰¹ Visser 't Hooft and Blake insisted that the accusations of the involvement of the WCC and of Visser 't Hooft in political conspiracy were 'fantastic and groundless';¹⁰² Horvath did not give up his position of accusing the WCC being guilty in supporting an 'illegal' and 'counter-revolutionary' church policy in Hungary. Visser 't Hooft expressed his concerns about the developments in the RCH and about 'the personal situation of a number of church leaders'¹⁰³ (he might have meant Pap and Ordass by this). Although the six and a half hours (!) long meeting did not deliver much concrete results, Visser 't Hooft concludes that 'the important thing was that we were again in speaking terms and that we had been able to register the strong concern of the World Council that the Hungarian churches should have a leadership which would be fully trusted by the congregations.'¹⁰⁴

Although the issue was discussed in Prague, the question of the role of the WCC and of its general secretary in the Hungarian revolution remained on the agenda for several more months. Accusations were repeated in the Hungarian Reformed¹⁰⁵ and secular press and – a characteristic example of Communist 'internationalism' – even the Chinese press addressed the issue. The question was

respect and trust unless powerful nations remove the yoke which now prevents other nations and peoples from freely determining their own government and form of society. We urge the member churches to continue to seek this objective. As also stated at Evanston, Christians must stand together with all who, in the struggle for freedom, suffer pain and trial. Our unity in this fellowship will remain unbroken whatever happens and will also find expression in prayer for the people of Hungary in their hour of trial and for the churches in their witness to our crucified and risen Lord. Franklin Clark Fry, Chairman of the Central Committee, Ernest Payne, Vice-chairman of the Central Committee, W.A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary.' Quoted by Visser 't Hooft 1973, p. 301.

¹⁰⁰ Visser 't Hooft 1973, p. 304.

¹⁰¹ Op. cit., p. 303 and Pap 1992, p. 231-233.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Op. cit., p. 304. This latter remark could be interpreted in the contemporary context as a cautious expression of a continuing support for the freely elected leaderships of the Protestant churches in Hungary.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Imre Kádár, *Az egyház az idők viharában*, Budapest, 1957, p. 210-211, p. 226, p. 239, p. 248.

brought to a conclusion by an article of Ernest Payne about the question in the *Ecumenical Review*.¹⁰⁶

In the period 1957-1968 the presence of Visser 't Hooft in the Hungarian Reformed press was apparently decreasing. Although his name was mentioned several times when reporting about the visit of RCH delegations to different ecumenical occasions (including the 3rd and 4th General Assemblies of the WCC in New Delhi 1961 and Uppsala 1968 respectively). The short summary of some of his lectures, addresses and sermons were quoted¹⁰⁷ and words of appreciation were also added to it. However, his person was pushed to the background.

He remained in touch with László Pap. However, their private correspondence was restricted to personal matters, usually by the means of exchange of open postcards.¹⁰⁸ Pap was aware of the fact that Visser 't Hooft tried to intervene for the improvement of his personal situation in the years when Pap suffered serious retributions and – according to him – the informal pressure that Visser 't Hooft exerted on the Hungarian ecclesial authorities played an important role in convincing the leadership of the RCH to accept Pap's request of retirement in 1963.¹⁰⁹

Visser 't Hooft's contacts with Hungary are decreasing in quantity and quality after 1961. The main reason for this may be in the developments which Bogárdi Szabó describes in following way, '...the Russian Orthodox Church joined officially the World Council of Churches (1961, New Delhi) and this [event] dismantled the Protestantism of the Eastern bloc of her role of mediator, which she had been fulfilling in the context of the great secular – and ecclesiastical political dichotomy'.¹¹⁰ It is also demonstrated by the fact that Visser 't Hooft does not mention Hungary and the RCH at all in the last part of his Memoirs (about the period of 1957-1973) neither does he mention any Hungarian names in the last chapter of the same book where he lists the names of the persons who were important for him during his active carrier.¹¹¹ After his retirement in 1966, he virtually disappears from the pages of the Hungarian Reformed publications. It is characteristic that after his death in 1985, there was only a short necrology placed in the official periodical of the RCH consisting of a brief biography and some general

¹⁰⁶ Ernest Payne, 'Some Illusions and Errors' in: *The Ecumenical Review*, April 1958. This article was answered by László M. Pakozdy, reaffirming the official standpoint of the Hungarian authorities.

¹⁰⁷ e.g. Visser 't Hooft's sermon on Acts 4:31 preached at the 19th General Assembly of the WARC in: *Református Egyház* XVI/12 (1964), p. 274; his lecture in Uppsala 1968; Kálmán Huszti: 'Tapasztalatok az EVT uppsalai nagygyűléséről' in: *Református Egyház* XXI/3(1968), p. 204; Tibor Bartha: 'Jelentés...' in: *Református Egyház*, XXI/3(1968), 52; Tibor Bartha: 'Az egyházak ökumenikus helyzete' in: *Református Egyház* XXII/10 (1969).

¹⁰⁸ cf. WCC-A-42.063-64. Sending open postcards was a safe way of communication (because of the censorship), but it limited the content of the correspondence to commonplaces. It is possible that (the most important) part of the correspondence between Pap and Visser 't Hooft is preserved in the private files of Visser 't Hooft in the WCC Archives, which are not yet accessible for research.

¹⁰⁹ Pap 1992, p. 274.

¹¹⁰ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 12 (translation from Hungarian: GL).

¹¹¹ Visser 't Hooft 1973:340-368. It is possible that he did not mention Pap in order to protect him from renewed accusations. Pap was in retirement in 1973 when Visser 't Hooft finished his Memoirs.

remarks about his role in the ecumenical movement.¹¹² The official organ of the Hungarian Ecumenical Council of Churches (MEÖT) does not even mention his death and no necrologies or appraisals of his oeuvre were published in the volume 1985 and in the consecutive years.¹¹³

6.5. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Visser 't Hooft was one of the outstanding personalities in the history of the church in 20th century. His fingerprint was indelibly left on the shape and content of the ecumenical movement, of which he was a leader for more than 30 years. Through his wide range of official and private contacts he played a remarkable role in the history of the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), too.

Four periods may be discerned in the development of his relationship to the RCH,

1. At the beginning of his ecumenical carrier (1923-1945) he had sporadic and occasional contacts with members of the RCH (mainly via international conferences). No direct influence can be documented from this period.
2. Visser 't Hooft's contacts with the RCH were quite intense in the second period, 1945-1954. He visited Hungary twice (1947, 1954) in this period, received Hungarian Reformed visitors in Geneva and met them at ecumenical gatherings (Amsterdam 1948, Evanston 1954). His primary Hungarian Reformed contact person was professor László Pap. This period is characterized by Visser 't Hooft's cautious but evident support of those in the RCH (and in the Lutheran Church in Hungary) who were ready to cooperate with the Communist authorities. However, he was ready to protest when the Hungarian Communist authorities committed atrocities against leading Protestant personalities (e.g. the Ordass-issue, 1948).
3. The third period is 1955-1957. Visser 't Hooft's contacts to the RCH are still very intense but his approach is gradually changed. After receiving more information about the real situation in the RCH, via private talks (Pap), via documents (the Declaration of Faith) and through personal experiences (visits 1955, 1956), he became more and more critical about the leadership of the RCH. The decision to 'bring' the meeting of the Central Committee to Galyatető, Hungary in August 1956 can be assessed as ambivalent. It may have helped to widen the horizon of the local churches by the visit of international guests and it was true that the Hungarian secular and ecclesial authorities could be forced to make certain compromises (e.g. rehabilitation of Ordass, more freedom for Ravasz), but the very presence of the meeting in the context of a Communist-ruled country could be (mis-) used by the Hungarian state and

¹¹² [s.n.], 'Willem Adolf [sic!] Visser 't Hooft' in: *Református Egyház*, XXXVII/11 (1985), p. 264.

¹¹³ Cf. *Theológiai Szemle* 1985-1987.

church leaders as a legitimizing factor and an affirmation of their 'shop window policy' in the area of religious freedom. The accusations by the Hungarian officials that the Galyatető meeting prepared the Revolution of the 1956 in one way or another, can be described as groundless. Visser 't Hooft explicitly supported the cause of the renewal in the RCH in the days of the Revolution 1956. He was in touch with Pap and he made public his positive opinion of the developments in the RCH. His support was experienced as an encouragement by the leaders of the renewal in the RCH. However, the accusations that he (or the WCC) would have been involved in the anti-Communist politics in Hungary are groundless, too. However, the WCC restored the relationship with the Hungarian state and with the (anti-revolutionary) leadership of the RCH after the fall of the revolution; Visser 't Hooft informally expressed his sympathies for the renewal movement and tried to take steps in the background to protect them (Pap, Ravasz, Ordass).

4. During the fourth period (1957-1968), contacts with the RCH (and with Hungary as such) became less and less important for the WCC. Although Visser 't Hooft remained in touch privately with his Hungarian contacts (Pap) and met the officials of the RCH on ecumenical occasions several times, these contacts were formal and diplomatic by nature. However, he made informal steps for the improvement of the situation of those suffering retributions because of the role they played in the RCH during the revolution. After his retirement (1966) his contacts are reduced to some correspondence of private nature.

Visser 't Hooft's impact on the history of the RCH can be described as ecclesio-political. He influenced the course of events by public statements and by open or hidden diplomatic steps. However, it is hardly possible to discover any theological impact. Although his theological propositions about the serving nature of the church and about *diakonia* as a primary content of Christian mission could have served as points of contacts for the ecclesiological and missiological concepts of the 'theology of the serving church' of the RCH, no direct influence of Visser 't Hooft can be detected. Although some of his general theological statements were quoted and referred with affirmation in the official Hungarian Reformed press, it can be stated that although his influence on the development of the ecumenical movement in Hungary was remarkable, he did not exert any impact on the theological definition of mission in the RCH.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ This conclusion was affirmed by Lukas Vischer in an interview with the author, Geneva, 3 February 2004.



Graphics by Gábor Kustár

Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975)

7. JOHANNES C. HOEKENDIJK AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY

7.1. INTRODUCTION

When trying to discover the areas where Johannes C. Hoekendijk (1912-1975) may have exerted an impact on the Hungarian Reformed theology of mission we must make a distinction between his direct and indirect influence. It is supposed that direct influence could be exerted in the following ways, encounter in person, correspondence, lectures held by Hoekendijk in Hungary or to (partially) Hungarian audience, publications of his works in Hungarian. Other evidences of his impact may be references to and quotations of his works in the Hungarian theological literature. Indirect impact can be recognized when we can prove of a certain theological (in this case, missiological) insight (*theologoumenon*) that it is a characteristic ‘hoekendijkian’ thought and we realize that this very idea was influential in the Hungarian (mission) theology. This latter case may also happen through ecumenical documents which bear the theological fingerprints of Hoekendijk. In what follows, a short biography of Hoekendijk is sketched (7.2.), the central topics of his theological oeuvre are described briefly (7.3.) and an attempt is made to identify the aspects of his influence in the Reformed Church in Hungary by describing his contacts to/with Hungary (7.4) in a chronological order, first during his activities in Bossey (1946-47), then focusing on his two visits to Hungary as a secretary of the Dutch Missionary Council (NZR, 1947, 1948), concluding with the evidences of contact from the years thereafter.

7.2. A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF JOHANNES C. HOEKENDIJK (1912-1975)

Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk¹ was born on 3 May 1912 in Garut, West-Java in the Netherlands East-Indies (today Indonesia), in the family of a Dutch Reformed (later Evangelical) missionary. His father was in the service of the Nederlands Zendings Vereeniging [Dutch Association of Mission] (1899-1916) and of the Bond van Evangelisatie [League of Evangelism] (1919-1925). Hoekendijk grew up in the East-Indies (1912-1916 and 1919-1925) and in the Netherlands (1916-1919 and from 1925). In 1925 his father repatriated to the Netherlands and became a minister of the Free Evangelical Church in Rotterdam (1925-1930) and in

¹ Van Gurp 1989, p. 33-79.

Bossum (1930-1942). Hoekendijk was brought up in an evangelical Christian family, in the sphere of total commitment to the cause of mission, nevertheless, in general scepticism about the church as an institution². He attended secondary schools in Rotterdam (1925-1930).

In 1930 Hoekendijk applied to be a student of the Missionary Training Institute of the Dutch Council of Mission (Nederlands Raad van Zending) at Oegstgeest. In 1934 he became a confirmed member of the Netherlands Reformed Church (NHK). He followed a part of his studies at the University of Leiden. As a student of the Oegstgeest Institute he studied theology at the University of Utrecht (1936-1939), specialized in the Phenomenology of Religion, especially of the Islam, in Old Testament studies and in Cultural Anthropology. He finished his studies in 1940 and was ordained to be a missionary minister of the Netherlands Reformed Church. It was his wish to become a missionary to West-Java but because of the circumstances caused by the Second World War it was not possible.

In the years 1939-1941 Hoekendijk was active as a secretary of the Dutch Students' Christian Federation (NCSV) and was working on his dissertation on the theological evaluation of the German missiology. His manuscript was ready by 1941 but it was lost in the turbulent war years. He took an active part in the dissolving of the Students' Federation as an act of opposition against the Nazi German dictatorship. He married Els G. Laman in 1940. He was involved in the resistance movement against the German rule in the Netherlands and was active in saving orphaned Jewish children. From 1942 he had to live in hiding. The Dutch Government in exile in London invited him to be a Navy Chaplain in England. He decided to go to Britain with his wife but, on their way, they were imprisoned in Switzerland. Willem A. Visser 't Hooft, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (in the process of formation) helped them to be freed and invited Hoekendijk to serve as a minister to the refugees in Switzerland.

After the end of the war Hoekendijk was appointed to be a Missions Consul of the International Missionary Council to be stationed in Batavia (Jakarta), Indonesia. In order to be able to fulfil this task he was also appointed to be a liaison officer to missions as a major of the Allied Forces. He travelled to London, Great-Britain, to New York, United States of America and from there to Australia in order to occupy his office in Batavia (Jakarta), where he arrived in 1945. First he was involved in the work of restoration after the war in Indonesia and ministered among the former prisoners of war in the Japanese concentration camps. Later he played a key role in the re-opening of the Theological Seminary in Batavia/Jakarta (1946) as the leader of the institute where he himself taught Church History and History of Religion. Due to sudden problems of health of his wife he had to return to Europe rather unexpectedly, which marked the end of his career as a missionary.

After repatriating to Europe Hoekendijk became the Study Director of the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Céligny in Switzerland. He was appointed to this office instead of H. Kraemer who was supposed to take over this task later in 1947

² 'Ook van vader Hoekendijk moet gezegd worden: veel zending, weinig kerk!' Op. cit., p. 39.

(and he did so). Hoekendijk led two courses there. The participants came from different countries of Europe and of Asia and from the United States. Reformed and Lutheran Church members from Hungary participated, too. Hoekendijk became friends with a young Hungarian Reformed historian, László Makkai in Bossey, who played an important role in organizing his visits to Hungary later (see below).

Between 1947 and 1949 Hoekendijk fulfilled the office of secretary of the Dutch Missionary Council (NZR) with a special assignment from the International Missionary Council (IMC) to promote missionary interest in the churches of Eastern Europe. It was in this context that he visited Hungary in 1947 and 1948³. He played an important role in establishing a missiological periodical *De Heerbaan* (later *Wereld en Zending*). In this period he rewrote his doctoral dissertation about *Kerk en Volk in de Duitse zendingswetenschap* [Church and People in the German Missiology]⁴ and defended it at the University of Utrecht under the tutorship of A.A. van Ruler.

In 1949 Hoekendijk was invited to serve in the staff of the World Council of Churches in Geneva again, as a secretary of evangelism. He was involved in the program 'The Evangelization of Man in Modern Mass Society' and he organized a Continental Missionary Conference (1951, Freudenstadt, Germany) on behalf of the IMC, where preparations were made for the World Mission Conference of Willingen, 1952, about the topic, the missionary obligation of the church. In 1951 he had to take a longer furlough because of health reasons.

In 1953 Hoekendijk was appointed to be a professor on behalf of the Netherlands Reformed Church, at the Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, The Netherlands. Until 1958 he taught Practical Theology, Apostolate and Biblical Theology. In 1958 he stopped teaching Practical and Biblical Theology and became a state professor of the History of the 20th century (he continued his lectures about the Apostolate). In this period of his life he was also active in different projects of the ecumenical movement. He played an important role at the World Teaching Conference, Strasbourg, 1960, where he held a lecture on 'Christ and the World in Modern Age'. One of his most important contributions was his participation in the study project of the WCC, 'The Missionary Structure of the Congregation' (1962-1966), the results of which were summarized in the report 'Church for Others' in 1967⁵. He was also instrumental in establishing an Inter-University Institute of Missiology and Ecumenical Studies (IIMO) in the Netherlands.

In 1965 Hoekendijk left the Netherlands and became a professor of missiology at Union Theological Seminary, New York, in the United States of America. He was also ordained into the ministry of the Word in the United Presbyterian Church of the USA, and was active in the life of a congregation in missionary situation in Harlem, New York City. He also continued his activities in

³ These visits are discussed in detail under 7.5 and 7.6.

⁴ Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *Kerk en volk in de Duitse zendingswetenschap*, Amsterdam, 1948.

⁵ *Die Kirche für andere und die Kirche für die Welt im Ringen von Strukturen missionarischen Gemeinden: Schlussberichte der Westeuropäischen Arbeitsgruppe und der Nordamerikanischen Arbeitsgruppe des Referats für Fragen der Verkündigung*, ÖRK, Genf, 1967.

the ecumenical movement playing an important role at the 4th Assembly of the WCC in Uppsala, Sweden, 1968 where his missiological concepts were especially influential⁶. He participated in different study projects, too.

In the last years of his life Hoekendijk had to cope with difficulties both in his professional and in his private life. After the students' rebellions of 1968 his popularity decreased among his students, and in 1969 he divorced his (first) wife. In 1970 he married Letty M. Russell. He died in an accident in Long Island, USA in 1975.

7.3. CENTRAL THEMES IN HOEKENDIJK'S UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION

Dieter Manecke, who published a comparative study on the theological foundation of mission by Karl Barth, (by) Walter Freytag, (by) Karl Holsten and (by) Johannes C. Hoekendijk⁷, begins his chapter on the latter as follows, 'Hoekendijk gehört zweifellos zu den temperamentvollsten und streitbarsten Verfechtern einer Neubesinnung der Kirche auf ihr missionarisches Wesen.'⁸ Together with H. W. Gensichen he points to the fact that Hoekendijk's theology has a peculiar characteristic which makes his oeuvre unique but also difficult to interpret, he integrates theological and sociological terminology in his discourse⁹. This approach of Hoekendijk is founded on deep theological convictions. Although he himself was much more a theoretical thinker than a man of practice, he was interested in the practical applicability of his theology. He always wanted to test his thoughts on their relation to reality and intended to create a missionary theology that leads to a methodology of mission (but not to '*Missionskasuistik*')¹⁰.

Against Ethnopathos and Ecclesiocentrism

In his dissertation on Church and Volk in the German Theology of Mission¹¹ Hoekendijk exerted a devastating criticism on the concept of *Volkskirche* in the German missiology of the 19th and 20th centuries. Concentrating especially on the oeuvre of Bruno Gutmann, he demonstrated that a romantic and unbiblical concept of 'the people' (*Volk*) was introduced to the theology of mission which was raised to the level of being a divine ordinance. (He uses the term '*Ordinologie*' and denotes it as '*ethnopathos*'). In this way the social network based on language and culture became a value in itself and the role of Christian mission was nothing more than to correct and sanctify these primal relationships (cf. *urtümliche Bindungen*). Hoekendijk shows that this concept is actually a sort of *theologia naturalis*.

⁶ Wind 2a 1991, p. 296-297.

⁷ Dieter Manecke, *Mission als Zeugendienst*, Wuppertal, 1972 (hereafter: Manecke 1972).

⁸ Manecke 1972, p. 107.

⁹ Hans. W. Gensichen, 'Deutsches Missionsdenken in ausländischer Sicht' in: *Evangelische Missions Zeitschrift*, 1949, p. 49; quoted by Manecke 1972, p. 107.

¹⁰ Cf. Manecke 1972, p. 107-108.

¹¹ Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *Kerk en volk in de Duitse zendingwetenschap*, Amsterdam, 1948.

Another part of his criticism is directed to the central role of the church in the German missiology. Hoekendijk rejects the legitimacy of understanding mission as the multiplication or expansion of the church. He denies that the concept of the 'three-self formula' (H. Venn, R. Anderson) or the German idea of '*selbständige Volkskirche*' would be based on solid theological foundations. On the contrary, he sees here an alien, non-Christian element mixed into the concept of mission and he actually made a criterion of it. Here we already see a central element in Hoekendijk's theology, his suspicion of ecclesiocentric tendencies.

Hoekendijk's ecclesiological concept can be understood through his views on the apostolicity of the church. He turned around the well-known order of argumentation, according to which the mission of the church (apostolate) is based on the spiritual-theological continuity reaching back to the Apostles of the ancient church (apostolicity). Over against this static concept, in which the church 'owns' apostolicity as *beatus possidens*, he suggests a dynamic concept of apostolicity. According to him the church is apostolic if she participates in the genuine missionary activity of the Apostles. Thus, mission (apostolate) is a precondition of apostolicity. The church is only a church inasmuch she is participating in mission. The church does not really exist as such, but she always happens when genuine apostolate is lived out¹².

God's people can thus never be identified with any particular *Volk* or culture. It is an eschatological concept. Here Hoekendijk goes far beyond the contemporary Dutch theology of the apostolate of A.A. van Ruler and H. Kraemer. Instead of their concept of mission/apostolate being an indispensable function of the church Hoekendijk argues that it is the church which is a function of mission/apostolate.

Kingdom, World, History

God's people is an eschatological reality linked to the Kingdom of God that has already come and is going to come. Mission is no ownership of the church but it is God's mission, directed to the world. The world (the *saeculum*) is the arena of God's salvific action. He sent His Son for the salvation of the world (and not that of the church). In Christ the new humanity is demonstrated, the nature of the Kingdom is represented. His kenotic existence is the pattern according to which Christians should live in the world.

Hoekendijk argues that God made the world to be history¹³ especially by the Christ-event, and thus (secular) history is the locus where God realizes his plans. The church has only a tertiary role in mission. Instead of the wide-spread logic of God-church-world, Hoekendijk argues that God is directly active in the present-day world history setting up signs of his Kingdom. The Christian individual should participate in these actions and so, in the third place, the church could and should be involved in the *missio Dei*. When describing the contents of this divine action in history Hoekendijk uses the Old Testament concept of *shalom*. The signs

¹² Cf. Manecke 1972, p. 128-130.

¹³ Petter 2002, p. 94.

of the Kingdom are the signs of *shalom* in the world, when history is radically changed in order to humanize the life of the people at a certain place. In his later writings Hoekendijk stresses the revolutionary character of these changes.

Church as Paroikia

Hoekendijk passionately called the church to give up her clinging to old structures. He warned against morphological fundamentalism, i.e., her structural conservatism. Every element of the life of the church should be tested again and again, whether it serves or hinders the participation in God's mission, and a kind of readiness should prevail to radically change everything that proves to be a hindrance. Hoekendijk argues that structures should be flexible, personal, unimportant and even contradictory to each other. In this sense he questions even the parochial structure of the Christian churches. He propagates the importance of home churches, action groups and *communities of base*. In his concept the church is a temporary home (*paroikia*), more like a tent than a cathedral. The church should leave all sacral behind and undertake an exodus into the world where she can discover God's humanizing activity. In this sense, as Dieter Mancke puts it, *intra ecclesiam nulla est nulla salus*¹⁴. Because of his radical criticism of 'churchism' Hoekendijk was often accused of 'ecclesioclasm'¹⁵.

Shalom

The concept of *shalom* plays a central role in Hoekendijk's theology. Referring to the prophetic literature of the Old Testament (especially Isaiah¹⁶ and Ezechiel), he argues that *shalom* means much more than peace, it denotes the total integrity and harmony of the whole creation according to God's plan as represented in the ultimate humanity of Christ. For Hoekendijk, *shalom* is a concrete social reality and as such it is a sign of the real presence of the Kingdom of God. *Shalom* exists when social justice prevails, when human dignity is respected, when the poor and the weak are restored. The realization of *shalom* is often a result of revolutionary social changes. The process of the realization of *shalom* can be described as humanization.¹⁷

Mission

In this sense, Christian mission means participation in the revolutionary acts of God in world history in order to set up signs of the coming Kingdom by humanizing the life of the people. It happens in a kenotic way, following the pattern of the Servant of JHWH as it is represented by Christ. The church should move to the world and should discover there the presence of the *missio Dei* and join forces with those in

¹⁴ Mancke 1972, p. 166.

¹⁵ Hoedemaker 1995, p. 166.

¹⁶ To this topic see: Zoltán Kustár, „Durch seine Wunden sind wir geheilt.” *Eine Untersuchung zur Metaphorik von Israels Krankheit und Heilung im Jesajabuch*, BWANT 154, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 2002.

¹⁷ Petter 2002, p. 104-107.

the world who strive for the humanization of life. Christian mission should participate in God's mission by setting up signs of *shalom*, by the means of kerygma, koinonia and *diakonia*. According to Hoekendijk the authentic presence of Christians in the world is a diaconal presence, to be there for others in humble service. The Christians should form cells of koinonia, informal, flexible groups (home churches etc.) which place themselves at disposal to God's mission in the world. Kerygma, the verbal testimony of the coming Kingdom, initiated by the all-encompassing reconciliation brought about by Christ, is a postscript, an interpretation of the diaconal presence of the koinonia of Christians in the world. As we see here, the prior agents of mission are the lay members of the church who live according to Christ's humanity in the world, in their professions or in their everyday lives.

Impact

Hoekendijk was not a scholar publishing many books. Besides his dissertation of 1948 he published about a hundred articles, some of which were later published in books containing collections of his writings. It is also well known that his lectures and seminars provoked mixed reactions both in Utrecht and in New York¹⁸. Although he was often quite popular among students (cf. his success at the WSCF congress in Strasbourg, 1960), his radical views were not so well received by fellow theologians (e.g. H Berkhof, G.C. van Niftrik¹⁹). On the other hand, it is often stated that his understanding of mission had a decisive influence on the theological shift in the WCC represented especially by the report 'Church for Others'²⁰ and by the statements of the 4th General Assembly of the WCC in Uppsala 1968.²¹

7.4. HOEKENDIJK'S PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH HUNGARY

7.4.1. Bossey 1946-1947

After Hoekendijk was forced to return to Europe from the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), because of the ill health of his wife, a temporary job was offered to him by W.A. Visser 't Hooft, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (still in the process of formation), to lead two courses as a study director of the recently established Ecumenical Institute which was situated in the Chateau de Bossey, Céligny, near Geneva in Switzerland. Actually it was Hendrik Kraemer, who was invited to fill this position but who could not start his activities before July

¹⁸ Houtepen 2001, p. 291-294.

¹⁹ Van Gorp analyses these reactions in detail: Van Gorp 1989, p. 167-173 and p. 213-215.

²⁰ *Die Kirche für andere und die Kirche für die Welt im Ringen von Strukturen missionarischen Gemeinden: Schlussberichte der Westeuropäischen Arbeitsgruppe und der Nordamerikanischen Arbeitsgruppe des Referats für Fragen der Verkündigung*, ÖRK, Genf, 1967.

²¹ Houtepen 2001, p. 292.

1947 due to other obligations. It was Hoekendijk's task to 'bridge the gap' in 1946-1947.

The Ecumenical Institute²² was established on 1 April 1946 by the World Council of Churches (in the process of formation) in order to train church members (and theologians) to be 'ambassadors' of the church in the world²³. The first course which was led by Hoekendijk was for lay members of different European and American churches (from 5 October 1946). The second course under his leadership was attended by theological students and ministers (15 January – 29 March 1947). The participants came from about 15 different countries, also from Hungary. The theme of both courses was 'The Renewal of the Church'. Hoekendijk himself found these courses very important in the process of the renewal of the churches. In a letter of 1947 in Dutch (the addressee of which is unknown²⁴) he writes the following:

That is why, in the first years we do not need great speakers; rather some people who are willing to struggle with others to get a new vision [...] More pastors than professors or strategists [...]. This is not a shift from theology to psychology, but it is due to the fact that the renewal of the church must start with the renewal of the minister.²⁵

There were several Hungarian participants at the courses (Éva Szabó, Reformed minister; László Benczúr, Lutheran minister) and László Makkai²⁶, a lay member of the Reformed Church in Hungary. We focus our attention on the latter because he played an important role in the development of Hoekendijk's relationship with Hungary²⁷.

László Makkai was a historian and a sociologist, son of Sándor Makkai²⁸ (1890-1951), the head of the Department of Mission of the Reformed Church in Hungary (1947-1951). László Makkai participated in both courses, although the second one was designed for theologians. In a circular letter to the participants of the courses even the word 'co-worker' was used when referring to him, 'A mentionner enfin qua notre ami Makkai a été un lien entre le premier et le second

²² Cf. Hans-Ruedi Weber, *A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life. The Story of Bossey 1946-1996*, WCC, Geneva, 1996.

²³ Van Gurp 1989, p. 59.

²⁴ We suppose that the addressee must have been either H. Kraemer or W. A. Visser 't Hooft.

²⁵ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Indrukken uit Bossey* (unpublished), 1947, JCH-A-C.12, p. 3 (translation: GL).

²⁶ Kool, 1993, p. 670.

²⁷ Kool, 1993, p. 669-671.

²⁸ Sándor Makkai was Reformed bishop of Transylvania, Roumania (1926-1936), then a professor of Practical Theology at the Reformed Theological Faculty of the István Tisza University of Debrecen (1936-1951); writer of several novels; and one of the outstanding theologians of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Cf. Károly Fekete, *Makkai Sándor gyakorlati teológiai munkássága* [The Practical Theology of Sándor Makkai], Debrecen, 1997.

cours, et qu'il y a été un précieux collaborateur, comme aussi à la conférence suivante, après Pâques.²⁹

L. Makkai met Hoekendijk in Switzerland³⁰ and as László Benczúr, L. Makkai's room-mate in Bossey, recalls it they soon became friends³¹. Their friendship went so far that they worked together on the report of the course for theologians and they together made a plan for the further development of the Ecumenical Institute.³² L. Makkai 'mediated' between Hoekendijk and his father Sándor Makkai³³ about the issue of sending Hungarian Reformed missionaries to Indonesia in cooperation with the Dutch Reformed churches. What is more, L. Makkai translated several lectures of Hoekendijk into Hungarian³⁴.

Hoekendijk's Lectures in Bossey

Some of Hoekendijk's lectures held during the courses of 1946-1947 in Bossey can be found in the Archives of Hoekendijk, deposited in the Library of the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands³⁵. These lectures are of importance for our topic because of the following reasons, (1) The Hungarian participants of the courses attended these lectures. (2) Some of these lectures were translated into Hungarian (maybe by L. Makkai and his wife³⁶) and were published in Hungary.³⁷ (3) These lectures exhibit the theological/missiological thinking of Hoekendijk in the years when he had the most personal contacts with Hungary.

*Mission and Nationalism*³⁸

The copy of this lecture is to be found in the Hoekendijk Archives (B.10.) in Dutch. On the first page of the typewritten manuscript there is a note by the hand of Hoekendijk, which is very difficult to read, saying that this lecture was held in Bossey in 1947 and was published in Hungarian in September 1947. The title of the Hungarian periodical is not identifiable³⁹.

²⁹ *Lettre circulaire de Bossey*, Juillet 1947 (unpublished), HK-UA-628.7, p. 2.

³⁰ Kool, 1993, p. 669.

³¹ Kool, 1993, p. 670.

³² L. Makkai in a letter to his father dated in Geneva on 4 April 1947, TIREK 7480. L. Makkai calls Hoekendijk ('Hans') a 'great person', a 'good friend' and 'half of my soul'. Ibid. (translation: GL).

³³ cf. The correspondence about this issue between László and Sándor Makkai, TIREK 7480 and TIREK 7497.

³⁴ *Zweiter Rundbrief aus Bossey*, December 1947, (unpublished), HK-UA-628.7, p. 9.

³⁵ Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht, Handschriften, Archief Hoekendijk (JCH-A), B10, B11, B.12. Cf. K. van der Horst, Libertus A. Hoedemaker, *Inventaris van het archief van Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975)*, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, 1983.

³⁶ 'Makkai... übersetzt mit seiner Frau die von Hoekendijk gehaltenen Lektionen', *Zweiter Rundbrief aus Bossey*, December 1947, (unpublished), HK-A-628.7, p. 9.

³⁷ 'Die Vorlesungen von [...] Hoekendijk (ung. und dt.) werden jetzt einzeln veröffentlicht', Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *Bericht anlässlich des Ersten Theologen Kurses im Ökumenischen Institut 15. Januar – 27. März 1947*. (unpublished), JCH-A-C.13, p. 9.

³⁸ Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *Zending en nationalisme*, (unpublished), 1947, JCH-A-B.10.

³⁹ Gedeeltelijk (?) lezing Bossey, 25. III [?], 1947. uitgegeven hongaars, [unreadable title], Sept. 1947, op. cit., p. 1.

In this lecture Hoekendijk speaks about the danger of nationalism as a substitute for religion. He exerts strong criticism on the 'colonial nationalism' of the West but, at the same time, refers to the danger of nationalism among the younger churches. He demonstrates these dangers by the examples of Indonesia, India and Japan. He speaks about the perils of a 'double homogenization' (*gelijkschakeling*), the church identified with a certain nation (p.6.) and the church identified with a certain caste or social group. This way the church loses her relevance, she is not 'revolutionary' enough, 'In her heart the church was so little revolutionary for centuries that she must meet the revolution everywhere on the streets.'⁴⁰

He sees the solution in the concept of the 'serving church'. He refers to Luther (without an exact reference), saying, 'He, who wants to serve God, must stay among the people and serve them with whatever he can.'⁴¹

The fact that Hoekendijk speaks so negatively about the association of the church with nationalism and that he points to a way out of this danger using the concept of the 'serving church' has paramount relevance for our research, since these two problems (the church vs. national thought and the servant nature of the church) were central themes of the theological discourse in the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of Hungary after the Second World War⁴². A.M Kool directs attention to the problem, saying,

'Hoekendijk's experiences in Indonesia with nationalism which had become an ideology, seems to have some parallels to the Hungarian situation before World War II. According to Van Gurp he sharply rejected such an attitude of the churches. Hoekendijk's rejection of nationalism and his sympathies to socialism might have attracted the Hungarians who were finding their way in the new political system'.⁴³

Although it is questionable whether Hoekendijk had socialist sympathies⁴⁴, it is more than remarkable indeed that it was Hoekendijk who was much welcomed by the most 'leftist' wing of the Reformed Church in Hungary later in the same year (see below). On the other hand, it is interesting to note that Hoekendijk made no references to the Eastern European situation in his lecture.

⁴⁰ Op. cit., p. 1 (translation: GL).

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 8 (translation: GL).

⁴² Cf. Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 66-167.

⁴³ Kool, 1993, p. 670.

⁴⁴ Cf. van Gurp 1989, p. 42-44.

*The Serving Church*⁴⁵

During the courses in Bossey Hoekendijk gave a series of lectures about the younger churches. The texts of the lectures can be found in the Hoekendijk Archives (B.12) in German. The series consists of six parts,

1. Die junge Kirche heute!
2. Die Frage nach der Kirche
3. Die Kirche im Volk
4. Religionsfreiheit. Kirche und Islam⁴⁶
5. Dienende Kirche
6. Lehrende Kirche

It seems that Hoekendijk himself considered the fifth lecture as the most important, because it was the only one that was published later in the *Evangelische Missions Zeitschrift*, under the title, 'Junge Kirche als dienende Kirche'⁴⁷. These lectures are especially interesting for us, because a summary of them were published in Hungarian⁴⁸, too (*Missziói Útmutató*, 1948, *Református Gyülekezet* 1949⁴⁹.) We focus our attention on the lecture 'The Serving Church'.

In this lecture Hoekendijk intends to demonstrate the importance of a 'comprehensive approach' in Christian mission. In order to do so, he highlights the servant nature of the church. He argues that service belongs to the very existence of the church. He speaks against the practice of using service as a way of attraction to mission as if service would be a means to prepare the way for the 'real' ministry (i.e. the preaching of the gospel) of the church. Service may create a sphere of positive response from the state and from public opinion, but the church should be careful not to misuse it,

Und es ist jetzt viele Missionen und jungen Kirchen eine fortdürende Versuchung um diese Wohlgefallen des States (und der öffentlichen Meinung) nicht zu missbrauchen für eine Rechtfertigung der Missionsarbeit überhaupt. Es ist nicht ungefaerlich, wenn eine Kirche über viel soziale Prestige verfügt und sich mit einer Arbeit die als einfacher Zeugendienst gemeint war, für die Augen der Welt rechtfertigen kann.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Dienende Kirche*, 1947, JCH-A-B12 (5).

⁴⁶ It is interesting to remark that on the manuscript of this lecture there are some notes by the hand of Hoekendijk, written with a pencil which are hardly readable, but the words 'Brief' (German/Dutch: letter) and 'Szabo' are very clear. Was there maybe an exchange of letters between Hoekendijk and Rev. Éva Szabó, a Hungarian Reformed participant in the course? Cf. JCH-A-B12(4).

⁴⁷ Johannes C Hoekendijk, 'Junge Kirche als dienende Kirche' in: *Evangelische Missions Zeitschrift*, VI/6. (1949), p. 1-6.

⁴⁸ Johannes C Hoekendijk, 'A fiatal egyházak ma. A pogánymisszió időszzerű problémái [The Younger Churches Today. Contemporary Problems of Heathen Mission]' in: *Református Gyülekezet*, I/1 (1949), p. 56-67 [Published in the series *Útmutató*, too, in 1948].

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Op. cit., p. 2.

The other extreme is criticized also, when service becomes totally independent of the church and other mission. Hoekendijk gives positive examples of service from the lives of the younger churches, complex rural development projects in India and educational projects in Africa. When defining the legitimate goal of service he describes it as demonstrating the reality of the Kingdom of God, showing examples of the *shalom*⁵¹. He underlines the importance of a theological reflection on the question of *diakonia*, too, 'In den praktischen Arbeit hat man in die jungen Kirchen eine Lehre des Diakonats entwickelt'⁵².

His conclusion is that service belongs to the very nature of the church and that the churches should put it in practice through offering service to the whole nation,

...die Kirche [handelt] als eine totale Gemeinschaft. Kirchenglied sein heisst sich in einem Dienstverhaeltnis zur ganzen Volksgemeinschaft stellen.⁵³

Although Hoekendijk himself warns against the danger of an 'independent' concept of service, he tends to define the nature of the church exclusively with the terms of *diakonia*.

In the Protestant churches of Hungary the 'theology of the serving church' (Reformed) or the 'theology of *diakonia*' (Lutheran) became the 'official' theologies after 1948⁵⁴. It is very interesting to discover that Hoekendijk used this theological concept already in 1947 in Bossey and there were Hungarian participants (among them the influential László Makkai and László Benczúr) who surely interpreted this concept to the Hungarian Reformed and Lutheran public both informally and by translating and publishing Hoekendijk's lectures in Hungary. A.M. Kool calls for a deeper study here, 'More research is needed into the meaning of 'service' (*szolgálat*) and serving church (*Dienende Kirche*) and its relation to the theology of *diakonia* which was later developed as a leading theology in the Hungarian Protestant Churches.'⁵⁵

We suppose that Hoekendijk's ideas could have been a source of inspiration for the Hungarian Protestant theologians when developing the theology of the serving church/*diakonia* or, at least, they could have seen it as supportive and as a frame of reference in and for their theological orientation.

⁵¹ Shalom becomes a key concept in Hoekendijk's theology later, but he develops this concept first in his doctoral dissertation, published in 1948. It is interesting to remark that he already used this concept in a public speech in 1947! (Although its well known that the text of his dissertation was already ready in 1942.) cf. van Gorp 1989, p. 130.

⁵² Op. cit., p. 9.

⁵³ Op. cit., p. 5.

⁵⁴ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 90-107.

⁵⁵ Kool, 1993, p. 670.

*The Universal Church*⁵⁶

Another lecture is preserved from the year 1947⁵⁷, about which it is not sure whether it was held in Bossey (on the manuscript we find the date 4 July 1947 by the hand of Hoekendijk). However, it represents the way of thinking of Hoekendijk in the period. The lecture itself would not be relevant for our topic because it is more of a general overview of the situation of the universal church all over the world, in a geographical order. There are two things which are still remarkable. The first is that in this lecture the author totally omits Central and Eastern Europe. It is curious that Hoekendijk, who is apparently having friendly contacts with a Hungarian historian, and who will be so deeply involved in the 'Second World issues' some months later, does not even pay attention to this region in a lecture held in the same year. For our topic it is more important that in this lecture Hoekendijk speaks very critically about Communism as an ideology, describing it as hostile to the church and to Christianity (p.4). In this light we must disagree with the allegations that Hoekendijk was thinking positively about Communism or that he had been a pro-Communist⁵⁸.

Hoekendijk's appointment to Study Director of Bossey was only temporary because the position was already offered to H. Kraemer, who occupied it in January 1948. Although Hoekendijk's activities in Bossey lasted less than one year, he was remembered as a good leader of the courses, who built very good relations to/with the participants⁵⁹. As far as his contacts with Hungary are concerned, the Bossey period was very important, because it was there where his first personal relationships with Hungarian Reformed and Lutheran church representatives were built and through his Bossey lectures he gained respect in those circles of the Protestant Churches in Hungary which were striving for a radical renewal of the church. The key person in building these relationships was László Makkai.

7.4.2. First Visit to Hungary 1947

In 1947 Hoekendijk was appointed to be the Secretary of the Netherlands Missionary Council (*Nederlands Zendingsraad*), a position he filled until 1949. It was one of his main tasks to work in Eastern Europe. In his short autobiography (1965) he describes this period in the following way,

⁵⁶ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Wereldkerk* (unpublished), 1947, JCH-A-B.11.

⁵⁷ Actually, the series of lectures under the title 'Mission im Neubau' are also dated from 1947 in the catalogue of the Hoekendijk Archives (Horst, K. van der – Hoedemaker, Libertus A, *Inventaris van het archief van Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975)*, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, 1983, B.14) but we agree with van Gurp when he says that these lectures must have been written in 1948 (see below). Cf. van Gurp 1989, p. 114.

⁵⁸ e.g. Kool speaks about 'his sympathies to Socialism'. Kool, 1993, p. 670.

⁵⁹ Van Gurp 1989, p. 60.

1947-1949, Secretary of the Netherlands Missionary Council. Special assignment on behalf of the International Missionary Council⁶⁰, 'to promote missionary interest in the Churches in E.Europe'. Travelled extensively especially in Hungary.⁶¹

He visited Hungary twice, in 1947 and in 1948. His visits to Hungary are well documented. Not only his lectures (unpublished) held in Hungary are preserved, as A.M. Kool writes⁶², but there are three confidential reports of his visits in 1947 and 1948⁶³ present in the Hoekendijk Archives, deposited in the University Library Utrecht. Hoekendijk was invited to visit Hungary through two channels. The most important motivation was the invitation by his friend László Makkai⁶⁴ and by his father Sándor Makkai. Sándor Makkai was then the mission officer of the General Convent of the RCH, thus formally authorized to issue such an invitation with the consent of and on behalf of the leadership of the church. However, a second invitation was issued, too. Benő Békefi, Reformed minister of Nyíregyháza (North-East Hungary) attended a meeting of the Netherlands Missionary Council (NZR) on 20-21 May 1947⁶⁵ and invited Hoekendijk as well. The third point of the agenda of the meeting was 'Discussion of a request from Hungary'⁶⁶. Norman Goodall, general secretary of the IMC was also present at the meeting. Benő Békefi (1909-1964) was one of the leading figures of the Revivalists within the RCH, founder and general secretary of the National Reformed Free Council⁶⁷. At the meeting Békefi spoke about the situation of the Reformed Church in Hungary after the Second World War. He reported about a growing missionary fervour in the RCH, also in the local congregations, and mentioned the example of

⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that Hoekendijk was – as far as it is documented – never introduced in Hungary in his IMC capacity: He was always addressed as the secretary of the Netherlands Missionary Council.

⁶¹ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Curriculum Vitae* (unpublished), 1965, JCH-A-T1a, quoted by van Gurp 1989, p. 60.

⁶² 'In the Hoekendijk Archives in Utrecht the only 'mark' of his visit is his lecture Mission im Neubau, held during his visit October 1947.' Kool, 1993, p. 747.

⁶³ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Verslag van een reis naar Hongarije, gemaakt in opdracht van de N.Z.R., op uitnodiging van de Hervormde Kerk in Hongarije, 9-31. October 1947* [A Report of a Journey to Hungary, made on behalf of the Netherlands Missionary Council, on an Invitation by the Reformed Church in Hungary], (unpublished), 1947, JCH-A-C15. Also present in the W.A. Visser 't Hooft Archives in Geneva: WCC-A-301.4391.1/2.

Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Verslag van een bezoek aan Hongarije, gemaakt in opdracht van de N.Z.R., op uitnodiging van de Hervormde Kerk in Hongarije, 25 October -5 December 1948*. [A Report of a Visit to Hungary, made on behalf of the Netherlands Missionary Council, on an Invitation by the Reformed Church in Hungary], (unpublished), 1948, JCH-A-C17.

Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Report on the Missionary Movement in the Reformed Church in Hungary*, (unpublished), JCH-A-C16. For the text of this Report see Appendix 2.

⁶⁴ Kool, 1993, p. 669-670.

⁶⁵ Cf. 'Notulen van de Algemeene Vergadering gehouden te Baarn op 20-21 mei 1947', NZR-A-UA 840 (Kast 114, Dossier 37. Map 1 Notulen vergaderingen 1940-1951).

⁶⁶ 'Behandeling verzoek uit Hongarije' [translation: GL], op. cit., p. 6-8.

⁶⁷ The National Reformed Free Council (1946-1947) was a forum organised by the Revivalist opposition within the RCH. Some of the participants in it had explicit leftist political sympathies.

the Hungarian Reformed martyr missionary Mária Molnár⁶⁸. Expressing his hope that this 'missionary fervour' would be channelled into practical missionary action, Békefi alluded that the RCH would be a good partner in mission to the Muslims, because of the experience of the Hungarians with the Muslim Turks, during the 150 years of Ottoman occupation. . He suggested that this representative of the NZR should go to Nyíregyháza in order to meet the leading persons of the Hungarian Reformed missionary movement. At the same meeting the NZR appointed Hoekendijk to be the one to visit Hungary in July 1947 in order to discuss a possible cooperation in mission in the former Dutch East-Indies⁶⁹.

It seems that there was an interesting ambiguity about this invitation. We do see that both the representatives of the 'official church' (S. Makkai) and those of the emerging Revivalist opposition agreed on the importance of concrete mobilization of the RCH in order to take part in world missions. There appears to be a consensus about the way it should be achieved, in cooperation with the 'Dutch brethren', practically via the NZR. However, as A.M. Kool demonstrates it, there was a certain measure of mutual suspicion between the two Hungarian instances involved in the matter. On the one hand, László Makkai, in a letter to his father, wrote about his astonishment about Békefi's visit to the Netherlands. On the other hand, it seems that Békefi, by inviting the NZR-delegate to his home town, Nyíregyháza, where the National Reformed Free Council held its gatherings, intended to link the Dutch missionary relationships to the Revivalist opposition. This latter intention was not welcomed by the NZR. In a (yet unpublished) letter of Hoekendijk to Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, dated 06 July 1947⁷⁰ Hoekendijk writes about a report to Norman Goodall (about the Hungarian Indonesia mission plans?), a copy of which he sent to Visser 't Hooft. In this context he mentions that '[Goodall] heard all kinds of remarkable things about Rev. Békefi whom he met at the meeting of the NZR.'⁷¹ He also alludes that 'van Randwijck warned you [W.A. Visser 't Hooft] to be cautious [apparently, about Békefi]'⁷². In what follows he tells the general secretary of the WCC (in process of formation) that they [the NZR] try to make contacts with the official organs of the RCH. The NZR (and Hoekendijk) thus decided not to support any of the streams within the RCH but they concentrated to their relationship with the official church leadership in Hungary. In the same letter Hoekendijk informs W.A. Visser 't Hooft that his trip to Hungary had to be postponed to September 1947 because 'the Russians denied a visa for me, just some days ago'⁷³. The reason for this is unknown. At last, Hoekendijk's first visit to Hungary took place between 9 and 13 October 1947. His main task (given

⁶⁸ Mária Molnár was a Hungarian Reformed missionary to the Admiralty Islands (today Papua New-Guinea), working for the German Liebenzeller Mission. She was killed by the Japanese army in 1945.

⁶⁹ 'Notulen...NZR, 20-21 mei 1947', NZR-A-UA 840, p. 6-7.

⁷⁰ To be found in the JCH-A in Utrecht. Copies of the correspondence Hoekendijk – W.A. Visser 't Hooft (originals in the WCC Archives, Geneva), deposited by P. van Gurp, No. 37.

⁷¹ Ibid. (translation: GL).

⁷² Ibid. (translation: GL).

⁷³ Ibid. (translation: GL).

by the NZR and by the IMC) was to prepare the missionary cooperation between the Dutch Reformed churches and the RCH.

This remarkable plan was the fruit of the developments in the Dutch East-Indies towards an independent state of Indonesia which resulted in growing difficulties to fill the personnel needs of the missionary projects with citizens of the Netherlands. Thus the Dutch missionary bodies were searching for other options to meet these needs. One of these options was the recruiting missionary candidates from the Reformed Churches of Eastern Europe, especially from the ranks of the Reformed Church in Hungary. This need for personnel in the Dutch missionary bodies coincided with a growing interest toward mission in Hungary where there was a revival movement within the two mainline Protestant Churches before, during and after the Second World War⁷⁴. These revival movements caused an increasing awareness of the missionary obligations of the church and of the fact that the Hungarian churches had not taken part in the worldwide mission so far to such an extent that could be expected from them according to the proportions they represented within the Protestant world. The promising plans could not be put in practice mainly because of the Communist *coup d'état* which took place in Hungary in 1948. A detailed study of this plan of a Hungarian mission to Indonesia is made by Anna Maria Kool in her dissertation *God Moves in a Mysterious Way*⁷⁵. During his visits Hoekendijk held many lectures, some of which were published in Hungarian. We concentrate our study on the theological contents of these lectures and publications as we try to trace their impact on the theology of mission in the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Hungary⁷⁶.

Hoekendijk's Report 1947

Hoekendijk wrote a very detailed confidential Report⁷⁷ about this visit to the Netherlands Missionary Council (NZR), which has not been published yet and which is a unique document of the ecclesiastical situation of Hungary, especially in the Reformed Church in Hungary, in a rather turbulent historical period, as interpreted by a Western European (Dutch) guest. A copy of this report can be found in the Hoekendijk Archives in Utrecht, another copy is present in the Archives of the World Council of Churches in Geneva⁷⁸. The historical analysis of this valuable document would go beyond the scope of this study; we confine ourselves to investigating the theological relevance of the Report. Other important

⁷⁴ A pioneering study about this period is published by the Hungarian Reformed theologian of Debrecen, Sándor Fazakas: *Új egyház felé? A második világháború utáni megújulás ekklesiológiai konzekvenciái* [Towards a New Church? The Ecclesiological Consequences of the Reformed Renewal Movements after the Second World War], Debrecen, 2000.

⁷⁵ Kool, 1993, p. 667-674; p. 716-724; p. 747-754; and p. 798-805.

⁷⁶ 'A profound theological evaluation of the impact of Hoekendijk's lectures in Hungary, especially on Sándor Makkai, requires more attention...' Kool, 1993, p. 752.

⁷⁷ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Verslag van een reis naar Hongarije, gemaakt in opdracht van de N.Z.R., op uitnodiging van de Hervormde Kerk in Hongarije, 9-31. October 1947* [A Report of a Visit to Hungary, made on behalf of the Netherlands Missionary Council, on an Invitation by the Reformed Church in Hungary], (unpublished), 1947, JCH-A-C15, and WCC-A-301.4391.1/2.

⁷⁸ W. A. Visser 't Hooft Archives, Correspondence with Hoekendijk, WCC-A-301.4391.1/2.

sources about this visit are to be found in the Archives of the National Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary in Budapest, especially in the files of László Draskóczy.

The Report has the following structure: first Hoekendijk provides the reader with some background information about the motivation of his visit (p.1), then he describes the general political and social situation in Hungary in 1947 (pp. 2-3) after which a quite detailed chapter follows about 'church and mission' (pp. 3-6). The main focus of his visit was to discuss the questions of a possible missionary enterprise of the Reformed Church in Hungary in Indonesia, thus the next part of the document is about this topic (pp.7-8). In the following chapter he reports of his extensive travels⁷⁹ in Hungary and about his meetings with Reformed and Lutheran representatives of different ecclesial bodies and of the organizations of mission (pp.9-13). The Report is closed by some conclusions and suggestions (pp. 13-14).

The Report itself does not intend to deal with theological questions at all, but there are a few sentences which are still relevant for our topic. Our first remark must be that a rather sharp criticism of the mainline churches (and especially of the Reformed Church in Hungary) can be found in this confidential Report. The core of the criticism is that the Hungarian churches look at themselves as the Easternmost bastions of Western Christianity (*clipeus Occidentalis – clipeus Christianitatis*⁸⁰), which leads to a defensive mentality. His criticism is concentrated on the Reformed Church in Eastern Hungary, about which he writes,

...It can be noticed in Eastern Hungary (where 50% of the Reformed live) how massive a church becomes which does not share, and how much she has been stiffened in her traditions.⁸¹

He also notes that the Western missionary revival movements could not find their ways to the Reformed Church in Hungary until the end of the 19th century. This critical approach is based on an ecclesiological presupposition which sees the sharing (thus missionary) character of the church as a *conditio sine qua non* of the existence of the church. Van Gurp, when describing the relationship of church and mission in the early Hoekendijk comes to the same conclusion,

Hoekendijk still intends to say that the church may not be a goal in herself and that she is an instrument of the Holy Spirit, being used by Him for proclaiming the gospel.⁸²

Hoekendijk recognizes his own ecclesiological insights in the renewal movements within the Reformed Church in Hungary, especially in the 'reform-

⁷⁹ 'In 20 days I travelled more than 2000 kms, I gave 25 lectures at meetings which were attended by 15,000 people.' Op. cit., p. 9 [translation: GL].

⁸⁰ Op. cit., p. 3.

⁸¹ Ibid. [translation: GL].

⁸² Van Gurp 1989, p. 120 [translation: GL].

movement', (p.5) associated with the influential Hungarian theologian Sándor Makkai and even more in the National Hungarian Free Council (p.6) as represented, among others, by Albert Bereczky. This orientation is of crucial importance because, as mentioned before, this same Report was also sent privately to W.A. Visser 't Hooft, the General Secretary of the WCC (in process of formation), and it may have contributed to the decisions about the WCC policy of its relationship to Hungary.

There are two other interesting remarks in the Report which shed light on the theological thought of Hoekendijk about the relationship of church and mission. On page 9 he reports of the first meeting he had with the representatives of the Reformed Church in Hungary (among others with László Ravasz, presiding bishop of the RCH) and with the delegates of the different movements and organizations in and around the RCH with a missionary interest (Budapest, 13 October 1947). The main topic of the meeting was the plans of the RCH mission to Indonesia. Hoekendijk highlights the importance of this meeting and notes that the main reason is that the RCH is ready to take full responsibility for implementing the plans about this missionary enterprise, and this way it will not be endangered by a possible association of this mission with one particular theological/political stream within the church. He speaks about this 'ecclesialization' of the mission⁸³ in a very positive context, which is remarkable especially in the light of the missiological radicalism of Hoekendijk in the later period of his life.

Another sentence points to the same direction. When he explains the results of his negotiations with the RCH leadership he gives a definition of the missionary, referring to the International Missionary Conference (of the IMC) held in Whitby in the summer of the same year, quoting with affirmation from its proceedings, 'the missionary will be one who, called by God..., is invited by the church in a country to which, ordinarily, he does not belong...' (p.11, underlining in the original).

Hoekendijk's ecclesiological and missiological model as reflected in this report corresponds to what P. van Gurp writes about the young Hoekendijk,

In this first period of Hoekendijk's thinking [until 1948 GL] about the relationship of church and mission the church has a central place, yet no matter what happens with the societies, mission is a task of the church⁸⁴.

This conviction of the early Hoekendijk is relevant for this study, because it coincides with the program of Sándor Makkai (supported by bishop László Ravasz) summarized in the popular theological slogan of the time 'Let the church be more missionary and let the mission be more ecclesial.' This program resulted first in the integration of the different missionary and renewal movements of the Reformed Church in Hungary into one national co-ordinating body (National Reformed

⁸³ 'Daarmee wordt deze actie 'verkerkelijkt'...', op. cit., p. 9.

⁸⁴ Van Gurp 1989, p. 120 [translation: GL].

Missionary Working Group ORMM⁸⁵) but later it led to the dissolving of the missionary societies, unions and associations (by 1951) in accordance with the intentions of the Socialist state⁸⁶.

We conclude that the Report of Hoekendijk about his first visit to Hungary in 1947 bears hints to his missiological thinking in that period, applied to practice when organizing the proposed missionary work of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Indonesia. The main characteristics of this thinking are: (1) the insight that the missionary character of the church is an ecclesiological criterion of the existence of the church; and (2) an ecclesiocentric definition of mission. These theological positions were relevant to the context of the Reformed Church in Hungary in 1947, because (ad 1) a debate was going on between the different streams within the RCH about the assessment of the role the church played between the two World Wars and one of the conclusions was that the RCH had not fulfilled her missionary calling, and (ad 2) the ‘ecclesialization’ of the mission became an official program of the RCH in that period.

Draskóczy's Notes

Another valuable document of Hoekendijk's visit of 1947 to Hungary is the Notes of László Draskóczy (1905-1967), General Secretary (1930-1936) of the Hungarian Evangelical Foreign Missionary Society (MEKMSz), later that of the Reformed Mission Society (MRKSz). These notes are preserved in the personal archives of Draskóczy, deposited in the Archives of the National Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary⁸⁷. Draskóczy made detailed notes of the lectures and of the meetings of Hoekendijk and later typed them in Hungarian, in several copies. Some of these materials were published in the Hungarian press; other parts were shared with others on a private basis. Draskóczy diligently edited these materials and prepared them for publication⁸⁸. He also wrote a full summary of the visit in which all of the material is included⁸⁹. According to a hand-written note on the first page, this summary was made for ‘the General Convent and for Sándor Makkai⁹⁰.’ We follow this latter document here.

⁸⁵ Országos Református Missziói Munkaközösség, Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 788-793.

⁸⁶ Kool, 1993, p. 706-713.

⁸⁷ MREZSL 89.

⁸⁸ It is difficult to discern which are the original Hoekendijkian formulations and how far they are interpreted and paraphrased by Draskóczy. We must remember that these lectures were given in German, interpreted spontaneously into Hungarian, and they were re-written again in Hungarian out of the notes taken on the premises. We may suppose though that the main sequence of Hoekendijk's argumentation and his main conclusions, as we found them in this text, are authentic. Unfortunately no text or notes of Hoekendijk about this journey are preserved in the Hoekendijk Archives.

⁸⁹ László Draskóczy, *Feljegyzések Hoekendijk holland missziói tanács főtitkára Budapesti előadásaiából és magánbeszélgetéseiből, 1947. október* [Notes of Lectures and Private Talks Held by Hoekendijk, General Secretary of the Dutch Missionary Council, in Budapest, October 1947], (unpublished), 1947. MREZSL 89f 13. a-d.

⁹⁰ ‘Egyet. Konvent és Makkai Sándor részére’, op. cit., p. 1.

'A lecture held in the Kálvin Téri Reformed Church' (pp.1-3)

This lecture was given on 16 October 1947, in the Kálvin Téri Reformed Church, in Budapest, to a broader public. In this short speech Hoekendijk shared some basic information about the ecclesial situation in Indonesia and illustrated it with four short stories, the crucifying of 12 ministers under the Japanese rule, the story of an elderly widow of a pastor who was ministering alone in a church of 40 000 members for two years in Borneo, an impressive account of the martyr death of the family of two Hungarian medical missionaries, Gyula and Emma Cseszko (Sangir and Talaud), and a story of a church where members must attend the services in shifts not having enough cloths for the whole congregation. The conclusion of this very emotional address turns into an invitation to the Hungarian Churches to participate in the missionary endeavour of the Indonesian Christians. The text of this speech was published in Hungarian under the title 'Indonesia Calls.'⁹¹

The address does not give any theological definition of mission. However, an underlying concept of an ecclesiocentric definition of mission can be traced throughout the whole text. It pays special attention to the missionary calling of every lay member of the church: 'Every Indonesian church member is a missionary, too.'⁹²

'A lecture held in a meeting with the Reformed Ministers of Budapest and answers to the questions they asked' (pp. 3-9)

This lecture consists of a brief introduction about the situation of the churches in the non-Western world (Japan, China, 'British-India' and Indonesia, p. 3-5). It is followed by a chapter on the 'The Secret of the Renewal of the Church' (pp. 5-6). In this part Hoekendijk passionately declares that 'the Hungarian Reformed Church will not be renewed unless she commits herself to the cause of mission' (p.6 translation GL). He calls for purifying the idea of mission of the old romanticism and for meeting sober decisions about participating in God's action. Referring to Zinzendorf he says that the church should be God's 'chariot of war' (p.6).

This part represents the same concept of ecclesiocentric mission with two remarkable elements in addition. It is rather unexpected that Hoekendijk uses a military terminology when speaking about mission, even if we see the rhetorical function of these words. It is more interesting that in a metaphoric sentence he refers to mission as God's action in which the church should participate, 'We can no longer sit here doing nothing and only watch what God is doing'⁹³. In this formulation we may discover a hint to the concept of *missio Dei*, which became so important in the missiology of Hoekendijk later⁹⁴.

After a short paragraph on the history of the church in West-Java (p.7) he describes what kind of personnel is needed in the work in Indonesia (pp. 7-8), underlining the importance of high academic education. When describing the ideal

⁹¹ 'Indonézia üzen' in: Hajnal, December 1947, p. 3-5.

⁹² Op. cit., p.3 [translation: GL].

⁹³ Literally: 'We may not sit with our hands on our laps...' Op. cit., p.6 [translation: GL].

⁹⁴ Cf. van Gurp 1989, p. 185-192.

profile of the missionary to Indonesia he stresses the importance of a servant attitude, that of 'biblical *diakonia*'.

In the last part of this lecture Hoekendijk's answer is summarized, which he gave to the question 'what should we do for the mission' (p.8). He calls the ministers to 'repentance to mission' so that they could preach and teach credibly about it and animate the whole church for the cause of mission. He warns against the danger of reducing the missionary interest to the 'awakened nuclei' of the congregations, stressing that mission belongs to the 'basic structure of the church' and should be the cause of the whole congregation. This latter insight is in harmony of the program of Sándor Makkai, who wanted to integrate all the missionary initiatives into the structure of the Reformed Church. However, it must be noted here, that it was exactly this concept which was used (misused) by the pro-Communist leadership of the church in order to disband the missionary and evangelistic societies.

'The relationship of foreign mission and the mission to the Jews' (pp.9-10)

The sub-title says that Hoekendijk held this lecture at a joint meeting of the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Mission Society and of the 'Good Shepherd' Ministries. The latter was a ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary to support the Jewish members of the Reformed Church at the time of persecution (Holocaust) and to do missionary work among the Jews in Hungary.

Hoekendijk gives an account of his sad experiences in Hungary regarding the 'Jewish question'. He is convinced that the approach to the Jews is a 'question of Christianity' (p.9). He condemns all kinds of anti-Semitic sentiments harshly, as anti-Christian. In the following he summarizes his theological insights about the relationship of the mission to the 'heathen' and to the Jews saying that they belong together and that the progress of foreign mission is a sign that the 'time of Israel' is near when a mass conversion of the Jews to Christianity may be expected. In this context he also gives a brief definition of mission,

What is mission? From a biblical point of view it is the proclamation that Jesus is the Christ and the Lord and is calling all the peoples to believe this...The mission is not a task but a gift; sign and message of the progress of the Christian church. (p. 9-10, translation: GL)

We note here that it is a christologically motivated ecclesiocentric definition of mission, a simple and rather spontaneous summary of a classical view of what Christian mission is about. It is also in accordance with P. van Gulp's analysis about the younger Hoekendijk describing his definition of mission in this period as kerygmatic, 'the proclamation of the message of the Gospel'.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Van Gulp 1989, p. 127.

'A confidential private talk with Hoekendijk, 28 October 1947' (p. 10-13)

This part of Draskóczy's Notes is historically the most interesting of all. Here the summary of a confidential conversation is given, a talk not hindered by the sensitivities of the public opinion, of politics and by the obligatory rules of diplomacy. The Hungarian text refers to a question which was asked from Hoekendijk, 'How did he see the situation of the Reformed Church in Hungary and that of the Revival?' (p. 10). In his lengthy answer Hoekendijk exerts again a very sharp criticism on the 'receiving' character of the RCH, he speaks about a 'catastrophe' of the church, which only receives and never shares (ibid.). He also sees the danger that the church acts defensively when protecting its extensive system of institutions (schools, social work) and thus she would fail to fulfil her mission in the new Hungarian social life. As far as the Reformed system of schools is concerned he misses the reflection on a Reformed pedagogy and is perplexed by the reluctance of the Reformed teachers to think about this. Hoekendijk speaks with great respect about the evangelistic/revivalist movements but he criticizes them of being too individualistic and 'pietistic' (p. 11). He pleads for the presence of the Reformed Church in the social arena of Hungary, where he sees that the RCH does not represent any authentic social policy. Finally, he repeats his experiences of latent anti-Semitism and he calls for a clear stance of the RCH on this issue to condemn all kinds of anti-Semitism explicitly. Sharing some positive personal experiences of his journeys in rural Hungary he urges a program of turning the *ecclesiolae in ecclesiam* ('revivalists') into a *Kerngemeinde* (ibid.) which would work for the missionary re-structuring of the local congregation. One of the ways out of this situation is a missionary action which could mobilize and revive the life of the local congregations (reciprocal effect). He gives some practical guidelines to take concrete steps towards a participation of the RCH in the world mission, first via the Dutch churches and soon (within 8 years) on her own, with its own Hungarian mission fields (pp. 12-13).

This text is not a theological reflection again, thus we may only trace some hints to underlying missiological concepts. The most important of them is the emphasis Hoekendijk puts on the ecclesial nature of mission, arguing that the *raison d'être* of the para-church movements is the renewal of the church herself. As we already noted above, this insight is in accordance with the program of Makkai to integrate mission into the 'normal' structure of the church. However, this theological concept coincided with the intentions of the Communist Party, which wanted to dismantle all of the civic organizations including the Christian ones.

Hoekendijk's visit to Hungary gained broad publicity in the then still flourishing Hungarian Reformed Church press. Some of his lectures were published in Hungarian translation;⁹⁶ others were published in summaries.⁹⁷ It was László

⁹⁶ Johannes C. Hoekendijk, 'Indonézia üzen' in: *Hajnal*, December 1947, p. 3-5 (also published separately as a tract); Johannes C. Hoekendijk, 'A misszió helyzete Indonéziában' in: *Hajnal*, s.d. (1947?), p. 9-14; Johannes C. Hoekendijk, 'A fiatal egyházak ma. A pogánymisszió időszzerű problémái' in: *Útmutató* (Spring 1948 and Summer 1948); and Johannes C. Hoekendijk, 'Az Egyház és a nép' in: *Református Gyülekezet* 1/1 (1948), p. 56-67.

Draskóczy who made a great effort to spread Hoekendijk's ideas by the means of the ecclesial media of the time.⁹⁸ In the Lutheran Church, László Benczúr published articles about Hoekendijk's visit.⁹⁹ Through these publications Hoekendijk's thoughts were made available both to the ministers of the Reformed (and Lutheran) churches and to the wider public of the church membership ('grassroots'), too. This evidence leads us to the conclusion that Hoekendijk's ideas about the nature of the situation of Christian mission in the middle of the 20th century were influential in the RCH to a large extent.

Another sign of his impact can be traced in the Minutes of the meeting of the Presiding Council of the General Convent of the RCH (the operative leadership of the RCH), held on 11 November 1947¹⁰⁰ (thus some days after the end of Hoekendijk's first visit). At this meeting Sándor Makkai, missionary officer of the Convent, reported about Hoekendijk's visit and initiated a motion to set up a 'Subcommittee on Foreign Mission'¹⁰¹. The motion was accepted and the subcommittee was set up. Here we see a direct impact of J.C Hoekendijk on the missionary structure of the RCH.

After returning home Hoekendijk reported about his visit to Hungary to the NZR at a meeting held on 12 November 1947 in Amsterdam¹⁰². He confirmed that there was a strong missionary interest in the Reformed and in the Lutheran Churches in Hungary and he strongly suggested that the NZR should get involved in cooperation with these churches in order to help them put their missionary zeal into practice. He emphasized that Benő Békefi does not play an important role in Hungary 'any more'¹⁰³ and warned that the Communists were manipulating the inner life of the Protestant churches in Hungary¹⁰⁴. The question was asked whether the Hungarian Protestant churches did not tend to flee the actual challenges at home by initiating foreign missionary activity. Hoekendijk argued emphatically that the missionary commitment he experienced in Hungary was rooted in genuine spiritual convictions and he asked the NZR to support this cause. After the discussion a decision was made to invite 3-4 Hungarians to be trained at the Mission School in Oegstgeest, The Netherlands, and a suggestion was made to allot a 'corner' of the

⁹⁷ 'Hoekendijk holland misszionárius Magyarországon' in: *Missziói Lapok*, I. (1948), p. 2-5.

⁹⁸ In several articles. e.g. D[raskóczy] L[ászló]: 'Kedves vendége volt...' (editorial) in: *Hajnal*, December 1947, p. 1-2; László Draskóczy: 'Indonézia üzen' in: *Missziói Füzetek*, No. 109.

⁹⁹ László Benczúr, 'Hoekendijk' and 'Indonézia' in: *Lelkipásztor*, Summer 1947, p. 7-8.

¹⁰⁰ 'Kivonat a református egyetemes konvent elnökségi tanácsának Budapestén, 1947. november 11-én a konvent székházában tartott ülése jegyzőkönyvéből', MREZSL, 2e 112/XIX.

¹⁰¹ *Külmissziói albizottág*.

¹⁰² *Notulen Algemeene Vergadering NZR*, 12 Nov. 1947, Amsterdam, NZR-A-UA 840.

¹⁰³ Hoekendijk may have thought about the inner tensions within the National Reformed Free Council which led to its dissolution by the end of 1947. However, his judgment about Békefi's diminishing role turned out to be wrong: Békefi filled important positions in the RCH until his death in 1964, including the office of bishop of the Dunántúli Church District 1962-1964. cf. Ladányi 2006, p. 26-27 and p. 80.

¹⁰⁴ It is remarkable that Hoekendijk could assess the situation of the churches in Hungary so sharply, especially in the light of the fact that the actual removal of the anti-Communist church leaders started about half a year later in 1948. (e.g. László Ravasz Reformed bishop resigned on 11 May 1948, Lajos Ordass Lutheran bishop was arrested on 24 August 1948).

mission field to the Hungarians (*Hongaarse hoek* [sic!]) in New-Guinea (Irian Jaya).¹⁰⁵

7.4.3. Second Visit to Hungary 1948

At a meeting of the Board of the NZR held on 15 October 1948¹⁰⁶ the plan of a second visit of Hoekendijk to Hungary was on the agenda. It is reported that at a former meeting of the Board (11/12/1947) a decision was made to accept a repeated invitation of Hoekendijk by the RCH. He would go to Hungary in the capacity of a 'guest professor', giving courses on missiology at the protestant theological faculties in Hungary. His other task remained the same, to make preparations for the cooperation between the RCH and NZR in order to send out Hungarian missionaries to Indonesia (after a period of training in the Netherlands). The visit took place between 25 October and 5 December 1948. Hoekendijk wrote a detailed, confidential report about this visit to the NZR (in Dutch)¹⁰⁷ dated on 13 December 1948 and a summary of the experiences of his two visits (in English)¹⁰⁸, on 30 December 1948. The addressee of the latter report is unknown; we suppose that it was made for the IMC, it might have been addressed to Norman Goodall, Secretary of the IMC¹⁰⁹. These documents bear very interesting witness of how a Dutch visitor experienced the political and ecclesial situation in Hungary. A profound historical analysis of the documents goes beyond the scope of this study.¹¹⁰

Hoekendijk visited the four theological academies of the RCH (Budapest, Pápa, Sárospatak and Debrecen), where he held lectures to the students and to the faculty on missiological issues. He attended a conference of the faculties of the theological academies on 28-29 October 1948 at Sárospatak. On 22 November 1948 he participated at a meeting of the missionary sub-committee of the Synod of the RCH, at Budapest.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ 'Notulen NZR 12. November 1947' Rapport Hongarije, p.7-8.

¹⁰⁶ 'Notulen moderamenvergadering NZR 15 October 1948' NZR-A-UA 840, Map 1.

¹⁰⁷ Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *Verslag van een bezoek aan Hongarije, gemaakt in opdracht van de N.Z.R., op uitnodiging van de Hervormde Kerk in Hongarije, 25 October -5 December 1948*. [A Report of a Visit to Hungary, Made On Behalf of the Netherlands Missionary Council, On An Invitation by the Reformed Church in Hungary], (unpublished), 1948, JCH-A-C17.

¹⁰⁸ Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *Report on the Missionary Movement in the Reformed Church in Hungary*, (unpublished), JCH-A-C16.

¹⁰⁹ The report was sent by Hoekendijk to Visser 't Hooft, too. Cf. Correspondence Hoekendijk-W.A. Visser 't Hooft deposited in the JCH-A by van Gorp (originals in WCC Archives, Geneva), No. 37.

¹¹⁰ Cf. László Gonda: 'Tó vagy folyó? A magyar református missziói helyzet 1947-48-ban egy holland vendég szemével' [Lake or River? The Situation of the Hungarian Reformed Missions in 1947-1948 through the Eyes of a Dutch Visitor] in: *Református Tiszántúl*, XII/3-4. (2004), p. 14-16.

¹¹¹ The schedule of his visit was planned as follows: arrival to Debrecen on 20 October 1948, 20-24 October: Debrecen, 24-31 October: Sárospatak, 1-7 November: Debrecen, 7-20 November Budapest and Pápa, 23 November – 5 December: Budapest (reserved for meetings with RCH officials). This schedule is reconstructed on the basis of notes in Sándor Makkai's diary of 1948, TIREK 6735.

Hoekendijk's Report 1948

In his report Hoekendijk describes the general situation of Hungary and the developments of the churches in it, then he reports briefly about his visit, and finishes the document with conclusions and suggestions.

In the first part of the report he offers an interesting typology of the church-state relationships in Hungary. He illustrates three typical attitudes to the Communist state by introducing briefly three leading ecclesial personalities. The first is Cardinal József Mindszenty, Roman Catholic archbishop of Esztergom, whose attitude is described as 'radical no' to the Communist state¹¹². Hoekendijk quotes that he is called to be the 'only true Calvinist in Hungary', referring to the strong tradition of resistance to authoritarian state policies in the Hungarian Reformed Church¹¹³. The other type presented is that of Albert Bereczky¹¹⁴, Reformed bishop in Budapest, who represent the 'unconditional yes' to the Communist state. The third of the typology is the one for which the author has an explicit appreciation, Lajos Ordass¹¹⁵, Lutheran bishop, whose stance is described as 'principal no'. Ordass was ready to accept the state as a legitimate authority but boldly criticized the excesses of the anti-clerical policy of the Communists and was ready to protest against the nationalization of schools. He was in prison during Hoekendijk's second visit. After this typology Hoekendijk describes the overall situation of the country and the place of the mainline churches in it¹¹⁶.

¹¹² József Mindszenty (1892-1975), Roman Catholic archbishop of Esztergom (1945-1974; from 1956 in exile) resisted the ecclesial politics of the Communist state, refused to agree with the nationalization of church schools and ecclesial property. He was arrested on 26 December 1948 (thus 11 days after Hoekendijk left Hungary). During the Revolution in 1956 he was liberated from his house arrest and actively supported the cause of the Revolution. After the fall of the Revolution he lived in exile, first at the American embassy in Budapest (1956-1963), then in the Vatican (1963) and in Vienna (1963-1975). He refused to resign from the see of Archbishop, but the Pope forced him to retirement in 1974. He died in 1975.

¹¹³ JCH-A-C16, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ Albert Bereczky (1893-1966) a representative of the Reformed Revivalist movement, Reformed bishop of the Dunamelléki Church District of the RCH, with his see in Budapest (1948-1958). Bereczky was elected to be a bishop after the forced resignation of his predecessor László Ravasz (in 1948) and was strongly supported by the Communist party. During his episcopacy he was loyal to the Communist state and made an attempt to create a theological foundation for this cooperation (the 'theology of the narrow path'). During the 1956 Revolution he was ill (due to a stroke), he handed in his resignation but he was restored in office in 1957. He retired due to ill health in 1958.

¹¹⁵ Lajos Ordass (1901-1978) bishop of the Bányai District of the Lutheran Church in Hungary (1945-1950), vice president of the Lutheran World Federation (1957-1963). Because of his open criticism on the policy of the Communist state he was arrested on 8 September 1948 and sentenced to two years of imprisonment in a made-up trial. He was released from prison in 1950. In 1956 he was restored in his office of bishop and served until 1958.

¹¹⁶ He makes an interesting remark about the possibility of a schism in the mainline churches: an 'official' church loyal to the Communist authorities and an 'underground' church of the resistance. Cf. op. cit., p. 2-4. We must note that Hoekendijk did not assess the situation correctly in this case; the scenario (which became characteristic to the church in China) did not turn out to be the case in Hungary. The reason of this may be a subject of further research.

Turning to the situation of mission he summarizes the opinion of a well-known Reformed scholar Sándor Karácsony¹¹⁷, professor of pedagogy at the university in Debrecen, a lay representative of the Revivalist stream in the RCH. He quotes the words of this influential Reformed intellectual as characteristic of the understanding of mission in the RCH,

We have neglected to be missionaries to the East and boasted of being the Eastern bulwark of Christendom. Now God has brought the East to us and all the atrocities of the Soviet Army are a righteous judgment on our disobedience to the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19) and the call to social righteousness (Prophets). We have to accept this punishment and repent in a concrete way, through evangelizing the East.¹¹⁸

Karácsony's words are remarkable in several ways. The typical pattern of post-war Reformed (revivalist) theology is present in his argumentation, disobedience to God in the past – judgement and punishment – call to repentance. This pattern is concretized in terms of mission by identifying disobedience as the lack of missionary activity 'to the East', the Soviet occupation and the Communist social order is seen as the instruments of God's punishment, and repentance is interpreted as launching missionary activities. In this logic an ancient Hungarian Reformed tradition is revived, in which the events of contemporary history are interpreted according to the hermeneutical key offered in the Old Testament (especially in the deuteronomic historiography) in relation to God's people (sin – judgment – repentance – mercy). This logic was applied to interpret history (then the Turkish occupation of Hungary) in the 16th century when the teachings of the Reformation reached the Kingdom of Hungary. Another question rises in Karácsony's discourse, what did he mean by 'the East'. This category is used again and again in the pre- and post-war missionary circles in Hungary, yet its definition remains vague. Some understood it as the people at the Eastern Hungarian ethnic border, thus it should denote Roumanians and Serbs. Others referred to the Muslim population of the Balkan (Bosnians, Albanians, Bulgarian Turks). Another suggestion was to direct the Hungarian Reformed missionary activity to the Finno-Ugric peoples at the foot of the Ural Mountains (Chanty, Mansi etc. in the former Soviet Union, today in Chanty-Mansijsk, Federation of Russia), since they are 'relatives' of the Hungarians, at least as the language is concerned. The problem that we see here is that most of these nations(including the Russians) belong – at least formally – to Christian churches (except the Muslims, of course), predominantly to the Eastern Orthodox traditions. We are confronted here with the problem of proselytism.

¹¹⁷ Sándor Karácsony (1892-1952), professor of pedagogy at the University of Debrecen (lecturer: 1932-1942, professor 1942-1948). An original thinker in education theory and philosophy, a lay theologian, an influential teacher. He was forced to retire in 1948. Inspired by the Revivalist movement and by Barthian theology.

¹¹⁸ JCH-A-C16, p. 4.

However, we must keep in mind that this was more a theoretical than a practical problem, the Hungarian Reformed missionary activity was directed either to South-Asia (Papua) or to the Muslim population of the Balkan (Albania, Bulgarian Turks). A third characteristic of the understanding of mission represented by Karácsony is his conviction that the Hungarians as a people have a divine call 'to evangelize the East'. This idea, which resembles the American concept of 'manifest destiny', is harshly criticized by Hoekendijk,

Prof. Karácsony has mixed these ideas with rather romantic Magyar nationalism (renaissance of the Magyar songs etc) and many of his ideas come close (or are even identical with) the well known ideas of the Deutsch Christen [sic]¹¹⁹

This criticism can be judged as rather unjust and exaggerated. Karácsony belonged to the so-called 'people's movement' in Hungary, an intellectual experiment of searching for alternative ways of social order in Hungary, strongly concentrating on the issue of social justice of the lower classes (especially of the peasantry) and on the revival of authentic Hungarian culture. This movement (including right-wing as well as left-wing thinkers) was well represented in the RCH. One of their most important conferences was held under the umbrella of the Reformed Students' Movement 'Soli Deo Gloria' (Balatonszárszó, 1943). The overwhelming majority of these thinkers – including Sándor Karácsony – was anti-Nazi and admittedly inspired by Barthian theology and by the struggle of the *Bekennende Kirche* (especially through the *Barmer Thesen*).¹²⁰

After reporting on his extended travels in Hungary and of a meeting about the plans of Hungarian Reformed involvement in foreign mission in Indonesia (held in Budapest, 22 November 1948) and of talks with Benő Békefi, Hoekendijk concludes his reports (both to the NZR and to the IMC) with suggestions of a continuing support of the cause of Hungarian Reformed missionaries. In this context he makes an interesting suggestion addressed to the IMC. He suggests that the WCC and the IMC should set up a secretariat in order to support the involvement of the Christians living behind the Iron Curtain in worldwide mission (he refers to Hungary, Transylvania- Romania and Czechoslovakia). In this context he writes the following,

In this secretariate the interests of the WCC and the IMC necessarily overlap and it might be contemplated therefore to make this secretariate right from the beginning a joint enterprise (in practice)¹²¹

¹¹⁹ JCH-A-C16, p. 4-5.

¹²⁰ A detailed and documented discussion of this interesting issue falls beyond the scope of this study but deserves the interest of further research.

¹²¹ JCH-A-C16, p. 11.

This suggestion is remarkable because we see here a very early sign of the conviction that the WCC and the IMC ('church/ecumene' and 'mission') should work closely together on international level. It is interesting that Hoekendijk formulated this as early as in 1948, 13 years before the merger of the WCC and IMC (1961, New Delhi). On the other hand, this opinion of Hoekendijk is not surprising at all in the light of his theological conviction of the church being a function of the apostolate.¹²²

Aide-mémoire

One of the purposes of Hoekendijk's second visit to Hungary was to make further preparations of the cooperation between the NZR and the RCH in the issue of foreign mission. Next to private talks about this concern (with Sándor Makkai, Benő Békefi and others) Hoekendijk participated at a meeting on foreign mission (*külmissziói értekezlet*) on 22 November 1948, in Budapest.¹²³ Some days after the meeting Hoekendijk summarized its results in an 'aide-mémoire', in the German language, dated on 25 November 1948.¹²⁴ The Hungarian translation of the same text is preserved in the Archives of the Synod of the RCH, too.¹²⁵

The contents of the documents describe the points of agreement between the NZR and the RCH on the involvement of the RCH in practical missionary activity in cooperation with and with the assistance of NZR. It is agreed that at the outset the RCH would send 5 missionary candidates to the missionary training school of the NZR in Oegstgeest, The Netherlands. The RCH is responsible for the selection. It is further agreed that the RCH will start her missionary activity on a field in the Republic of Indonesia, in close cooperation with the NZR and with the national church (the NZR will bring the RCH and the Indonesians in touch with each other). It is also planned to allot an independent mission field to the RCH in New-Guinea (Irian Jaya)¹²⁶. In the Aide-mémoire Hoekendijk also reports on his talks with Sándor Makkai, Rev. Soedarno¹²⁷ as well as about his meeting with three missionary candidates. He mentions also that he discussed the visa problems of missionary candidates with the ambassador of the Netherlands in Hungary.¹²⁸

¹²² See above.

¹²³ In the minutes of the meeting Hoekendijk is listed as a participant Cf. 'Feljegyzés az 1948. november 22-én d.e. Budapesten, a püspöki hivatal bizottsági termében tartott külmissziói értekezletről' (unpublished) MREZSL 2e 112/XIX, p.1.

¹²⁴ *Aide-mémoire auf Grund der Besprechungen im November 1948 in Ungarn gehalten durch J. C. Hoekendijk, Secrétaire des Niederländischen Missionsrates (N.Z.R.)* (unpublished), JCH-A-C17b.

¹²⁵ *Pro Memoria. Hoekendijk, a Holland Missziói Tanács (NZR) főtitkárának 1948. novemberében Magyarországon folytatott megbeszélései alapján*, MREZSL 2e 112/XVI.

¹²⁶ These decisions are also documented in the official minutes of the meeting. MREZSL 2e 112/XIX.

¹²⁷ Sudarno visited Hungary in the same time as J.C Hoekendijk (on an invitation by Barna Nagy, professor at the Reformed Theological Academy in Sárospatak).

¹²⁸ In his 1948 Report to the IMC Hoekendijk's mentions this meeting too and makes a remark which is quite interesting. He speaks about the positive developments around the granting of Hungarian passports and Dutch entry-permits for the selected missionary candidates, and he notes that 'The difficulty has been that the Netherlands Government did not allow an entry-permit to those people who had a Hungarian passport because they were supposed to be communists' JCH-A-C16, p 8. It seems that the

This document demonstrates that Hoekendijk was convinced of the crucial role Christian mission plays in the life of a church. Motivated by the idea that the whole church, thus the Eastern-European Protestant churches as well should take their part in the worldwide missionary activity, Hoekendijk, in the capacity of the Secretary of the NZR, did his best to take practical steps to make this participation possible. The results of his efforts were promising, nevertheless, the political situation made the implementation of the plan absolutely impossible. In the minutes of a meeting of the NZR on 16 December 1948¹²⁹ it is noted that the ‘team of missionaries’ from Hungary had still not arrived in the Netherlands due to visa problems¹³⁰. In the beginning of 1949 it became evident that the plans of missionary cooperation between the NZR and RCH had to be cancelled due to the political hindrances. However, Hoekendijk still thought that the churches of Eastern Europe should participate in worldwide mission in the future. In a private letter to Visser ‘t Hooft, dated on 4 March 1949 he writes the following,

I think that the present situation will be impossible in the future, the whole bloc of the churches in Central Europe, with approximately 4 million Protestant Christians (Hungary, Transylvania, Czechoslovakia) has not even provided 10 missionaries until recently and that they do not have any missionary responsibility of their own.¹³¹

Mission im Neubau

Hoekendijk’s second visit to Hungary had a double aim, to make preparations for the cooperation of the NZR and of the RCH in foreign mission (Indonesia, New-Guinea) and to give lectures on mission at the theological academies¹³² (cf. ‘*gastprofessor*’) in Hungary. Due to unknown reasons he does not give any details about his courses held at the academies in his reports on his journey to Hungary.¹³³ However, we do know that the visits took place.¹³⁴ According to the documents preserved in the Archives of the Synod of the RCH, Hoekendijk arrived in

failure of acquiring of the needed documents for the missionary candidates did not depend exclusively on the Hungarian authorities. Cf. Kool, 1993, p. 801.

¹²⁹ *Notulen Algemeene Vergadering NZR 1948*, 16 December, Amsterdam. NZR-A-UA840 Map 1.

¹³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹³¹ Original in Dutch (translation GL), Correspondence Hoekendijk- Visser ‘t Hooft deposited in the JCH-A by van Gorp (originals in WCC Archives, Geneva), No.42.

¹³² In 1948 the RCH had four theological training institutions. One of them was a Theological Faculty of the University of Debrecen (until 1950, when the Communist authorities excluded the theological faculties from the state universities), the other three (Budapest, Sárospatak and Pápa) were functioning as church-owned colleges (academies).

¹³³ The reports, addressed to the NZR and to the IMC concentrate on the possible involvement of the RCH in worldwide mission. This might have been the reason why he did not go into details about his own lectures.

¹³⁴ The evidence of this can be found in the correspondence between Sándor Makkai and the representatives of the academies in Pápa and Sárospatak about the technical details of Hoekendijk’s visits to these institutions. Cf. MREZSL 2e 112 Map 16.

Debrecen on 25 October 1948 and stayed there until 7 November 1948. In the meantime he went to Sárospatak, too (28-29 October 1948). In the second half of his stay in Hungary (8 November – 5 December 1948) he visited Pápa.

The question rises whether we know anything about the contents of Hoekendijk's lectures held at the theological academies. For the first sight the answer appears to be 'no', because we do not find any reference to his lectures held in Hungary in 1948, neither in the bibliography of his published works¹³⁵ nor in the Hoekendijk Archives¹³⁶. However, it is supposed that Hoekendijk's unpublished series of lectures under the title *Mission im Neubau*¹³⁷ are the lectures he held in 1948 in Hungary.

In the catalogue of the Hoekendijk Archives this lecture (actually a series of four lectures) is to be found under the heading 'B14' with the following description, '*Mission im Neubau*. Lecture, held during Hoekendijk' Hungarian journey, Oct. 1947., 23 pages, typescript'.¹³⁸ On the first page of the document itself we read a note written with a pencil '1947 Hongarije'¹³⁹. A.M Kool refers to this document as 'the only 'mark' of his visit [to Hungary]' and dates it from 1947, too¹⁴⁰. However, Peter van Gorp, when discussing this lecture, makes an interesting remark about its dating. According to him there are doubts about whether the document is from 1947, because there are quotations in it from books (and from articles) published first in 1948.¹⁴¹ There is another – indirect – evidence that confirms the opinion that the document *Mission im Neubau* is dated from 1948, László Draskóczy made detailed notes of Hoekendijk's lectures held in 1947¹⁴² in Hungary and he compiled a summary of them in Hungarian. As described elsewhere in this study, these notes and summaries do not contain the lecture *Mission im Neubau* or any part of it. On the basis of this data the conclusion is to be made that the document '*Mission im Neubau*' is from the year 1948. It is supposed that this lecture was held in Hungary, not in 1947, but one year later. The fact that

¹³⁵ Van Gorp 1989, p. 337-334.

¹³⁶ K van der Horst, Libertus A Hoedemaker, *Inventaris van het archief van Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975)*, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, 1983.

¹³⁷ JCH-A-B14.

¹³⁸ 'B 14 Mission im Neubau. Lezing gehouden tijdens JCH's Hongaarse reis, okt. 1947, 23 bl, getyp.' (translation GL), K van der Horst, Libertus A. Hoedemaker, *Inventaris van het archief van Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975)*, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, 1983, p. 24.

¹³⁹ 1947 Hungary. It is not clear though whether this note is made by Hoekendijk himself or by someone else.

¹⁴⁰ Kool, 1993, p. 747.

¹⁴¹ 'Het is aan twijfel onderhevig, of dit dokument inderdaad uit 1947 stamt: er komen citaten in voor uit boeken die pas in 1948 zijn verschenen.' Van Gorp 1989, p. 114. Some examples for this case: H. Berkhof: 'De apostoliciteit der kerk' in: *Nederlands Theologische Tijdschrift*, 1948, p. 146-193. (p 6/a); Semois: 'Definition de l'activité missionnaire' in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 1948, p. 1 ff. (p 6/a). A.A van Ruler: *Het apostolaat der kerk en het ondwerp-kerkorde*, Nijkerk, 1948 (p 6/a). And a reference to his own dissertation published in 1948 in Amsterdam on p. 17.

¹⁴² László Draskóczy: *Feljegyzések Hoekendijk holland missziói tanács főtitkára Budapesti előadásaiából és magánbeszélgetéseiből, 1947. október* [Notes of Lectures and Private Talks Held by Hoekendijk, General Secretary of the Dutch Missionary Council, in Budapest, October 1947], (unpublished), 1947, MREZSL 89f 13.a-d.

the language of the document is German leads to the conclusion that the text was addressed to a non-Dutch audience. As German was the *lingua franca* of the academic world in Hungary before (and right after) the Second World War, it is likely that it was written for a Hungarian public. Furthermore, the contents of the text represent a high academic standard, fitting very well into the context of the theological faculties.

The document itself contains 25 pages of typescript, and is divided into four parts. Each part is long enough to contain an academic lecture (if we suppose that they were translated to the audience sentence by sentence, it is even more so). It is thus more correct to speak about a series of four lectures. The structure of the text is as follows,

1. Mission in der Krise (pp. 1-6a)
2. Begegnung des Evangeliums mit der Religionen (pp. 7-12a)
3. Kirche und Gemeinde-Aufbau (pp.12-17)
4. Dienende Kirche (pp.18-23)

In the first chapter (pp. 1-6) Hoekendijk describes the crisis which was characteristic of the missionary situation right after the Second World War. He argues that there were two reasons for this crisis, a theological and an ideological one. According to him, the key theological problem which brought mission to crisis is the concentration on the multiplication of churches instead of on the Kingdom of God. Here he sees a parallel development in the Protestant and in the Roman Catholic theologies of mission. The second reason is what he calls 'ideological', the ideal of *Corpus Christianum* (Christendom) in which Christian mission was intertwined with the interest of the European colonial powers. This resulted in importing 'alien' elements into the set of goals of mission, like the 'spiritual expansion of the empire' of the spreading of the benefits of European civilization (E. Troeltsch). Against these false ideas Hoekendijk passionately argues that Christian mission is deeply rooted in eschatology and that mission to the gentiles is the 'power that holds the walls of history' (p.6) until the end comes. 'Durch Mission führt Christus die Welt ihrem Ende zu' (ibid.) Instead of church-centred mission (apostolate as function of the church) he calls for a radical change of perspective saying that the church should be taken up into the apostolate. The proper theological order is the following, Kingdom – Spirit – Church – History. This way a missionary theology is outlined and mission is saved from 'Kulturpropaganda', and a way is shown out of the crisis of mission.

The second chapter of the document discusses the topic of 'Encounter of the Gospel with the Religions' (pp. 7-12). A distinction of 'Gospel' and 'religions' are made (following a Barthian line of thinking). It is argued that there is a radical difference between propagating (Western) Christianity as a religion and the proclamation of the Gospel (M. Kähler). In the latter case the gospel is proclaimed and the freedom of the Holy Spirit is acknowledged by which the local form of the Christian church may profoundly differ from the Western ones in its cultural expressions. It is argued also that no 'points of contacts' should be sought for in the

‘elements’ of religions (K. Barth) but they should be looked at as ‘complex totalities’ (p.8 – H. Kraemer). Then the problems of the encounter of the Gospel with religions are illustrated by two cases, Hinduism and Islam. He concludes the chapter by a program of ‘Solidarity without Synthesis’ (p.11). He pleads for a total solidarity with the followers of other religions because of the unconditional nature of divine grace in Christ without falling into an illegitimate synthesis of ideas of different religious systems (cf. syncretism).

The third part of the series of lectures deals with the topic of the edification of the church (*Gemeindeaufbau* – p. 12-17). The central interest of this chapter is a radical criticism of the (German) concept of people’s church (*Volkskirche*). The author, on the one hand, demonstrates the need of the independent native churches on the former ‘mission fields’, freed from the control of the former Western sending churches and rooted in the local culture (*bodenständige Volkskirche*). On the other hand, he exerts sharp criticism on this idea (referring to Gustav Warneck and Bruno Gutmann) saying that the eschatological category of the ‘people of God’ is replaced by a romantic unbiblical concept of the ‘*Volk*’, which is seen as a divine order of the creation (*Schöpfungsordnung*), which should be Christianized and transformed without being given up. Hoekendijk expresses his conviction that this method is based on a concealed form of an unacceptable *theologia naturalis*. Instead, he argues for a program of turning the congregation into the Body of Christ (p. 16 - *Leibwerdung der Gemeinde*). The local church should be edified to be conscious of her unique eschatological nature, being an avant-garde of the Kingdom of God in the world. She should be freed from all kinds of primal bindings (*urtümliche Bindungen*) and social determinedness and live out genuine Christian community (*koinonia*) in all kinds of social contexts. Instead of being a conservative organ preserving the social structure of by-passed ages, the church should be on the cutting edge of the revolutionary transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit, in present day history.

The last part of the series of lectures bears the title ‘The Serving Church’¹⁴³ (pp. 18-23). Hoekendijk directs the attention of the reader (and of the listener) to the dilemma of the relationship between ‘word’ and ‘deed’, between proclamation of the Word and charitable services (*diakonia*) in Christian mission. Through historical examples he demonstrates that help in need and service to people has always been an integral part of Christian mission. When turning to theological reflection he describes three problematic approaches (p. 19), diakonia as an auxiliary service (next to proclamation), diakonia as an interim service (until the time proclamation arrives) and the autonomy of diakonia (totally freed from missionary motives). While dismissing these approaches as one-sided and theologically illegitimate, he shows that historical experience (e.g. YMCA in First World War) and developments in psychological anthropology (holistic understanding of the human being) make it inevitable to deal with the question of diakonia. However, the most important reason for this lies in the theological notion

¹⁴³ *Dienende Kirche*.

that in Jesus Christ the ‘reconciliation of the whole life’ (*Versöhnung des ganzen Lebens* – p. 20.) is granted and no element of the human life is excluded from his reconciling and restoring ministry. He wants to grant life to everyone in abundance (John 10,10). The church is the avant-garde of the Kingdom of God in this world and should live as an example of the coming Kingdom (*exemplarisch*), which is the Kingdom of Peace. ‘The church is to set up signs of the reconciled life where shalom reigns.’¹⁴⁴ This shalom means, ‘fellowship, justice, integrity, harmony and peace’¹⁴⁵ (Ps 85). That is why the church is ‘interested in the world’ (*Weltinteresse*). This approach is illustrated by the description of a missionary project of a church in Indonesia¹⁴⁶ in which the issue of ‘Christian family life’ is approached in a comprehensive way. In the last part (pp. 22-23) of the document, Hoekendijk summarizes his theological understanding of mission by describing it as consisting of three elements closely tied to one another, kerygma, koinonia and diakonia. He demonstrates that these three elements belonged to each other inseparably in the life of the early church in the New Testament (Acts 2,22ff). In the following discourse kerygma and koinonia are described as the two ‘foci’ (*Brennpunkte* – p.22) of the Gospel. They are never to be separated from each other. Both are witnessed in the world exclusively by diakonia. ‘This service is the point of the gospel [directed] to the world’¹⁴⁷. The program of ‘the serving church’ means that the church intends to regain all these three biblical aspects of her life. He demonstrates that the life of the church is unimaginable without kerygma or without koinonia, and he argues that without diakonia ‘both are lost’ (ibid.) ‘The only form in which the proclaimer and the congregation can live is the form of service’¹⁴⁸.

Hoekendijk concludes his lecture with a metaphor using the image of the prophet Elisha healing the son of Shunammite woman (2Kings 4, 34). As Elisha stretched himself out over the body of the boy, so should the church stretch herself out over the whole life of the people in order to bring the mankind to life. In such a close togetherness with the world can the church be a true ‘serving church’, a sign of God’s Kingdom.

The text of this series of lectures does not contain any direct references to the situation of the churches in Hungary. However, there are several elements which – though indirectly – might have been relevant to the context in which these lectures were held at the theological faculties in late 1948, in Hungary.

1. The strong criticism of the *Corpus Christianum* (Christendom) characteristic of the close links between state and church and of the privileged position of the church in the society (pp. 1-2) could be welcomed in the Hungarian context by those representing the position that

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. Translation GL.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Translation GL.

¹⁴⁶ Hoekendijk speaks about ‘in Indien’ (p.22) which may theoretically be a reference to India too, nevertheless, we suppose that he means to speak about the Dutch East-Indies (Cf. he uses plural).

¹⁴⁷ ‘Dieser Dienst ist die Spitze des Evangeliums in die Welt hinein’ p. 22(translation GL).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. Translation GL.

- the church should be ‘freed’ from all her privileges and public spheres of influence in the Hungarian society (including the nationalization of the schools).
2. The criticism of the German concept of the ‘people’s church’ (*Volkskirche* – p. 14-16) coincides with the criticism of the pre-war ecclesial situation in Hungary, exerted by the revivalist wing of the RCH and utilized by the new church leadership (A. Bereczky, B. Békefi, J. Péter) in order to legitimize their positions.
 3. The emphasis on diakonia as the only legitimate mode of approach of the church to the world coincided with the concept which gradually replaced all missionary activity by the ‘diakonal presence’ in the society.
 4. The concept of the ‘serving church’ became the key concept of the official theology in the RCH between 1948 and 1989. Although it can not be proved that this concept was directly taken over from Hoekendijk, nevertheless, his use of this concept (already in Bossey cf. above) and in his guest lectures at the theological academies could contribute to the wider acceptance of this ecclesiological concept. Hoekendijk’s use of this concept could also be seen as a confirmation that the theology of the ‘serving church’ fit into the developments of the ‘Western’, Ecumenical theology. This insight could strengthen the legitimacy of this theology in the eyes of the Hungarian Reformed church public.

László Makkai, staying in Basel in 1948, reflected on the importance of Hoekendijk’s visits to Hungary in a letter to his father, dated in Basel on 1 November 1948 (thus still during the time of Hoekendijk’s second visit to Hungary). It is worthwhile to quote a longer paragraph from the letter,

During my one month long stay by them [the Hoekendijks] I was again convinced of what a great present of God they are for me. My own questions, my own plans are getting clearer if I can discuss them with them and Hans’s vast worldwide perspective and theological knowledge shed light on the problems and arrange them. [...] Back to Hans, I would be glad if Father could spend with him as much time as possible. I think that your thoughts are closer to each other than those of the majority of the Hungarian ministers to yours! We need such a man in order to refresh the provincial theological academies (I mean Budapest, [Sáros]patak and Pápa) and to fill their old atmosphere with life. I often contemplate that it would be good to keep Hans in Hungary or, at least, to invite such kind of guest professors for a longer period.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Letter László Makkai to Sándor Makkai, Basel, 1 November 1948. (unpublished), TIREK 7497 (translation GL).

It is remarkable that someone, being familiar both with Hoekendijk's thinking and with the Hungarian situation found his thought so relevant for the life and theology of the RCH.

The Netherlands Missionary Council (NZR) discussed Hoekendijk's confidential report about his journey to Hungary on 16 December 1948¹⁵⁰. The only remark that is made in this context is that the Hungarian 'missionary team' had still not arrived to the Netherlands due to visa problems.

Sándor Makkai gave a detailed report to the General Convent of the RCH about Hoekendijk's visit in the framework of his annual report in the capacity of missionary officer¹⁵¹, on 19 May 1949. He mentions there that Hoekendijk met the missionary subcommittee of the RCH and gave them a detailed feed-back about his experiences in Hungary. Makkai speaks about the chances of the Hungarian Reformed Indonesia-mission with hopeful words. However, towards the end of the year 1949 the whole topic disappears both from the agenda of the NZR and of the RCH. By this Hoekendijk's official contacts to Hungary came to an end.

7.5. HOEKENDIJK AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY AFTER 1948

7.5.1. *After 1948*

When an attempt is made to trace Hoekendijk's influence in the RCH after his visits in 1947-1948, one is confronted with the difficulty of lacking material. Although Hoekendijk was frequently quoted and referred to in the preceding years (see above), it must practically be stated that the references to him entirely disappear from the Hungarian Protestant church press and literature after 1949. Several reasons contribute to this phenomenon.

1. The plans of the 'Indonesia-mission' of the RCH – in the organization of which Hoekendijk was deeply involved – turned out to be impossible to implement due to political hindrances. As the results of the researches done by A.M. Kool show, the issue was off the agenda of the RCH after 1950 in spite of the fact that the candidates did receive their visa from the Dutch authorities¹⁵². Thus, the most important point of contact between Hoekendijk and the RCH disappeared.
2. In the years 1949-51 the media of the Hungarian Protestant churches were radically cut back by the Communist authorities, instead of hundreds of the national, regional and local periodicals and magazines of the churches before and right after the Second World War, only two organs of the Reformed church press were permitted to exist, the weekly '*Az Út*' [The Way] and the monthly

¹⁵⁰ *Notulen Algemeene Vergadering NZR*, Amsterdam, 16 December 1948, NZR-A-UA 840 Map 1, p. 5.

¹⁵¹ Sándor Makkai: 'Konventi missziói előadói jelentés' in: *Református Gyülekezet*, 1/2 (1949), p. 34-65.

¹⁵² Kool, 1993, p. 804.

‘*Református Egyház*’ [Reformed Church] (the same reduction took place in the Lutheran Church, too). Later an ecumenical theological journal was allowed to function again (*Theológiai Szemle* [Theological Review], from 1957 on). However, these periodicals were also under strict control and censorship¹⁵³. Although some of Hoekendijk’s propositions fit well into the politico-theological ideology of the new (pro-Communist) church leadership (as we demonstrated above), the references to him disappear altogether from the church press, maybe because he was too much associated with the reviving foreign missionary interest in the RCH and with oncrete plans of Indonesia-mission in the eyes of the church public. In the fiercely controlled church press these elements were not welcome any more.

3. Hoekendijk himself left the position of secretary of the NZR and moved to Geneva to work in the staff of the WCC (1949-1952).¹⁵⁴ In his new capacity he stopped keeping official contacts with the RCH and there is no evidence in his Archives¹⁵⁵ of any further correspondence with Hungarian partners.¹⁵⁶ The issues of the situation of the RCH disappeared from his field of interest in the coming years. The same is true of the later periods of his life (Utrecht, New York).

There are two points where Hoekendijk’s influence can identified in the period between 1948 and 1968. The first of them are references to the Hoekendijkian theology made by one of the leading Hungarian Reformed systematic theologians of the 20th century, Ervin Vályi Nagy. Here we see that Hoekendijk’s theological development was followed and critically assessed in the Hungarian Reformed theologies. The other – indirect, however more widespread – field of influence was exerted through the 4th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in 1968, in Uppsala, Sweden.

7.5.2. Ervin Vályi Nagy

Although Hoekendijk was present in the church press of the RCH in 1946-1948, the references to his theological oeuvre disappear from the – quickly shrinking – Reformed media after 1948. An exception can be found in a theological work, published by Ervin Vályi Nagy (1924-1993), an outstanding systematic theologian of RCH in the 20th century. Vályi Nagy received his doctoral degree in theology

¹⁵³ Cf. Ladányi 2006, p. 29ff.

¹⁵⁴ Van Gorp 1989-63ff.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. K. van der Horst, Libertus A Hoedemaker, *Inventaris van het archief van Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975)*, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht, 1983.

¹⁵⁶ However, we do suppose that Hoekendijk did not stop to correspond with his Hungarian friends, especially with László Makkai. This correspondence is unfortunately inaccessible for research, not being present in either of the Hoekendijk Archives or in the Archives of László Makkai (TIREK AN6240). It is possible that this correspondence was destroyed due to security reasons as Mrs. Hebe Kohlbrugge supposes. (Interview with Mrs. Hebe Kohlbrugge, Utrecht, The Netherlands, June 2003.). The other option is that it is still in hiding at the time of the writing of this study (2006). We have not found any evidence of this.

from the Basel University in 1965. His dissertation, *Kirche als Dialog*, was first published in 1967 in German (together with a paper by Heinrich Ott on the same topic)¹⁵⁷. The book was also published in English in 1968.¹⁵⁸ In this remarkable book, the author briefly reflects on some ecclesiological propositions made by Hoekendijk. Hoekendijk is mentioned in the book six times,¹⁵⁹ and two of his works are quoted, *Die Zukunft der Kirche und die Kirche der Zukunft*¹⁶⁰ and an article on 'Die Welt als Horizont'.¹⁶¹

Vályi Nagy refers to Hoekendijk's ecclesiological insights about the church as a 'single paragraph in Christology',¹⁶² and he criticizes him for over-emphasizing the event-character of the church.¹⁶³ He agrees with Hoekendijk's program to define the church in her relationship with the world, but describes it as being 'easily said' and not implemented yet in the ecumenical movement¹⁶⁴. Without a concrete reference, he affirms this Hoekendijkian suggestion again in the *Schlusswort* of his book, 'Hoekendijk hat recht wenn er sagt dass s leicht sei, das Desiderat zu formulieren, die Kirche müsse in ihrer Weltbeziehung verstanden werden...'.¹⁶⁵ He quotes Hoekendijk once again in order to support his own thesis about the dialogical character of the church.¹⁶⁶

By Vályi Nagy we see a – partially critical – assessment of some selected elements of Hoekendijk's theology. The Hungarian systematic theologian reflects on Hoekendijk's thought in the context of his own ecclesiological interest. Even in his short references to Hoekendijk, he highlights some of the key concepts of his theology (cf. the church as a function of the apostolate). Without involving any politico-ideological elements, he offers a critical corrective to Hoekendijk's theology, especially vis-à-vis its tendency to define the church exclusively as an event (*Ereignis*). However, this corrective remains unelaborated (because Vályi-Nagy did not concentrate on Hoekendijk's theology as such).

The references in Vályi Nagy's book to Hoekendijk show that his theological oeuvre was at least partially familiar to some of the Hungarian Reformed theologians, in the period 1948-1968, too. However, in the light of the fact that Vályi Nagy's dissertation has never been published in Hungarian,¹⁶⁷ this reflection could not influence the Hungarian theological thinking to a larger extent.

¹⁵⁷ Ervin Vályi Nagy – Heinrich Ott, *Kirche als Dialog*, Basel, 1967.

¹⁵⁸ Ervin Vályi Nagy, *Church as Dialogue*, Philadelphia, 1968.

¹⁵⁹ On pages 26,76-77, 87, 100.

¹⁶⁰ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Die Zukunft der Kirche und die Kirche der Zukunft*, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1964.

¹⁶¹ Johannes C Hoekendijk, 'Die Welt als Horizont' in: *EvTh* 25/9 (1965), p. 483 ff. This article is a German version of Hoekendijk's farewell address to the Theological Faculty of the State University of Utrecht held on 26 May 1965. Cf. Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *De wereld als horizon*, Amsterdam, 1965.

¹⁶² Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Die Zukunft...*, p. 118 (quoted by Vályi-Nagy on p.26).

¹⁶³ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Die Zukunft...*, p. 120-122 (quoted by Vályi-Nagy *ibid.*).

¹⁶⁴ Referring to Johannes C Hoekendijk, 'Die Welt als Horizont' p. 483 (quoted by Vályi-Nagy *ibid.*).

¹⁶⁵ Vályi-Nagy *op. cit.* p. 87.

¹⁶⁶ Johannes C Hoekendijk, *Die Zukunft...*, p. 207 (quoted by Vályi-Nagy on p. 100).

7.5.3. Uppsala 1968

A. Wind points to the fact that the 4th General Assembly of the WCC held in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968 represents a shift in the theology of mission in the Ecumenical movement.¹⁶⁸ The goal of mission was identified as ‘humanization’ and a new, widened understanding of the (Barthian) concept of *missio Dei* led to the laying of the emphasis on God’s activity in world history. David Bosch describes Uppsala as the ‘apex of the ecumenical theology of secularization’.¹⁶⁹

The notion is represented by a wide circle of theologians that Uppsala 1968 was deeply influenced by Hoekendijk’s theology.¹⁷⁰ Although Hoekendijk himself was not present in Uppsala, he exerted a strong theological impact via the ‘Church for Others’ Report, a result of a study project of the WCC about the ‘Missionary Structures of the Congregation’ (1962-1966). This project was partially coordinated by Hoekendijk (he took part in the work of both the European and American sections)¹⁷¹ and – although it was not written by he himself, it bore his theological fingerprint¹⁷². Hoekendijk’s constant plea for the total re-definition of mission was given a full attention in Uppsala and his ‘program’ of the ‘church as a function of the apostolate’ was transformed into the ‘official’ theology of mission of the WCC¹⁷³. The crucial points of Hoekendijk’s theological program became thus accessible to the ecumenical world public via the official proceedings of the Assembly in Uppsala. This was the case in Hungary, too.

The Uppsala Assembly gained a strong publicity in the – rather limited – Reformed church press in Hungary. In the *Református Egyház (RE)*, the official monthly periodical of the RCH, and in the *Theológiai Szemle (THSZ)* (bi-monthly theological periodical of the Hungarian Ecumenical Council of Churches) nine articles are published in the years 1968 and 1969 that are partially or fully devoted to the Uppsala Assembly (next to short news before, during and after the event, also in the weekly magazine *Reformátusok Lapja*).

Already in June 1968, a lengthy article was published in the RE by János Bottyán, which deals with the Uppsala Assembly of the WCC¹⁷⁴. The author gives a short overview of the history of the modern ecumenical movement praising it as ‘creating great things’, noting however that ‘sometimes it was tempted by a certain

¹⁶⁸ Wind, 1991, p. 384ff.

¹⁶⁹ Bosch, 1980, p. 190.

¹⁷⁰ Van Gorp lists a series of theologians of this conviction: P. Beyerhaus, K. Bockmühl, J. Brisbois and H.T. Hoekstra. Van Gorp 1989, p. 262. David J. Bosch argues similarly in Bosch, 1980, p. 190 just as L. Hoedemaker in Hoedemaker 1995, p. 168.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Van Gorp 1989, p. 73.

¹⁷² Hoedemaker 1995, p. 168.

¹⁷³ In an article on the oeuvre of Hoekendijk, Anton Houtepen argues that the apparent consensus about the Hoekendijkian influence on Uppsala 1968 should be questioned. However, at this moment, his approach seems to be a minority opinion about this issue. Cf. Houtepen 2001, p. 297.

¹⁷⁴ János Bottyán, ‘Nemzetközi egyházi feladatok sodrában’ in: *Református Egyház*, XX/6 (1968), p. 121-123.

church-centeredness'¹⁷⁵. He reflects on the approaching 4th Assembly in the same spirit. He expects that this assembly will be of great importance, because it will implement a shift from the 'century of the church' to the 'century of the world'¹⁷⁶. He expresses his hope that the 'second generation [of the ecumenical movement] stands before [...] even greater tasks, it must walk on the way of the service in faith for the whole *oikumene*, for the whole mankind'¹⁷⁷. Here we already see that even before the Assembly, the compatibility of its (new!) theological propositions with the official theology of the RCH (the 'theology of the serving church') is demonstrated. It could be done so, because this official theology consisted of elements which were indeed quite similar to those represented in Uppsala. E.g. we quote here an official theological publication of the RCH from the year before the Assembly. The Synod of the RCH issued a document called 'synodal teaching' on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation (and of the 400th anniversary of the Debrecen Synod of 1567). This document formally represents the theological standpoint of the RCH in the era.¹⁷⁸ In paragraph 8 we read the following,

...we see the obedient behaviour of our church in the world in solidarity with the world [...], because our Lord Jesus Christ is the lord of the whole created universe. He is not only the Shepherd of the church but, by merciful governance, he is leading the world as well to whole justice and to the wholeness of life or, in biblical terms, to the realization of *shalom*. Relying on God's promises we already see this ultimate fulfilment. In the light of this hope we work in this present world with all our strength for humanity, for more bread and for a just and durable peace.¹⁷⁹

An argumentation can be seen here, where key Hoekendijkian theological concepts occur (*shalom*, working for humanity) which later played a crucial role in Uppsala. The notion that Christ is progressively active in the world ('as well'), leading it to *shalom* (history!) coincides with the Hoekendijkian understanding of *missio Dei* which became predominant in Uppsala, too. Although no reference is made to Hoekendijk, we see here evidences of a theological approach which shows similarities to his concept.¹⁸⁰

Tibor Bartha, bishop of the Tiszántúli Reformed Church District (Debrecen) and clerical president of the Synod of the RCH (formerly professor of Ecumenical

¹⁷⁵ Op. cit., p. 122 translation GL.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. Translation GL.

¹⁷⁸ 'Élő keresztyén reménységben. A Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinatának II. tanítása a reformáció négyszázötvenedik évfordulóján' in: RE XIX/11 (1967), p. 249-259.

¹⁷⁹ Op. cit., p. 259 translation GL.

¹⁸⁰ We suppose that the *Church for Others Report* could serve as mediator between Hoekendijk and the theologians of the RCH (especially for Tibor Bartha, who was apparently well read in ecumenical theological publications).

Studies at the Debrecen Reformed Theological Academy) paid special attention to Uppsala in his annual episcopal report¹⁸¹ to the District Assembly¹⁸². He argues that according to the preparatory material of the coming WCC Assembly a shift is to be expected in the theology of WCC, which will be compatible with the theological program of the RCH (actually of Bartha himself) summarized in the slogan 'conversion to Christ and to the neighbour'. He traces positive developments in the theology of the WCC (turning away from the concept of 'responsible society' and the growing sympathies towards the theologies of the revolution), but he still misses the creative dialogue with Marxism and the positive appraisal of the Communist revolutions worldwide. Uppsala will be 'of decisive importance' both for theological and structural reasons, according to Bartha.

A wide spectrum of preparations for the 4th General Assembly of the WCC was organized in the RCH¹⁸³. Lukas Vischer (as a representative of Faith and Order) and Eugene C. Blake, general secretary of the WCC, visited Hungary in early 1968. All the congregations of the RCH were instructed to reflect on the Assembly themes during the week before Pentecost. The summer training courses for ministers were concentrating (partially)¹⁸⁴ on the same topics. Two working groups of the Hungarian Ecumenical Council created two documents consisting of a deeply elaborated theological reflection on the Assembly themes¹⁸⁵. About 60 theologians were involved in the writing and editing of these documents (predominantly of Reformed background).

The Hungarian Ecumenical Council was represented at the Uppsala Assembly by a large delegation of nine persons¹⁸⁶. One of the Reformed participants, Kálmán Huszti, professor of the Budapest Theological Academy, published an article in the *Református Egyház*¹⁸⁷ right after the event about his personal impressions of the Assembly. This article does not consist much of a theological analysis, but he still devotes some words of criticism to the Uppsala concept of 'the church as the avant-garde of God in the world'. According to Huszti 'the Lord of history may be followed but he can never be taken over'¹⁸⁸ (thus, God is active in world history and the church may only follow his footsteps there).

¹⁸¹ Bartha, Tibor: 'Bartha Tibor püspöki jelentése' in: *Református Egyház*, XX/7-8 (1968), p. 145-149.

¹⁸² The District Assembly is equivalent to a regional synod in the RCH.

¹⁸³ Bartha op. cit., p. 155ff.

¹⁸⁴ Another set of programs was to deal with the materials of a Christian World Peace Conference organised in the same year in Prague.

¹⁸⁵ The two documents: 'Teremtés, újjáteremtés, egyház, történet' [Creation-Recreation- Church-History] in: *Theológiai Szemle*, XI/7-8 (1968), p. 195-214 and 'Az egyház szociális felelőssége korunkban' [The Social-Ethical Responsibility of the Church in our Age] in: *Theológiai szemle*, XI/11-12 (1968), p. 331ff. Both documents were published in English, too, in a special issue of the *Hungarian Church Press*.

¹⁸⁶ Bishop Lajos Bakos (Reformed), Bishop Tibor Bartha (Reformed), Prof. Kálmán Huszti (Reformed), Prof. Zsigmond Varga (Reformed), Károly Tóth (Reformed), Bishop Zoltán Káldy (Lutheran), Bishop D. Ernő Ottlyk (Lutheran), Prof. Miklós Pálffy (Lutheran), Sándor Palotay (Free Church). Source: Norman Goodall (ed.): *The Uppsala Report 1968*, WCC, Geneva, 1968, p. 407-440.

¹⁸⁷ Kálmán Huszti: 'Tapasztalatok az EVT uppsalai nagygyűlésén' in: *Református Egyház*, XX/10 (1968), p. 203-205.

¹⁸⁸ Op. cit., p. 205 Translation GL.

Another delegate, Tibor Bartha refers to the proceedings of the Uppsala Assembly in an article as early as in October 1968¹⁸⁹. In his article on 'Repentance and Conversion as Actual Questions in the Church' he affirms a proposition of the Report of Section II (Renewal in Mission), which says that the biblical concepts of repentance and conversion are expressed in socio-ethical categories¹⁹⁰. Four months later he published a 'Report on the Ecumenical Service of the Churches'¹⁹¹. He praises a theological shift that took place at the Uppsala Assembly by which theology became anthropocentric. Christian mission was also redefined in Uppsala in the following way, 'Christian participation in the mission means participation in the struggle for a more just society'.¹⁹² Social changes (i.e. the change of the social order from a Capitalist one to a Communist one) are looked at 'in the light of our faith'¹⁹³. However, Bartha exerts criticism too on the theological developments of Uppsala, the WCC was not brave enough to follow the 'most progressive churches' on the way of the theology of the revolution, but it opted for a 'theology of the development' instead. However, Uppsala made it clear that the age of the ruling church had passed away and the time of the serving church had arrived. This way the 'decision of the RCH made in faith' to transform the whole ecclesial life according to the pattern of the serving church is reaffirmed by the ecumenical movement. Some months later Bartha repeats this appraisal of Uppsala in another article in the same organ, too.¹⁹⁴

Although Hoekendijk is usually not mentioned in these articles, there is one exception that shows that the Hoekendijkian origin of the 'Uppsala-shift' was well known to at least some Hungarian theologians. In an article on 'Uppsala and the Worship Service'¹⁹⁵ Géza Szabó describes the discussions about the assessment of secularization in Uppsala and its theological consequences. In this context he mentions – as something contrary to his own standpoint – that 'Some raised their voices in order to limit the influence of the secular theology of Gogarten, Robinson, Hoekendijk, van Leeuwen, van Buren and Cox'.¹⁹⁶

The RCH paid special attention to the 4th Assembly of the WCC held in Uppsala, in 1968. The theological program – often described as a 'secular shift' – was discussed at several levels of the church (theologians, ministers, local churches). The ideas of Uppsala were thus accessible to the public of the RCH.

The reception of Uppsala was overwhelmingly positive in the RCH. According to the theological assessments, the shift in the theology of the WCC was compatible

¹⁸⁹ Tibor Bartha: 'Az egyházak időszzerű kérdése a bűnbánat és a megtérés' in: *Theológiai Szemle*, XI/9-10 (1968), p. 257-262.

¹⁹⁰ Op. cit., p. 262 footnote 62 (correctly: 16).

¹⁹¹ Tibor Bartha: 'Jelentés az egyházak ökumenikus szolgálatáról' in: *Református Egyház*, XXI/3 (1969), p. 52-56.

¹⁹² Op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁹³ Ibid. This logic practically leads to the conclusion that the support of the cause of Communism is the fulfilment of the missionary mandate, because 'struggle for a more just society' = Communism ('in the light of our faith' [sic!]).

¹⁹⁴ Tibor Bartha: 'Az egyházak ökumenikus helyzete Uppsala után'.

¹⁹⁵ Géza Szabó: 'Uppsala és az istentisztelet' in: *Theológiai Szemle*, XII/1-2 (1969), p. 16-22.

¹⁹⁶ Op. cit., p. 19.

with the theology of the serving church elaborated by the RCH. The points of contacts are the following:

1. The insight that God is active in world history, outside the church, using secular powers (such as the revolutionary political movements) to set up signs of the coming Kingdom. The material criterion for discerning the activity of God (*missio Dei*) in world history is in the biblical concept of *shalom*. In socio-political categories, struggle for social justice and for peace.
2. The church should not strive for the extension of herself but she should join the progressive powers in history and be present in the world in humble service, as an avant-garde of the coming Kingdom in history.
3. Conversion is described in social categories, as a radical commitment to serve 'the others', at the individual as well as the social level. The latter means unconditional advocacy of the cause of the underprivileged of the Earth.
4. The call to conversion is directed to the church. She should give up old habits of self-possessed ecclesio-centrism and turn to be a community of service, a 'serving church'.
5. Christian mission means participation in the *missio Dei* by setting up signs of *shalom* of the Kingdom in the world. Practically, it means involvement in the struggle for a more just and peaceful society.

These elements were also present in the Hungarian Reformed theology of the serving church. However, Uppsala (and through it Hoekendijk's theology) did not shape actively the theology (of mission) of the RCH. As we demonstrated above, the theology of the serving church had been developed in RCH since 1948¹⁹⁷. The RCH theologians interpreted the theological shift of Uppsala as a turn in the WCC into the direction which is already represented by the RCH¹⁹⁸. (However, the turn was seen as not radical enough, they missed the explicit affirmation of the Communist social order – as the realization of the just society.)

7.6. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

In the preceding chapters it was demonstrated that Johannes C. Hoekendijk had intensive personal contacts with the RCH in the years 1946-1948. These contacts started in the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, Switzerland, where he served as an

¹⁹⁷ Although, as we have demonstrated above, Hoekendijk's concept of the 'serving church' could function a source of inspiration for the theologians of the RCH in the years of 1946-1948.

¹⁹⁸ It is well known that Uppsala was fiercely criticised by the Evangelicals (and this criticism led later to the formation of the Lausanne Covenant for World Evangelization). It is interesting to note that leaders of the RCH, coming from Evangelical theological background themselves and using Evangelical terminology to a large extent (Cf. conversion, repentance, rebirth), virtually ignored this criticism.

interim study director in the years 1946-1947. During this time several Hungarian participants took part at the courses organized by the Institute. Hoekendijk's most important contact person was László Makkai, a lay member of the RCH, son of the influential missionary officer of the RCH, Sandor Makkai. The Dutch theologian soon became friends with L. Makkai, they worked together on theological themes and Hoekendijk quoted one of L. Makkai's articles in the last chapter of his dissertation.

After having been appointed to be the Secretary of the Netherlands Missionary Council (NZR) in 1947, Hoekendijk was formally entrusted by his employer and by the International Missionary Council (IMC) to work on enhancing the missionary consciousness and activity of the Central and Eastern European Protestant churches. In this context he accepted an invitation of the RCH to visit Hungary in order to prepare a cooperation of the RCH and the NZR in the area of foreign mission in the (former) Dutch East-Indies (Indonesia and/or West New-Guinea). His visits to Hungary took place in 1947 and in 1948. Three yet unpublished and confidential reports were discovered in the Hoekendijk Archives that bear witness of his impressions of the ecclesial and missionary situation in the post-war Hungary, right before and after the beginning of the open Communist dictatorships. The publication of and about Hoekendijk's lectures held in Hungary and detailed notes of them made by a Hungarian mission-minded Reformed theologian, László Draskoczy (preserved in his personal archives) are evidences that Hoekendijk's theological thought reached wide circles of the ministers and of the membership of the RCH. In 1948 he held a series of lectures at the Reformed theological faculties in Hungary, the (yet unpublished) text of which is preserved in the Hoekendijk Archives under the title *'Mission im Neubau'*.

Hoekendijk worked intensively to organize a lasting cooperation of the RCH and the NZR in order to involve the RCH in foreign missionary work, first under the auspices of the NZR, but with the long-term goal of enabling the RCH to work together with the Indonesian churches on her own. Although a large scale of preparations had been made, Hungarian Reformed missionary candidates had been selected and their training at the Missionary School of the NZR in Oegstgeest had already been arranged, the whole project failed because the Hungarian (Communist) authorities did not give permission to the implementation of these plans. Hoekendijk stopped his official contacts with the RCH after the failure of the Hungarian-Indonesian missionary project. He also left his position at the NZR and joined the staff of the WCC in Geneva (1949-1952), where he did not have any assignment to deal with the missionary movement in Central and Eastern Europe any more. Although it is very likely that his private correspondence with his Hungarian friends (and especially with L. Makkai) did not end abruptly, the whereabouts of the documents of this correspondence is unknown for present day research. There is no evidence available of any personal contacts between Hoekendijk and the RCH after 1948, and no trace of interest in the developments of the ecclesial life or of the theology in Hungary can be found in Hoekendijk's publications after that date.

His ideas were – at least partially – known to some of the Hungarian Reformed theologians as we see it in the critical references to some of his publications in the works of a leading Hungarian Reformed systematic theologian, Ervin Vályi Nagy.

It is a well established fact of the history of the theological developments in the WCC that Hoekendijk's theology was very influential at the 4th General Assembly of the WCC held in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968. Although he was not present at the event, his theological program – also represented in the Church for Others Report – was integrated into the theology of the WCC causing a shift in the ecumenical theology, especially in the theology of mission. By this, Hoekendijk's theological program gained worldwide publicity.

The Uppsala 1968 Assembly of the WCC was covered to a large extent in the – rather limited – Hungarian Reformed ecclesial publications. The themes of the Assembly were dealt with at different levels of the church, thus its propositions were made known even at the grassroots level of the church life. A predominantly Hoekendijkian theological program gained access to the broader public of the RCH via the Uppsala documents. In the reflections on the event several theologians of the RCH, but, especially Tibor Bartha, greeted the 'secular shift' that took place in Uppsala (although they criticized its cautious formulations about the Socialist world order). In his publications on Uppsala 1968 Bartha argued that there was a close relationship between the 'theology of the serving church' of the RCH and the new theological course taken by the WCC after Uppsala. Here we see an indirect link between Hoekendijk's theology and that of the RCH.

Without going into the details of the analysis of possible theological points of contacts between Hoekendijk and the RCH (which is discussed in Chapter 8 of this study), we must confine ourselves here to undertake to draw some preliminary conclusions of formal nature.

1. At the beginning of this study we hypothetically assumed – together with A.M. Kool¹⁹⁹ – that Hoekendijk had a discernible impact on the development of the theological definition of mission in the RCH.
2. In the course of the study we proved that Hoekendijk had intensive personal contacts with the RCH in the years of 1946-1948.
3. We also stated that his theological propositions gained wide publicity at all the levels of the life of the RCH, through publications and personal contacts.
4. We have also seen that his official personal contacts to the RCH were broken after 1948.
5. His theological ideas became accessible to the wider public of RCH again in 1968, via the materials of the 4th General Assembly of the WCC held in Uppsala 1968.

¹⁹⁹ Kool, 1993, p. 748.

6. Hoekendijk's theology was welcomed by the 'official' theologians of the RCH both in 1946-1948 (directly) and in 1968 (indirectly).
7. Although we can not prove that Hoekendijk's theological ideas actively shaped the theological understanding of mission in the RCH, we do argue, that his theological program was seen as compatible with the official theology of the RCH and it was used as a frame of reference and as a legitimizing factor both for the structure of 'theology of the serving church' and for its understanding of Christian mission.

8. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

8.1. MISSION IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT 1910-1968

At the beginning of this study the well-known developments of the theological understanding of mission in the ecumenical movement in the period between 1910-1968 were described. These developments are the background, against which the assessment of the changes in the understanding of mission in the RCH was undertaken.

In 1910, in the time of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, the predominant concept of mission in the Protestant Churches of the Continent and of North-America was determined by a strong sense of optimism, mission was understood as an endeavour to extend the boundaries of Christianity to the ends of the Earth and the hope was expressed in enthusiastic speeches and articles that the decline of all other religions and ideologies were evident and the global triumph of the Christian religion is to be expected in the same generation.

The goal of Christian mission was understood as the conversion of non-Christian individuals to Jesus Christ and incorporating them into Christian churches. In this context Christianity was understood as the true religion (or the religion at the top of the religious evolution of mankind), and all other religious systems were looked upon as either backward or hostile. Although there were serious differences in questions of details (post-millennialism, pre-millennialism, Continental European school of *Heilsgeschichte* etc.), there was a virtual consensus about the expectation of the imminent success of the Christian mission. The political interests and the cultural values of the Protestant (and Catholic) Western powers were interwoven, the extension of the political sphere of interest of the West was praised as the progress of Christian civilization on the globe. Mott played a key role in setting up the structures of the emerging ecumenical missionary movement and he was an important protagonist of this Evangelical concept of mission. As it was demonstrated above, he was also influential in the RCH.

The First and the Second World Wars shattered this optimistic understanding of mission. The Christian quality of the Western culture became doubtful and so far hidden agendas of sheer political and economical interests were exposed. The very foundations of the Christian Western civilization were destroyed. On the other hand, churches on the former mission fields began to claim their right as equal partners in the ecumenical family of churches of the world, criticizing Western missionary paternalism (Jerusalem 1928). Furthermore, the churches of the West had to be confronted with the fact that the great traditional world religions were vivid and were far from disappearing while the religious home base of the

West was more and more weakened by emerging secularization (Tambaram 1938). Hendrik Kraemer played an important role in the ecumenical missionary movement in this period, he reflected on the process of transition from missionary optimism to the notion of the crisis of Western Christendom. His *Rezeptionsgeschichte* in the RCH was presented in this study as well.

The way out of this theoretical and practical crisis of mission was found – mainly through impulses from the Barthian theology – in the ancient Christian doctrinal concept of *missio Dei* (Willingen 1952). Mission was understood as a characteristic of the nature of the Holy Trinity, which is not dependant on the ethical quality of the Christian church. Mission is thus neither a project of multiplication of the churches nor the recruitment of new church members and it is by no means identical with the extension of the sphere of interest of Western political powers or of European culture. Mission means the sovereign act of communicating of God's love to humankind of which the subject is God Himself. He sent his only begotten Son in order to restore the broken community between humans and God by the reconciling act on the cross. The Father and the Son sends the Holy Spirit to heal and to reconcile all people in order to create new *koinonia* between God and men/women and among humans. This new social reality, reconciled with God and with one another is the church which is sent into the world by the Triune God in order to set up signs of the divine *shalom* and to proclaim the consummation of all history in Christ and the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. The Church is thus an instrument of the *missio Dei*. She has the mandate to proclaim the reconciliation offered by God through the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Kingdom of God (*martyria*). The church should live in the renewed, reconciled and healed community pointing to the new reality of the Kingdom (*koinonia*) and act according to the kenotic example offered by Christ in humble service to those on the periphery of the human society (*diakonia*). This new reality is celebrated in the worship service of the church around the Word and the Sacraments (*leitourgia*). The church expresses the reality of the Kingdom of God by striving for unity of all who confess Christ as their Lord; mission and *oikumene* belong thus deeply together. Visser 't Hooft, as a General Secretary of the WCC (1939-1965), was one of the most influential ecumenical personalities of the period. His relationship to the RCH was researched, too.

After the two World Wars and after the growing awareness of the evils of the colonial past in the global South, it became more and more obvious that the church can not confine her ministries to charitable services in the diverse local contexts. The structural problems of the societies – including social injustice, discrimination, racism and violence – should be addressed by the church as an integral part of her 'Kingdom mission'. According to this insight Christian mission should struggle for the realization of *shalom*, which is the concept of peace and integrity of the human society (in harmony with thre creation), based on the reconciliation by Christ, according to the intentions of God. The notion that God's mission is directed to the world (and not to the church) led to a complete reorientation of the concept of mission. Using the kenotic consequences of the

doctrine of incarnation as a point of departure, the locus of mission was moved from the church to the world, the powers of the Kingdom of God are present in the world everywhere where efforts are made for a more righteous and more just society, where the signs of the *shalom* are set up. The church is not a goal in herself but an instrument of *missio Dei*, discerning the signs of God's active presence in social progress and joining God's work wherever there is struggle to create a society congruent with the Kingdom of God. Recruiting new church members and inviting individuals to conversion to Christ are out of the scope of this new interpretation of mission. The authentic form of Christian mission is (political) *diakonia*. The direct and indirect influence of the Dutch Reformed theologian Hoekendijk played an important role in this theological reorientation of Christian mission in the Ecumenical movement (Uppsala 1968). His manifold impact on the theological definition of mission in the RCH is described in Chapter 7 of this study.

This research shows that the representatives of the RCH were not present at the world missionary conferences of the IMC and of the CWME, but they participated at the assemblies of the WCC. The RCH thus took her part in the theological developments of the ecumenical movement, but it is argued that key ecumenical theologians of mission (especially Mott and Hoekendijk) created the primary points of contact between the (emerging) ecumenical movement and the RCH.

8.2. TWO PARADIGM SHIFTS IN THE MISSION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY 1910-1968

8.2.1. *From Diaspora to Evangelization*

The concept of Christian mission in the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) underwent major changes in the 20th century, too. At the turn of the centuries the term 'mission' was widely used in ecclesial documents denoting ministries of the RCH on the peripheries of Hungary and beyond its borders, among Hungarian Reformed people in minority, diaspora. The goal of mission was fourfold, ecclesial, to provide pastoral care for those in diaspora with the aim of setting up independent congregations; confessional, to strengthen their Reformed Protestant sense of belonging; national, to help them preserve their Hungarian national identity and cultural, to spread the benefits of Hungarian, Reformed cultural values. This concept of mission was pragmatic, theologically un-reflected, ecclesiocentric. It was determined by the empirical situation of the church and in this sense it can be described as a contextual concept of mission.

From the first decade of the 20th century onwards a new concept of Christian mission emerged in the ranks of the RCH. The theological roots of this change of definition go back to the traditions of German Pietism (*Innere Mission*), to the impact of the Scottish Reformed Evangelical renewal movements of the 19th

century, and to the influence of American Evangelicalism mediated by the youth movements (YMCA, WSCF).

These theological streams were represented in Hungary by the Scottish Mission to the Jews in Pest-Buda since the middle of 19th century, by the German-speaking Affiliated Reformed Church in Pest, and by the Hungarian branch of the YMCA (BRIE/KIE) and of WSCF (MEKDSz). This concept of mission released the term from its ecclesial bedding and defined the goal of Christian mission as the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people and the invitation of everyone (including nominal Reformed Church members) to conversion and personal faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ. Reformed pastors like Aladár Szabó and János Victor were instrumental in communicating this fundamental reinterpretation of mission. This new understanding of mission (which practically identified it with evangelism without neglecting the social obligations of the Christian believers cf. the establishment of an orphanage and of a hospital) was not welcome in the official church and it was represented by evangelistic and missionary societies. These societies were formally independent from the RCH and they were parts of the international missionary networks of the time (YMCA, WSCF, CE) but they were deeply embedded in the Reformed and Lutheran Churches by the strong ecclesial links of their leaders and staff members (usually pastors and active lay members of these churches). Missionary activities (of minor scale) were initiated among the Muslim population in the Balkans, in China and in the Pacific. These projects were realized partially under the auspices of independent missionary societies but they were supported by a relatively strong home base at the grass-roots level of the local Reformed congregations. The understanding of mission of these projects was clearly Evangelical, the goal of mission was described as the conversion of the Muslims and of the 'heathen'.

By the 1930s this new concept of Christian mission permeated the thinking of the official Protestant churches to such an extent that this evangelistic definition of mission was gradually made the official theological position of the RCH (cf. Mission Ordinances of 1931/1933). It is argued that a paradigm shift took place in the understanding of mission in the RCH. The shift can be summarized by the following concepts, from *diaspora* to *evangelization*.

8.2.2. *From Evangelization to Service*

The ecclesiocentric element was strengthened especially in the understanding of mission in the RCH in the 1930s, by denoting all regular activities of the church as 'mission'. While Sándor Makkai made an attempt to contextualize this concept of mission applying it to the *volkskirchliche* situation of the RCH, János Victor argued for a more clear and concentrated, genuinely Evangelical theology of mission.

The RCH experienced a wave of spiritual revival ('Awakening') during and after the Second World War. The revival placed the question of mission (home and foreign) again into the center of attention. Self-critical voices were heard about

the negligence of the missionary responsibility of the RCH before the War and plans were made to initiate Hungarian Reformed missionary activity of larger scale in Indonesia (in cooperation with the Netherlands Missionary Council /NZR/). Two other issues were addressed permanently by the revivalist opposition of the official leadership of the RCH right after the War, the presence of independent revivalist, evangelistic and missionary societies next to the local congregations, and the failure of the RCH to address the problems of social and political injustice properly.

After the Communists seized power in 1948, they actively supported a change of guards in the leadership of the RCH. Representatives of the former revivalist opposition got into key positions of the RCH. A reorientation of the concept of Christian mission took place again. The church leadership forced the dissolution of evangelistic and missionary societies and integrated them into the structures of the church. This meant practically a total control of these groups and the stopping of voluntary missionary and evangelistic activities (Mission Ordinances 1952).

In the new concept of mission the church was looked upon as being under the judgment of God for neglecting her missionary and social responsibilities in the past. Communism was interpreted as a pedagogical tool in the hand of God in order to teach the church to discover her authentic mission in struggling for a more just society (Victor). The church should give up her old concept of edifying herself and recruiting new converts and should re-orientate her mission as serving the cause of world peace and social justice (cf. Bartha, 'conversion to the neighbour'). Since the Communist/Socialist society was seen as the avant-garde of progress towards a more just world order and the Soviet bloc was interpreted as the 'camp of peace', the mission of the church was defined as a humble service of the neighbour (diakonia) and the service of the cause of Socialism (political diakonia). By this, a second *paradigm shift* took place in the understanding of mission in the RCH. However, it needs to be noted that this new concept did not permeate all the spheres of church life (we may denote the phenomenon as a theoretical shift of paradigm). This shift can be summarized by the following concepts, from *evangelization* to *service*.

8.3. RESULTS OF THE HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The results of this research show that Mott was a key figure in creating a link between the emerging ecumenical movement and the RCH. His personal and literary impact was catalytic in the process of the paradigm shift in the understanding of mission in the RCH which can be described with the shift of understanding mission *from diaspora to evangelism*.

The direct impact of Hendrik Kramer was rather limited on the RCH. A selective reading of his works was used as a frame of reference for legitimating the theological standpoints of the leadership of the RCH after the Second World War. The central themes of Kraemer's oeuvre (crisis of Christendom, encounter of

Christianity and other world religions) were not experienced as relevant in the RCH.

Visser 't Hooft had intensive contacts with the RCH, especially in the period 1945-1956. His strong influence can be traced in the areas of ecumenical church policy. On the one hand, he actively supported the change of leadership of the RCH, in favour of the new – pro-leftist – wing, but he gradually became critical of the pro-Communist direction followed by the official RCH. In 1956 he – though cautiously – supported the opposition in the RCH. Although he did not directly influence the understanding of mission of the RCH, he did make an impact through supporting different wings of the RCH by his unquestionable international authority.

It was demonstrated that Hoekendijk's personal and literary impact played an important role in the process of the second re-orientation of mission in RCH in the period discussed. His direct impact is discernible in 1947-1948, especially through his visits and lectures (partially published in Hungarian). The concept of the serving church (*dienende Kirche*), that he promoted during his second visit in Hungary in 1948, became a key motif in the official theology of the RCH in the period under research, although it was misused for politically motivated purposes. His indirect impact can be traced through the influence of the 'secular' re-orientation of the concept of mission in the ecumenical movement, behind which the theological impact of Hoekendijk can be discovered (Uppsala 1968). This re-orientation of the understanding of mission in the ecumenical movement was used in the RCH as a reference of legitimation (in retrospect) of the second (theoretical) paradigm shift in the understanding of mission, which can be described as a shift *from evangelism to service*.

8.4. PARALLELS AND CONTACTS

The results of this study can be summarized by several theses, in which parallels and differences between the developments of the theological definition of mission in the RCH and in the ecumenical movement can be discerned.

8.4.1. *Parallels*

Parallels can be discovered between the developments of the definition of Christian mission in the ecumenical movement and in the RCH in the studied period. At the beginning of the 20th century the goal of mission was defined as the conversion of the individual to Christ and his/her incorporation into the Christian Church. The concept of mission was radically changed after the Second World War, the social element became gradually predominant. In the ecumenical movement the concept of *missio Dei* was reinterpreted and the world was defined as its *locus*. The role of the church was identified as an instrument of God's mission in the world. In the RCH Communism was interpreted as God's instrument in the world, and the mission of the church was defined as a service of the cause of Socialism. The

authentic form of Christian mission was defined both in the ecumenical movement and in the RCH as (political) *diakonia*.

8.4.2. *Contacts*

In the studied period there were constant contacts between the ecumenical movement and the RCH, in the area of mission, too. At the beginning of the century, the visits of Mott (especially that of 1909) played an important role in building a relationship between the missionary movement in Hungary and the emerging ecumenical movement. Mott's evangelistic preaching and evangelical definition of mission made a deep impact on the young theologians of the RCH of the time and thus he spiritually and mentally prepared the Evangelical reinterpretation of Christian mission in the Reformed (and Lutheran) Church in Hungary.

It was Hoekendijk who played a key role in the re-definition of Christian mission in the RCH after the Second World War, as an interim study director of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey (1946-47), visiting Hungary in the capacity of Secretary of the Netherlands Missionary Council (NZR, 1947-48), he strengthened the concept of integrating mission into the structures of the church. In several lectures and articles and especially in a series of lectures held at the Reformed Theological Faculty of the Debrecen University in 1948, he argued for the concept of 'serving church' as the authentic form of Christian mission. Both of these concepts were used (and misused) as legitimization and frame of reference for a radical reinterpretation of Christian mission in the RCH, missionary societies were dissolved and mission was interpreted as identical with *diakonia*. Hoekendijk played an indirect role in the RCH in 1968 again, because his 'secular' concept of mission became predominant in the ecumenical movement at the 4th Assembly of the WCC in Uppsala 1968, and this was praised by the official theologians of the RCH as supporting their concept of political *diakonia* as mission.

Hendrik Kraemer, the great Barthian missiologist, was well-known in Hungary as a historian of religion, but he had no documented personal relationships with Hungary. In several articles attempts were made to demonstrate that the Kraemerian concept of mission supports the missionary concept of the 'theology of the serving church' of the RCH. Kraemer was interpreted one-sidedly and his theological concept of mission was thus misused.

Willem A. Visser 't Hooft played an important role in supporting an alternative ecclesial stream within the RCH in the time of the ecclesial renewal attempts of 1956. However, after the end of the Hungarian Revolution and after the restoration of the pro-Communist ecclesial leadership, he made excessive compromises in order to preserve formal contacts with the RCH. His ecclesio-political role was thus ambiguous and his impact on the theological concept of Christian mission was not remarkable.

8.5. INSPIRATION, CATALYST AND FRAME OF REFERENCE

The development of the theology of Christian Mission of the RCH was constantly in dialogue with the emerging ecumenical movement in the period of 1903-1968.

Two paradigm shifts took place in the understanding of mission in the RCH during the period discussed. In both major shifts, representatives of the ecumenical movement played the role of a source of inspiration and that of catalyst, Mott in the first decades, and Hoekendijk in the middle of the 20th century. They were the primary links of the RCH to the ecumenical context. Other important theologians, like Hendrik Kraemer and Visser 't Hooft were used (and misused) as a frame of reference for legitimating. The radical re-interpretation of Christian mission in the ecumenical movement between the end of the Second World War and 1968 was also seen as a source of inspiration and a frame of reference for the politically motivated reorientation of Christian mission in the RCH.

Bogárdi Szabó states that the 'the Hungarian Reformed church leadership used the church diplomacy of the ecumenical movement, which characteristically insisted on the maintaining of the *status quo*, to justify their decisions and attitude'¹. Based on the results of this study, it may be added that – in the area of the theological definition of mission – the role of the (emerging) ecumenical movement in the RCH was that of a source of inspiration, of a catalyst and of a frame of reference.

8.6. CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

'What is mission?' Many different answers were given to this question in the long history of the modern ecumenical movement and in the Reformed Church in Hungary, too.

Diaspora, evangelization and service – these concepts were used to describe the nature of Christian mission in the RCH in the course of the 20th century. However, these concepts were used as mutually exclusive ones, representing different paradigms of mission, which replaced one another in the course of time.

The Hungarian Reformed Church lives in three forms of existence, in the home country, in diaspora situations as ethnic and confessional minority churches in the countries surrounding the Republic of Hungary and in diaspora in the West and in the global South. Furthermore, the church in the Western societies, including Hungary, experiences a new diaspora situation, as a religious minority in a post-Christian, post-modern, multi-religious context. It is true of the RCH too in a growing measure and she needs to cope with the grave consequences of four decades of atheist dictatorship ('double Secularization'). On the other hand, the RCH carries the remnants of a *volkskirchliche* structure also (just as many Western-

¹ Bogárdi Szabó, 1995, p. 25-26.

European mainline churches), with its advantages of a qualified presence in a wide circle of society and with the disadvantage of a large number of nominal members. The societies of the post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe experience a deep moral and political crisis in their long transitional period from socialism to democracy. Questions of social justice, individual and structural poverty, racism and discrimination are on the top of the agenda. The global challenges of climate change, of the environmental crisis and of the new reality of total globalization all influence the situation in loco fundamentally. These challenges call for a rediscovery of the issues of diaspora ministry, of evangelization and of service.

However, it is not only the context but the 'Text' that inspires to re-evaluate these concepts. In a Trinitarian theological foundation of mission as *missio Dei*, with a Christological concentration and with a pneumatological outlook, the church-in-mission proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected (kerygma) and testifies that the Kingdom of God has already arrived, transforms lives through the Holy Spirit, but it is not yet fulfilled (martyria). She seeks to set up signs of the Kingdom of God on earth, those of divine *shalom*, in living in a reconciled and healing community of the church (koinonia) and serving for a just and responsible society which lives in harmony with the creation (diakonia). The church of Christ lives in the world as a holy diaspora, a church-in-mission, a church with others, a community of an alternative Christ-culture.

In the light of this – text and context – the question rises whether it would not be edifying to integrate these three concepts, diaspora *and* evangelization *and* service, in order to better understand and fulfil the missionary mandate of the church, as a unique instrument and partner of the *missio Dei*, in the context of the 'Second World'.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

János Victor's Letter To John R. Mott ,The Hague, The Netherlands, 17 December 1919

The Hague, Hotel Twee Steden
Dec.17.1919.

Dear Mott¹,

It was a very great pleasure to me², on my arrival in Holland about a month ago, to find your kind letter of October 28. awaiting me here. Hearing from Rutgers about his intention soon to cross to America, I thought that it would be best to ask him to take along my answer.

I was somewhat surprised when arriving here, to learn that my letter to Mr. Webster was copied out by friends whom I asked to forward the letter from here to Scotland, and that a copy had been sent also to you. The letter was not written for such purposes, and the reports contained in it were made quite in the hurry not to miss an opportunity to be sent off by personal messenger to Holland (an extraordinary opportunity after those weary months of perfect seclusion from the outward world). Anyway, I am glad that by this way some news about our situation reached you.

It is an experience of quite exceptional value to me to be able to renew the contact with the Federation's life after these years of separation. I only wish I could share it with others, or at least to hand on all the refreshing influence it had on myself. In addition to touching a valuable portion of the Federation by contact with the Dutch movement, I had the privilege, not quite two weeks ago, of meeting Miss Rouse, and Mr. Rees of the British Movement here. The two days spent together in discussing the situation of the Movement in South Eastern Europe and especially the needs and hopes of the Hungarian movement, brought back to me the

¹ The original of this yet unpublished letter can be found in the archives of the World Student Christian Federation, Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, CT, USA. YALE WSCF R46 B185 1317 (Hand-written manuscript, original 35 pages).

² This text is a literal transcript of the original letter, without any (grammatical etc.) corrections.

atmosphere of Federation Conferences of by-gone years, with all that is involved in that atmosphere.

I was especially glad to learn about the plans made by the Executive of the Federation as to the resumption of work, particularly about the forthcoming Wadstena -anniversary, and the intention of appointing a special secretary for the European field in the person of Mr. Henriod. I am sure our people at home will be very thankful for the news which I was able to send them on Miss Rouse's authority that we may look forward to a possible visit of yours before or after the Wadstena-Conference. I am much in doubt whether the state of mind of the students at large would be suitable at that time (for reasons stated below) for arranging a public campaign as we would desire to do when having the long expected privilege of being visited by the secretary of the Federation. But I suppose you will agree with us that the most important help which we need in this time of reconstruction (in more senses so for us than to any other nation) can be given in small gatherings of leaders rather than in public meetings. As soon as the situation clears up a little more, I shall report to you about special needs which your visit could help us to solve.

In wishing to give you a report about our present situation I must reach back to the war years, since I am not sure how much of previous information has arrived at your hands. You will bear patiently with the length of my letter. I have to fill up a wide gap in our correspondence and the times I have to cover were rather extraordinary.

During the war, naturally, our work among the students of universities and colleges was seriously hampered by the ever renewed demands of the army on our men. Though students of theological colleges were not mobilized, even work among them suffered constantly during the war, since the Movement even in this its original field received its real impetus from the hopefully rising movement among non-theologicals. Still work was not only continued all the time, but considerable new developments could be recorded. One was the recapturing of Kolozsvár. You might remember that the hopeful beginnings started there at your visit 1909 were not followed by an activity in organic contacts with our movement. The leaders of students there held some views concerning the right foundations and methods of religious work among students on account of which we had to part ways and to leave it to the future to justify the convictions of one party or the other. Within scarcely the time of two students-generations these men, some of them having become since then professors at the Reformed Theological College there turned around and especially since 1916 not only endorsed our Movement but rendered quite extraordinarily valuable service as speakers at conferences and contributors to our literature. (By the way, one of the most deplorable blows suffered by the general cause of Evangelical Christianity in Hungary in consequence of political developments, is the threatening separation of this group of Kolozsvár -men from the field of Hungary. They became, during the last years, the most sought for leaders in thought for the whole of our Churches and all Kinds of Christian activities and however the future fate of Protestantism under Roumanian rule to

which Kolozsvár seems to be doomed, may justify or not justify our anxieties, there can be no doubt whatever as to this that these men will be hindered in all possible ways to have intercourse with movements and causes in Hungary, since this would be looked upon as a suspicious matter from a political point view.)

Another interesting development during this time was the increased vitality of groups started by our Movement in the Lutheran theological Colleges. First this seemed to lead to the formation of a denominational movement separated from ours, though working for the same ideals, but later on ways were found to secure an organic connection, while allowing for a certain 'autonomy' of a group constituted by these colleges, within our Movement. To run ahead again of the due order of things. I might mention here, what a change this part of our field has undergone as a consequence of political conditions. Two of three theological colleges of our Lutheran church Pozsony and Eperjes (both were visited by Mr. Wilder) were situated on the territory which has come under Czech rule. Both institutions ceased to exist therefore. (The Czech government is organizing one new institution in their stead at Pozsony). The third college, at Sopron, which you might remember from your visit ten years ago, lies on territory which some intend to allot to the Republic of Austria. For the time being this institution however still carries on its work. Out of the fragments of the two other colleges a new institution has been organized at Budapest. Temporarily, but most probably to become a permanent thing, whatever the future of Eperjes and Pozsony may become politically apart from the sad reason which made its necessary ultimately it will be a gain to our Lutheran Church to have a centre of her future ministry right at the capital, where the reviving currents of our religious life are strongest to be felt. This was an advantage hitherto to only enjoyed by the Reformed Church, and the difference was apparent.

One more interesting feature has to be mentioned in connection with our work amongst university and college students, the highly increased prestige of our movement especially at Budapest. However many difficulties there were during war years, by having employed secretaries at work, our movement was able to carry on, in spite of everything, a lively activity which by far surpassed anything done by other student organizations at the same time. This gradually attracted an increasing attention. To this was added the peculiar situation of our movement in the midst of the divided fractions of student life to which I have referred several times in my reports. On the one hand we had, in common with the left side, a demand for social righteousness and progress, and on the other hand we were looked upon as allies by the right wing, the so-called 'Christian' (=Roman Catholic mostly) student body. The last years of the war being for students particularly a time of practical needs, owing to lack of proper food and lodgings caused especially by the congestion of the population at Budapest and the rise of prices, strong tendencies manifested themselves to forget the old feud between the two parties and to try to form a neutral organization which would serve the economical needs of all students without distinction. It is very characteristic of our situation in these last years of the war, that such endeavours repeatedly looked to our group for a leadership which would enjoy general recognition. When an organization finally was formed one of

our secretaries was elected as chairman, our rooms were used by two of the branches started by the organization on being a sort of clearing office for students seeking employment or lodgings and another helping Russian students (prisoners of war) in all their needs. The whole organization did not live long (apart from just there two departments, carried on for about one year and a half under our auspices), but the emphasis which it laid upon the favourable situation of our movement in the general student field, gave us reason to look forward with the greatest expectations to the future possibilities of service. Unfortunately the eagerly expected end of the war was accompanied by events which, for a good time at least have robbed our cause of such a prominent standing and of all that it involved. To this I shall have to return later.

While thus the years of war were not entirely lost for active work on our main field, yet more and more our attention was directed to side branches of our cause by the cultivation of which we meant to serve the future in the most fruitful way.

One of these branches was our work among the secondary school boys. Since 1915 we organized special summer conferences for them along with our conferences for university and college students which of course (the latter) were not visited by more than about an average attendance of 20 men year by year. The school-boys' conferences were held simultaneously in 3 or 4 places changing every year. Their attendance varied from 15 to 120. As an average about 200 to 250 boys were thus touched every year up to 1918. The results of these conferences and they were rather rich in results, were followed up mostly by personal correspondence during the school year as in most places the necessary leaders were not at hand to carry on organized work in the schools. This was done too, of course in an increasing number of places.

Another activity which we were led to start for the boys and which was crowned with full success, was the publication of a periodical for them. Since more than a decade a brilliantly edited Roman Catholic boys paper was in existence, and had an extraordinary influence upon the boy's life, which was not limited to Roman Catholic boys merely. There was nothing that could have served the interests of Evangelical Christianity with a same success, though several attempts were made. During the war one of these attempted periodicals which however constantly elicited dissatisfaction as not being a worthy counterpart to the above mentioned Roman Catholic feature, had to discontinue and thus the field was open for our experiment, which was received with general praise and satisfaction on the part of church and school circles, and what was infinitely more important, by the boys themselves. In its first year this paper which we started under the title 'Az erő' (The Power), already succeeded in uniting thousands of boys in a conscious fellowship of high Christian ideals, and its real success was to be seen in the prepared state of mind in which hundreds of these boys flocked to our conferences.

From a financial point of view we deliberately incurred a considerable deficit with this paper there being no other way of starting it. We succeeded in securing good subsidies from Church and school authorities and thus we covered

the deficit (apart from the financial damage caused by the revolutionary conditions of the country). We first planned to attain to 3000 subscribers already the first year (1917-8) brought us considerably beyond this figure. For the second year we aimed at 10000 and we were on the best way, again, to arrive beyond our expectations, when the paper had to break down, owing to political events on last winter. Two-thirds of the country were invaded by armies of the neighbours. By dozens the institutions in which we had thousands of subscribers, were separated from us by strict demarcation lines (threatening to become permanent boundary lines) and even on the remaining territory it was impossible owing to financial reasons under such circumstances, to continue the paper.

Apart from these sad interruptions, we could not have been too optimistic as to the future results of these activities for our movement. It was bound to find its way rather prepared in the mind of thousands of students when they would come to the universities and colleges.

Besides this broadening of our movement's influence upon student masses, we had to lay broader foundations for our future in increased financial resources. This was the other side-branch of our activity to which we resorted. We began a systematic campaign all over the country to make our movement known and to win the support off all sorts of people to whom, in any way whatever it could make an appeal. In larger towns public meetings were held sometimes connected with musical performances, to which wide circles of the public were attracted. In a great number of villages addresses were held about the aims and the significance of our work, especially from a Church-point of view, since in these places mostly the minister could be used as a channel for reaching greater number of our (then) wealthy peasant population.

The results of this activity were apparent in our ability to increase our staff. Last winter we had in our employer service four secretaries and two office clerks, and this in spite of the largely increased salaries as demanded by the abnormal cost of living.

Apart from our general news there was especially one cause for which we tried to enlist interest, or at least, we just began to do so without being able to proceed for we were burdened in these last years with a growing sense of need for a hostel, which, while doing its bit in relieving the terrible housing conditions of students, would be an invaluable instrument in exerting constant influences upon at least a limited number of men. We started out to raise a million crowns for this purpose, as a beginning, to be followed by demands of further millions. We attained to about 25.000 crowns, but then the upheavals came and we had to stop.

There were other new developments besides these two chief branches, which are of importance. Especially our publication work might be mentioned. Our paper, which served us for 8 years under the title of 'Diákvilág' (Student world) was transformed into a periodical of a wider scope and a more general appeal under the name, 'Akarat' (= The Will, with the superscription, 'On earth, as it is...in heaven.)

Besides this we reorganized our publication department by raising from our former members a loan of 7000 crowns to be invested in a business-like way in a series of new books and pamphlets.

One important by-product of our publishing-work (including here also the paper published for school-boys) was to advertise our movement thereby we began to be regarded as the most alive agency for producing religious literature for educated readers.

I have to pass over all the rest that would be of interest. The sum of all related above is that we were in fullest swing in the beginning of the new term, autumn 1918, when finally, the war ending, we could expect to gather around us all those returning from the war fields, who either before going to war, or during their military service had come into touch with our movement. I did not refer above to our special paper edited for mobilized men for about a year, whereby we had won quite a number of new friends, never seen before in many cases, afterwards, personally, but maintaining with them a very memorable correspondence. We hoped to be able to use this forces of a considerable number and, all the advantages attained to during war-years at home, and finally, what promised to open entirely new possibilities. The wave of idealistic thought, created by America's war programme (Wilsonian points) that was sweeping over our country and especially our students during the last months of the war.

Soon however one hope after the other gave way to very painful disappointments. Instead of hastening to the great successes hoped for, our movement, after a few months, arrived at a state which from an external point of view might be called annihilation.

The reasons for this are largely to be looked for in political conditions. Owing to the invasion of the undefended country from all sides to the extent of its two-thirds, and owing to the rule established in these parts, the life of the whole country, and with it student life, too, was entirely brought out of joint. The whole nation lived, so to say, in the capital and the surrounding fraction of the land, which remained free from occupation. Here student life too was to be found, and in its midst our Budapest-group started out with very intensive work to realize at least something of its dreams for after-war times. Bible-circles were organized again in a larger number and public meetings were held weekly, to which students thronged to the capacity of the premises.

The whole atmosphere however, in which this work was carried on, was unsound. Budapest was in those days the centre to which all the misery and all the wantonness of the whole country streamed, all but in a graver form for the dismantled state of the country which are logical symptoms of transition from war to peace-conditions. The absolute trust in a righteous peace as vouched for by utterances of American public opinion, gave way to bitter desperation, at the sight of the country being thrown at the mercy of her neighbours' unsatiable and unjustifiable aggressions. All the restlessness caused thereby was skilfully used and aggravated by Bolshevik agitators at work already. And this feverish, excited atmosphere had its bad effect upon our group of students, too.

From the war many of them returned with shattered inner lives, all of them with a need of recovery. What they wanted was a quiet home, to settle down, after all they had passed through. And what they found was just the opposite. They were especially sensitive to irritations caused by the social problems, which – large enough in reality, - were artificially thrust out of proportion and presented in a well designed one-sided way by socialist agitators. soon to become Bolsheviks, all of them. Over against these problems, which were the subjects of daily heated discussion especially among the students, our men were provoked by the indifference which the churches displayed towards all that was going on around them, and by the hopeless inability of organized Christianity even to touch the most acute problems of social life. As a result of all this a spirit of negative criticism and dissatisfaction settled down on them, which was especially characteristic of a conference held in February this year. The main tendency was to raise problems, not to answer them instead of a constructive influence, this gathering was rather an outlet of all the uncertainties, doubt and complaints, that have gathered all through the years in the mind of our men in the army. As a result of which, great plans were made for the coming months but sufficient strength was wanting.

This internal weakness was accompanied by financial troubles. Being cut off from the larger part of our auxiliary constituenc, and remaining friends of the movement having to struggle with increasing difficulties in their private budgets, the incomes of the movement rapidly dwindled down. It became an impossibility to pay our secretaries and outlook became constantly darker. Finally the outbreak of Bolshevism mercifully ended the struggle. The work of the movement came to a perfect standstill. Secretaries had to look for other work to earn their living. One of them got an appointment as clerk in an office, another started in an electric-installer job, in want of anything better, etc. Soon our premises were taken and our equipment confiscated. Money the Bolshevik officials could not take from us as they did from all religions organizations the only thing our treasurer could offer them was an unpaid printers-bill of considerable amount, which they however left in our possession. Otherwise, on our inquiry at competent places, we were given to understand that the Bolshevik-regime does not restrict at all the right of combination of proletarians and since students are proletarians as they had all to join a 'trade-union' organized for them, our student associations too may carry on their work just as they like though not probable at all still. I think there might have been even a chance to get our furniture back and to be allowed premises though at the cost of endless applications, would the system have lived long enough.

Their professed neutrality towards religious activities, certainly did not hinder them to confiscate all religious literature under the pretext of want of rough material for the paper-mills all their government departments being transformed into publishing agencies of propaganda-literature, and this creating a great demand for paper. We succeeded, however, in hiding our stock of books and saved it through to better days.

In the meanwhile the university term was ended too and a long summer vacation followed, during which we had time enough to make plans as to how a

student Christian Movement might be carried on, should conditions remain so for a longer period. Of these anxiety we were relieved, when finally the system was thrown over and the way seemed to open for resuming normal activities.

During these months of involuntary cessation, the inner difficulties of movement were largely overcome. One by one the restless members found their spiritual poise, and while most of them were scattered to their country-homes, we were able to make a new beginning with a Bible circle at Budapest already during the Bolshevik-rule.

Conditions being still far from normal, the university at Budapest could not be opened this autumn. Yet for the great number of students living in this city, we tried to reorganize our movement. A new membership list was drawn up, a new staff elected, and one of the four former secretaries reemployed, for half a year at least, in the hope, that in the meanwhile money would be forthcoming for the second half of the years. In want of premises, the meetings are held in rooms of different other Christian organizations, which were fortunate in being left in their premises during the Bolshevik-regime, and which now extend their hospitality to us. According to the news received since leaving Budapest, the different meetings are attended very well and a very good spirit is present among the members.

In looking back to the internal trouble of our movement during the last winter, besides all the sad failures manifested in them, there is this very valuable and, for the future development of our movement highly significant, element in them, that evidently the Christianity of that group of men has outgrown any narrowness and has come into full touch with the problems at issue in the world at large. Social study will be henceforth an indispensable element in their Christian training, and this not as an imported matter, but demanded by their own inner development. Likewise an immensely increased interest in apologetics will mark the future work certainly, and in general a much higher intellectual standard, as a result of all the conflicts of views through which they had to struggle their way.

I am sorry not to have shared that exceptionally interesting period of our movement personally. During those months I was here in Holland. I doubt very much whether my presence would have meant much more than a mere difference of degree. Essentially, I think, these processes were inevitably bound up with after influences of the war in individuals and in the country's life.

Now, as to the future which we have to face.

The situation is a rather indistinct mixture of favourable and unfavourable elements, as to the state of mind of the students. Both elements are involved in the fact that the political interest stand in the foreground. It is not a new experience, especially with us, that the student-body is the most sensitive medium for political unrest. And political rest will not return to Hungary until her old frontiers are not restored. It remaining yet to be seen how the lines will be drawn at the Peace-Conference. But historical, economical and ethnographical reasons will keep the country in a state of constant agitation if anything like that is being enacted, which appear now on the horizon. It is a word on every man's tongue who knows the situation that 'the whole area of the former Austria-Hungary has become

Bolshevized.' And what this means, is felt most acutely by Hungary. The 'zone of danger', instead of being wiped off the map, has just been extended far to the north. And it is the more dangerous as it includes more developed nations. This means that the dominant factor in every department of life, will be the national idea, an overstrained race-patriotism, crowding out of attention all other ideals.

Herein lies a serious obstacle to our work. We must be prepared to find but a remnant of that general interest towards matters of religion and fundamental questions of life, which made it possible for our movement to develop in such strides during the last years. The ear of the students will be more than full with the appeals of irredenta-causes and not much of attention not to say popularity will be left to a cause like ours, which has directly nothing to do with political aspirations of the nation.

On the other hand this outraged national consciousness creates new religious needs, and this is the hopeful side to the situation. As a matter of fact, the recovery of the nation, after having reached her lowest depth during the reign of Bolshevism, is bearing an avowed religious character. The watchword is given out 'Hungary must be Christian', which of course would be a splendid thing if the word be used in our sense. [...] This current is skilfully utilized for her own purposes by clericalist politicians of the Roman Church. Also social reactionary groups endeavour to strengthen their position by its help. And after all, there is in this turning back to neglected loyalties some groping unconscious need for strength to be derived from religious sources for the nation's salvation.

Here is an opening which if patiently and wisely used might lead to great results.

What the proportional weight of the unfavourable and the favourable elements of the situation will be, remains to be seen yet. Certain it is, that we have to make plans so as to take into account a greatly decreased receptivity of student in the average. This means that we have to use more concentrated methods by which, through smaller numbers of students, yet are brought under more constant and irresistible influences. Big meetings, conferences, and campaigns will not have the place in our movement presumably, which they had before the war and which we hoped they would have after the war. The more emphasis will have to be laid upon smaller study-circles, and our old plan to erect a hostel and thus to offer a constant Christian atmosphere for students to live in gains immensely in importance and urgency. This latter especially owing to the conditions of student-life, which instead of improving, are bound to grow worse for a number of years. The whole life of the country being out of joint, the capital is overcrowded by floating elements and an indescribable want of inhabitable rooms is created. And it is especially the middle-class-families – to which students mostly belong – that have been evicted by thousand from the occupied territories of the country to make room for imported Czech and Roumanian officials, teachers etc. – And owing to ruined finances all the plans which were being prepared since several years for the amelioration of student-housing-conditions, will remain in suspense for considerable time.

Face to face with this situation challenging as much by its obstacles as by its promises, we stand hands bound, owing to financial difficulties. For a number of years it will be a hopeless undertaking to raise money in Hungary even for a fraction of the needs of Christian causes. Five months of Bolshevism were enough to ruin the economical life of the country much more disastrously than the five years senseless war were able. And what was left by the [palmer]-worm, was eaten up by the locusts, three months of Roumanian occupation and requisition meant as much of devastation to the places and population of our country, the economical backbone, which was left, comparatively speaking, unharmed by bolshevism, as the Bolshevik regime meant for our industrial and commercial life. And even apart from these two afflictions the dismemberment of the country would be in itself enough of an economical catastrophe depriving as it does the economical organism of the nation of all its mineral resources and timber as well as the most fertile parts of the soil; and rendering thousands and thousands of middle-class families homeless and without income. If you meet respectable men at Budapest who far from being able to buy the needed new clothes are even compelled to sell part of their wardrobe to be able to secure the necessary amount of victuals, then you did not meet exceptional causes, but something that dangerously comes near to become a rule.

In the midst of such poverty the logical consequence is that a number of Christian causes which carried on their work with employed workers, find themselves compelled to try to dispense with them. Our movement, in employing instead of its former four secretaries and two office clerks simply one secretary, is not the single instance to this. The times would demand a considerably increased force and equipment, but we cannot hope even to maintain what we had formerly without generous help from abroad.

This is why I appealed in my letter to Mr. Webster for help from Scotland, and the more hopefully I wish to appeal to Christian resurces in America, as you are so kind in your letter to encourage me to do so.

Our main needs in the immediate future would be these, the rent of suitable premises (if obtainable at all), money for reviving of the schoolboy's paper mentioned above, salaries for additional secretaries to the one already employed, funds enabling us to resume the publications, expenses of conferences, which at present and for some time to come cannot be arranged without enclosing considerable deficits.

Our case would be best helped if we could be offered a certain sum (the extremely low exchange of our money, far below its real purchasing value in the country itself, would immensely multiply its value on its arrival, on which we could draw for these mentioned needs. It would be impossible to specialize how much would be sufficient for every one of them, especially since they are rather elastic. A sum equivalent to about \$ 2500-3000 would certainly enable us to resume our work on the former level, from which we dropped. The above sum is meant for one year.

In talking over these matters with Miss Rouse I learned that considerable amounts of money are at disposal for the strengthening of student movements in

South Eastern Europe, the activities of which can be regarded as a continuation of the work done by YMCA secretaries in the armies of the respective nations. Of this our movement naturally cannot benefit. On the one hand we are only too glad to see as much help going to our neighbour movements, especially to those South and South East, as possible. Even from the narrowest national point of view the most to be desired thing for us would be to see our neighbours being provided with leaders who are dominated by Christian ideals. –But on the other hand we would feel it as a rather un-strategic arrangement, should these movements around us enjoy the reinforcements alluded to while our movement would be left to struggle for its mere existence. I hope you do not misunderstand this as if it were envy or any other selfish judgment. I am trying to take into view the whole field of South Eastern Europe as a whole. And from this point of views, as I had opportunity more than once to point out to you, a special significance has to be attached to the Hungarian movement. It is the only one on the whole territory which can lean back upon an indigenous basis of Evangelical Christianity, while all the other movements around it – until a miraculous change does not alter the nature of the Greek and Roman churches – will ever remain dependent upon Western Protestant countries for those factor which are determining. I endeavoured to point out to you, what a significance it would have, could these movements, in addition to the strong movements in western countries, look up also to a movement situated right in their neighbourhood for essentially the same benefits (through in a much smaller degree). International relationships have changed since then and may change again, but the fact remains that the Hungarian Protestant Churches are the only representatives of considerable size, in that part of the world, of those values for which the Evangelical Churches stand in the world and which gave birth to the Student Movement. This is why I, and all our men, would hopefully expect, that at the same time when these movements around us enter upon a new era of development, the Federation will stand by us in our present exceptional misery to enable us to keep pace in our development and to contribute our special part to the rising movement in South Eastern Europe.

We would emphatically ask that this our appeal for financial help would be regarded as a purely temporary matter caused by the present conditions which cannot last longer than 3 or 4 years. As soon as economical life recovers in our country from the disastrous blows received, we shall hasten to make our movement self maintaining as it was formerly. And I would ask this also to be understood, that it is not the existence of the movement which we ask help for saving. This is not endangered. It has stricken too deep roots in the religious situation of Hungary to be extinguished by whatever conditions. But the question is this, shall the movement merely exist and carry on a very blessed but very hidden and very quiet work, or shall it be enabled to stand up as one of the formative factors of the country's student-life in these significant years.

It might also increase our sense of responsibility if any help extended to us would be regarded as a loan, to be handed on to more needy movements, as soon as the critical period is passed over by ours.

In addition to the above needs I would lay before you this other, referred to already several times, our need of a hostel. It will be a long while before we shall be able successfully to resume our canvas for those millions of crowns mentioned. While the needs are urgent. Apart from our strategic position in South Eastern Europe on account of having a religion history influenced by the Reformation, with all that is involved in this, there is our geographical position too which raises any Christian achievement in our country to a significance reaching out beyond its borders. The new life which is bound sooner or later to flourish up in the new states of South Eastern Europe, will most naturally find its chief centre in Budapest. Not in vain did the International Danube-Commission, under the control of which the line of the Danube will be exploited henceforth for commercial traffic, take as the seat of its administration, Budapest. The basin of the Hungarian plain naturally forms a nucleus for commercial organization, and from Budapest, at its centre, the railway lines connect the central portion of the Danube with all the surrounding countries. This raises Budapest to the rank of those cities in which, from an international point of view, Christian causes must be provided with model-equipments. We need a house for the movement there, that should be in itself an effective advertisement and a powerful testimony to the whole of South Eastern Europe doing its business in that centre. Under the present regime, which – as stated above – is avowedly friendly to the cause of religion, it would be possible to obtain suitable site in the city, gratis for such a purpose. And money coming from America at the present exchange would mean a much greater amount of contribution that is ever could in the future. I would urgently ask you to take up this matter for earnest consideration and to commission the competent workers in your staff to look into it more closely.

One more special request to the Federation. We must be prepared at present to loose Transylvania and much beyond it to Roumanian rule. The university of Kolozsvár has been disbanded already and a Roumanian institution is being organized in its stead. Of the whole structure of Hungarian educational system nothing will remain but the schools maintained by the Reformed Church in those parts. At least, it is to be hoped that the clauses to be included within the Peace Treaty Concerning the protection of ‘minorities’ will insure the Church the unhampered activity of her schools. At present there is only a theological College at Kolozsvár under the auspices of this church, - all her other institutions being of a lower grade. There are serious endeavours made just now to develop this College into a Protestant university with several departments and thus to secure the future of Protestant intellectual life in Transylvania which was a stronghold of it ever since the XVI. century. Whether these endeavours succeed or not, there certainly will remain a certain body of Hungarian students at Kolozsvár, mostly Protestants. Spiritually they would offer same difficulties and possibilities as described above concerning Hungarian students in general.

These students I would recommend into a specially tender care of the Federation. The Hungarian movement will not be able to reach over the new frontier line. Neither officially, nor unofficially will it be possible to link them up with our own

work on the other hand it will be equally impossible for them to link up with the Roumanian movement which as we hope will extend its branch to Kolozsvár, when once sufficient Roumanian professors are trained to run a new university and student life begins to unfold there. What steps it would be necessary to take in the interest of these Hungarian students under Roumanian rule, I can not tell at present. I just wish to point out that there is a field which awaits quite special attention.

Herewith I can finish as far as the student Movement is concerned. Permit me, if I have detained you as long as this, to add a few words as to the general religious situation, which I wish to lay to your heart. As last year, so this time again I came to the Hague as a member of a delegation sent out by our Churches with the purpose of getting into touch with the Churches in America and Great Britain and to ask for their help in the midst of the extraordinary needs created by the upheavals, especially by the dismemberment of the country. I do not wish to trouble you with the details. The main things aimed at from the beginning were, to ask the Churches in the west to use their influence and to secure proper protection for those parts of our Churches which would come under foreign rule, especially in cases where the new power is allied with the Greek orthodox Church; moreover, if possible, to save the unity of our Churches even should their parts be divided politically, - since some of the saddest financial losses inflicted by the change upon our Churches would be caused if the central funds and properties which serve the purpose of aiding poor congregations etc. should have to be broken up into insignificant fractions; a financial appeal too is made, for the strengthening of our Churches in the severed territories to enable them to face their immensely increased educational task and to overcome all the hindrances and dangers inherent to the new situation. In America too especially the Churches grouped in the Presbyterian Alliance are being appealed to. The Lutherans of America have taken already serious steps to get into immediate touch and to acquaint themselves with the needs of our Lutherans. The Unitarians, a body very much concerned too in the political changes in Transylvania, have sent a representative to the spot to make an inquiry.

I would point out to you here a few aspects of the matter which are not of special denominational interest but should appeal to the whole of American Christianity. You certainly will have frequent opportunity to hand on this appeal to competent quarters.

In general I pray to God that American Christianity with all its missionary energy and its copious resources should be brought to concentrate, upon the problem of South Eastern Europe, at least as much of her interest and sense of responsibility as she does upon other needy fields in the world. This is the part of the world in which the map has undergone the greatest changes as a result of the war. These changes are not to be permanent, but great changes certainly will remain, and will accentuate the great spiritual needs of these people. Their worn out political structure lies in the dust, they are becoming democracies. But democracy to be safe needs the foundations on which America is built up, - and these are deplorably wanting in these nations. If they are to be lead on towards a peaceful and happy life in their acquired liberty, they need, urgently, a great Christian campaign.

In addition to this need arising from their inner constitution there is the tangle of international relationships between them. No such boundaries can be drawn by whatever genius, which would be satisfactory to all these nations. The situation is so complicated, territories are covered with such mixed populations, that there is only one choice, either these peoples are taught a real Christian love towards each other or else they must be consumed by continuous outbursts of national hatred. In Europe at least, this is the richest part of mankind, and certainly this illness is to death, but given as a challenge to prove the powers of Christ.

Secondly, if once the urgent need is recognized for a united action on behalf of the whole region the importance of the Hungarian Churches cannot be overlooked, - as I pointed out above concerning the special interest of the Student Movement. Let me just suggest a parallel case, what would it mean for the endeavours of evangelizing South America, if in the midst of its neglected, masses, mostly forced by Romanism to choose between atheism or superstition, there would be at least one nation into the fabric of which there had been interwoven a history of Protestant Churches? Would that not be an invaluable vantage ground from which to spread Evangelical influences? This is just offered by Hungary in South Europe. It seems always a most economic use of forces, to import external forces only so far as absolutely necessary, and otherwise to mobilize the forces to be found on the spot. This means that these Churches should be protected and strengthened, not for their own interest but for their possibilities in serving as a base for further advance. A large part of the help going out to that region should use them as a channel in one way or the other.

There is a third aspect. The Protestant Churches of Hungary urgently await the strengthening hand of Western Christianity, because, unless it is stretched forth to them, they might become even a hindrance to the Evangelization of S.E. Europe. Owing to their troublesome history, after endless struggles they have largely fallen into a spiritually exhausted state, which does not best recommend the Christianity represented by them, even though it stands much higher as the religious standard shown by their surroundings. An inevitable step for further progress in that region is, first fully to regain what is possessed now largely but nominally. The external frame, the organization the traditions etc. of these Churches have to be filled with a new life of Christian experience. There is no way around this for Evangelical Christianity in its campaign to conquer that part of Europe.

This means that in addition to the brotherly care taken for the whole of the Churches, special assistance ought to be given to all those younger movements which are busy to revive these churches from within. The respective denominations can easily find out what is going on among their co-religionists in Hungary, and they on their turn will do everything to make their causes, needing help, known. Here I would point out however that even those denominations in America which have no coreligionists among the historic bodies in Hungary, ought to take the field in view as described above. The fact is that e.g. from Methodist and Baptist quarters significant interest is taken in, and help is extended to, among other regions in S.E. Europe, certainly Hungary too. This however is done simply by introducing

Methodism and Baptism into Hungary. The religious map of Hungary can but gain in the end by such new elements appearing, and there is very great room yet for such work to be carried on. But it would be useful to keep in mind that this is not the only way in which Christians of these groups can extend their missionary interest to that region. If it is difficult for them to support by their means, raised under denominational auspice, activities carried on in Hungary under the auspices of other denominations, they at least could contribute to the revival of these older denominations in Hungary by the way of such interdenominational agencies as the YMCA. YMCA and the Student Movement. It will easily be seen, that any Christian help extended towards Hungary's religious needs, must largely lose in effects when it comes in the guard of a newcomer who has to fight first for recognition before given a due hearing. While on the other hand there are the deep riverheads of the historic Churches, readily awaiting to be filled to the brim with a new life.

Here again I wish to repeat, Hungary should not be taken into the calculations of Christian world activity as a negative post, offering merely needs. Hungarian Christianity is full of needs at present, but this is a transitional matter, and within a few years these Churches strategically placed at a natural centre, can be quickened into becoming an extremely valuable active post for South Europe's religious situation.

The immediate future lies very dark before us, but not the more distant years. Our only problem is, to be helped over the otherwise unsurmountable difficulties of a few years. Afterwards, we should take care of ourselves and of much beyond ourselves.

Here I wish to end. By reading through this letter to its end you will have exerted an endurance which certainly qualifies you as our friend, - you will excuse me for laying such a tax upon your time and your attention. I had to disburden all that is on my heart.

Looking forward to your kind answer as soon as the exceptionally busy days before you will permit and wishing you a very happy Christmas and New Year richer in fruitful work and joy than any preceding.

I remain
Thankfully for your patience

Yours very sincerely,
John Victor.

APPENDIX 2

Confidential Report on the Missionary Movement in the Reformed Church of Hungary by Johannes C. Hoekendijk, 1948

Introduction¹

The Netherlands Missionary Council (NMC) was officially invited by the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) to send a delegate to Hungary who might be helpful in fostering the missionary interest in the church in general and - eventually- in organizing a missionary department of the RCH. (May 1947).

In October 1947 - entry permit difficulties postponed the visit considerably - I had the privilege of touring the country and we drew up a preliminary project for missionary work in partnership with Indonesian churches and in cooperation with Dutch missions.

In the aide-memoire of October 1947, the NMC was asked to send in 1948 somebody, who might give a short series of lectures on the theology of missions in the four theological faculties of the RCH. (Sárospatak, Debrecen, Budapest, Pépa) for students and faculty-staff. Through the financial help of the IMC (requested by the RCH) I could visit Hungary another time (October 22nd –November 29th 1948) to deliver these lectures.

In this report I intend to give a short account of the origin and first developments of this missionary movement in Hungary (3). Because this movement is so strongly related with different movements in the church and - like everything in Hungary now - so complicated in the total situations – a few remarks on the general present situation (1) and the church in this socio-political context (2) may precede. In a few conclusions (4) the impressions are summarized and in the closing-paragraph I venture to formulate a proposal to the IMC for the continuation of this work in the Central Europe (5). (Old contact with a group in Prague and recent discussions here, give a hopeful picture of missionary possibilities in the Czechoslovak churches too).

1. Some remarks on the general situation.
2. The churches in this context.

¹ The original of this yet unpublished manuscript can be found in the Hoekendijk Archives, Special Collections, Manuscript, Library of the Utrecht University, The Netherlands, JCH-A –C16. This is a literal transcript of the original type-written manuscript without any linguistic nor grammatical corrections.

3. The missionary movement in Hungary
 4. Conclusions
 5. Proposals for Central Europe.
1. Some remarks on the general situation.

The present situation makes clear in what a tragic way Hungary is situated between East and West. Socially and politically the country is integrated ever more into the 'East', but the people desire to remain culturally and spiritually in the realm of the 'West'.

The radical land-reform is completed in the ruthless way; all estates exceeding 100 acres have been expropriated and so the force of two potential reaction-groups, the land aristocracy and the farmers has been broken. The intelligentsia is doomed to pauperism already.

Since September 1948 the plan of 'radical dynamizing' has been carried into effect in a distressing tempo. Fixed traditional groupings (family!) must disappear or – at least - lose their functions. Life must be atomized so that society in general will be easy to mould into the programmatic form of a class-less society. Nobody is allowed to have firm roots and a constant milieu; officials and businessmen are shifted constantly. Family-life is made impossible through obligatory participation of party-demonstrations (preferably Sunday morning 10-12). Ethos is ridiculed as a relict of 'bourgeois-style'; in the people's colleges (for youth) respectable forms are derided.

The Tito-putsch has brought Cominform-officials to Budapest and has contributed to the recent prudish doctrinarism, with which the Cominform-catechism is followed now, so that no suspicion may be raised. The remarkable shift from the 'national communist'-wing (Rajk) to the international Cominform-wing (Rákosi [sic!]) finds a plausible explanation here, as well as the overthrow of the Tildy- and Dinnyes-regimes.

In this turmoil it is possible for the numerically weak (10%?) Communist party to fill all strategic post (Judicature, Police) transport, press) and – on an arm's length of the USSR - to fields of power [...]

In the general feeling of the Hungarian people this whole situation is (more or less consciously) related to the adventures of the past, in the Russians one sees the return of the Turks over the Western world and in Hungary the collision of East and West repeated. So the present situation is conceptualized in the old and well-known way, Hungary will function again *clipeus occidentalis*. It is the eastern and farthestmost bulwork of western civilization which has the task of paralyzing the assaults of the East in defence of the West.

2. The Churches in this Context.²

The almost impulsive reaction of the greater part of church people is also one of total and radical aversion of the new regime. In the same way as the Hungarian people has to be the *clipeus occidentalis*, Hungarian Christendom has to function as a *clipeus Christianitatis*. This defensive picture is characteristic, the defensive and resisting attitude predominates. The general impression of the church life is one of stubborn traditional conservatism. One realizes – as many of the church leaders do now – that exactly because there has not been a constant flowing through and passing on of the Gospel to others, life has become stagnant and static. Reform- and revival-movements had only a negligible effect on church life. An exception is Bethania, a revivalist movement of the Christian Endeavour type, which spread through the country in the last 50 years and means a considerable force now.

In the relations of Church and State three different 'types' can be distinguished – though they are described here as the attitude of the R.C. primate cardinal Mindszenty[sic!], the Lutheran bishop Ordass and the Reformed bishop Bereczky respectively – they may be all found in the RCH.

Mindszenty is the leader of an aggressive and massive resistance to the new state and especially the new form of society. The Hungarian the bourgeois and the Christian conspire together and it is not clear who has the final say in the matter. From behind an ecclesiastical iron curtain an unconditional no! is hurled at the new regime. It is not evident that one recognizes that (though in an unjust and ruthless way) an age-long injustice is corrected (land reform) now and that the 'iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children'. The state is situated completely and exclusively in the shadow of Apoc.13.

Many protestants follow Mindszenty and honour Mindszenty for his courageous stand. It is not only jestingly that Mindszenty is called the 'only resolute Calvinist in Hungary'. The arrest of cardinal Mindszenty (27 December 1948) has been expected a long time already.

From his unconditional No! the principal No! of Bishop Ordass should be distinguished. Bishop Berggrav has been the example of Ordass and his action was based on the experiences of the German Church struggle.

In its measures (especially the nationalizing of all schools) in the summer of 1948 the state revealed according to Ordass that it has become the state of Apoc. 13. The church is hereby put in statu confessionis and from now on a firm resistance has to be the only possible attitude of the church. Bishop Ordass has been arrested with some of his nearest collaborators and sentenced to prison.

The general admiration for Ordass does not mean that one agrees with his decisions, even not in the Lutheran church. (Deszery [sic. =Dezséry]-group) In recent statements of Lutheran bishops a careful criticism of his attitude is heard already. ('The martyrdom should be postponed as long as possible as Jesus and Paul

² Roman Catholic 65% (5.5 mill.), Reformed 21% (1.8 mill.), Lutheran 6% (530.000), Greek Catholic (Uniate) 2.3%, Greek Orthodox 0.5%, Unitarian 0.1%. [footnote in the original]

did'). It was generally expected that the Lutheran church will still try to make an agreement with the state.

The attitude of bishop Bereczky –and of the Synod of the RCH is most passionately discussed in the country and abroad (Switzerland!).

Bishop Bereczky – who was elected to bishop of Budapest this summer - has been well known already as one of the most influential leaders of a turbulent 'prophetic-progressive' movement (The Free Council). Because he was personally related to the (former) president of the Republic Z. Tildy, and the government showed its approval of his election, Bereczky has a very difficult and compromised position.³

Bishop Bereczky has advocated an open and positive attitude to the Third Republic and has challenged the church to discern in the present situation God's judgment over her own past, in which she has too unsuspectingly identified herself, with the contemporary regime. One should approach this state also as God's instrument with confidence and let Rom. 13 predominate over Apoc. 13. As long as it will be possible, t.i. as long as there will be no persecution or 'Gleichschaltung' – the government must be accompanied and tested, meanwhile 'not despising prophesying'. The nationalization of education does not – according to Bereczky- imply that the church is put in statu confessionis. (The RCH asked herself for this nationalization for more than 50 years) and this measure did not withhold him – and with him the Synod of the RCH - to make an agreement with the state.

In this agreement it is stated that the church 'take cognizance of' the nationalization, but reserves the right to herself to have her own schools as a token whereof 6 colleges remain in the custody of the RCH. Furthermore it was recognized by the church that ('until now') there has been religious liberty and by the state that it put itself under the obligation of maintaining this liberty. A joint committee (state-church) controls the observance of this agreement.⁴

This agreement is overtaken already by the course of events. It is held officially, but local authorities (especially in the country) bring the church under such a pressure through intimidation that in practice religious liberty is violated many times. (F.i. house meetings are 'discouraged' officially; censorship on radio; no schoolroom is provided for Sunday school etc. (though promised in the agreement) or only once in a year (to obey the letter of the law) etc.).

Generally there are no illusions for the future. It is anticipated that religious liberty will be curtailed even more in the (perhaps very near) future. Meanwhile every individual case is brought before the Joint Committee of control and tested. The (inofficial) promise that the RCH would put itself in an 'exceptional position' has proved to be an illusion. Exactly the religious liberty clause is adduced

³ K.Barth was asked for his advice by the (then) 'state secretary' Rev.J.Peter, who travelled therefore (at the state expense) to Basle. K.Barth suggested Bereczky. Cf. K.Barth, *Christliche Gemeinde im Wechsel der Staat Staatsordnungen*. 1948.p.71-76. [footnote in the original]

⁴Bishop Bereczky has rendered an account of his attitude in his pamphlet, *Die ungarische Christenheit im neuen ungarischen Staat*. Zürich 1948. [footnote in the original]

now to refute this 'exceptional position', 'favouring of the RCH above the other churches would mean a violation of religious liberty',

Some optimists expect that the situation will clear up 'as soon as the state is ready with the R.C. church. Local authorities do not know the exact difference of R.C. and Protestant and execute the orders (for treatment of the R.C. church) therefore without any discrimination to the RCH'.

The greater part however of the RCH anticipates a time of persecution. In the new constitution (Spring 1949?) an arrangement like Czecho Slovakia or Roumania is held probably, t.i. a state-church, in which pastors, etc. will be nominated by the government. (Through the land reform, the churches lost a great part of her holdings and became financially dependent upon the state already). It is expected that a substantial part of the church members will separate themselves of the official church and withdraw in 'catacomb-congregations'. In the 'evangelists' movement (Cf.3) one tries to prepare the church for this decisive moment.

Another 'type' – to be distinguished from Bereczky because of its theological suppositions – is the attitude of Prof. Karacsony [Karácsony]. (Prof. of education of Debrecen). Prof. Karacsony is now the president of a student movement (Magyar Evangéliumi Keresztény Diák-Szövetség - formerly the – rather pietistic –Pro Christ [Pro Christo] Movement). Karacsony's attitude is based on a kind of theodicea, 'we have neglected to be missionaries to the East and boasted of being the Eastern bulwork of Christendom. Now God has brought the East to us and all the atrocities of the Soviet Army are a righteous judgment on our disobedience to the Commission (Matth. 28,19) and the call to social righteousness (Prophets). We have to accept this punishment and to repent in a very concrete way, through evangelizing the East!'. 15 % of the MEKDS are members of the communist party, all of them study seriously russian culture, history (and languages) 'just like a missionary for Africa studies the national cultures'. Prof. Karacsony has mixed these ideas with a rather romantic Magyar nationalism (renaissance of old magyar songs, etc.) and many of his ideas come close to (or are even identical with) the well-known ideas of the Deutsch Christen [sic!]. He excites missionary-interest and pleads for a courageous stand. ('He who fears is a reactionary').

3.The missionary movement in Hungary

During the last decades some reform-movements brought new life into the RCH., All of these movements tried to awaken a sense of responsibilities for the missionary cause.

'The first man exerting himself in Hungary in the interest of foreign missions, was A.G. Wimmern (d.1863). It was from his congregation that a missionary, Samuel Böhm went out to Africa, dying there (1859) as the first missionary martyr of Hungarian Protestants. The Scottish Mission at Budapest dating from 1841, besides carrying on its work among the Jews, with notable results was at the same time instrumental awakening interest among Hungarian in the

cause of foreign missions. After the seventies the matter of foreign missions was taken regularly by the religious press. (Bishop Révész)?

In the beginning of this century (1903) a Hungarian Evangelical Christian Missionary Union was formed especially out of YMCA circles. In SCM circles a second generation of missionary leaders was educated. Especially the visits of John Mott to Hungary brought a revival of missionary-spirit in student circles. All the present leaders of this missionary Union have come out of this group.

The activity of this Union has been restricted to sending out some individual missionaries in foreign service, f.i. in the Liebenzell Mission (Mannus [sic!]) and in Manchuria (Scottis Missions). In the thirties (after the visit of Mott and Zwemer) missionarywork has been taken up in the Balkans (among Turks in Bulgaria 1936 and in Albania 1938) but the missionaries had to be withdrawn later because of government-measures in these countries. Actually the RCH has at present one missionary abroad (Rev. Sandor Babos in Manchuria, now studying in Great Britain?).

The Missionary Union has been an interdenominational agency from 1903 until 1930. In this last year the Lutheran group withdrew and formed a Lutheran Missionary Union – the Evangelical Missionary Union became a semi-official Reformed board (Magyar Református Külmissziói Szövetség, Kálvin tér 8, Budapest, President J. Victor), closely connected with the RCH.

On information it became evident that the work of the Union was in general little known in the congregations. A collection for foreign missions in the church once every year is often sabotaged (the proceeds in 1948 about \$675!).

The union publishes a missionary monthly (in 1946 a total of 8000 copies were distributed); a series of missionary pamphlets (circulation of 500-1000 every month) and a missionary yearbook.

It maintains a missionary-college (at present in the college of Hajdúböszörmény) with 12 students, who follow a 3 year's preparatory course.

The importance of this Union has been especially that it has indefatigably promoted missionary interest in the church. It has had relatively little influence and effect though in the church herself and stuck more or less in the periphery.

The general impression is that this group is tired of being hewens of wood and drawers of water for foreign boards, without any appropriate directive responsibility of its own. It is clear also that this way or providing missionary-auxiliary troops to other does not appeal to the imagination of the congregations. Therefore this group desires to start work now that will become –as soon as possible – its own work. This is the point where the Indonesia-project comes in.

In addition to this 'Union' some other reform-movements have brought the missionary cause to the force. From different sides this point was stressed and in recent times the various lines converged in a strong evangelistic movement.

In and after the first world war in Transylvania a strong movement for the renewal of the church (parallel with a renewal of theology) propagated the idea that the church could only be renewed through the upbuilding of strong congregations,

which act in this world as dynamic evangelistic forces. Almost all of the Hungarian church leaders come out of this movement and brought this program to the RCH. The former bishop of Transylvania Prof. A. [Sándor] Makkai is the inspiring leader of the Evangelism-movement in Hungary now and referent for Missions of the RCH. In some theological circles – apparently under the influence of dialectical theology - there is a movement (difficult to identify as such) where the basis of sound theology (and the experiences of the German Church struggle) it is constantly proclaimed that ‘the church will not be renewed as long as she will not accept, in joyful obedience her missionary responsibility’.

Somewhat apart stands an evangelistic movement ‘The Society of Friends of Reformed Parish-evangelism’ with its centre in Nyíregyháza. (Bible Academy for training of laymen, also a faculty for foreign missions). The unclear political attitude of the leader Rev. Békefi has compromised this movement. In the National Reformed Free Council many of the leaders of these different movements are united on a ‘progressive prophetic’ program. The church is called upon to fight her own sins of secularism (non-evangelical hierarchy; institutionalism; lack of missionary spirit) to accept the judgment of God in the ordeal over the nation and to repent.

In the ‘Hungarian Revival’ of these post-war years, all of these groups work together. This fact had (and still has) some embarrassing consequences. In the view of the more traditional-church groups the revival is too much linked up with a progressive political attitude. (In the discussions one may hear a statement like this ‘the revival is organized by the government to break the resistance of the church’).

This connection does not mean however, that ‘traditional’ groups retire from this evangelistic movement. Some of the traditional leaders join it, grateful for the obvious and convincing blessings it has brought already.

In the summer of 1948 (July) a missionary-work-group was formed, in which representatives of all aspects of church-work try to coordinate and stimulate the evangelistic impact in the world. (13 departments, children-mission (Sunday schools, etc.); youth-missions; Woman’s Union; Evangelism; Upbuilding of congregations (Gemeinde-Aufbau); Bethania; Diakonia (‘philanthropy’); Missions to the Jews; Foreign Missions; Extra-school education; Press; Union of presbyters; Union of pastors). This workgroup has become already the dynamic centre of the church and one is conscious of the fact that through this centre and its widespread activities throughout the country, the church for to-morrow is built.

In a great evangelistic campaign (Autumn 1948) each time a group of villages is intensively evangelized through a team of evangelists (representing if possible - all the different branches: ‘Bush’-evangelism). After this concentrated attack on the ‘statistical’ church the follow-up work is done by ‘Congregation-builders’, who try to gather the ‘awakened’ in dynamic, evangelizing groups. It is generally held that these groups will be the units of Christian life in the church of tomorrow, when the official church will be an instrument of the state. These cells are formed all over the country already (house congregations, Bible circles, etc.) and they function (as in the future they will have to) without clergy - ‘we cannot sleep further on the soft

cushions of the institutional church but have to change our church radically into a missionary and evangelistic force. Our device should be the 'missionary-transqualification of the church, must begin with me and through me'. It is in this context that the Movement for foreign Missions is situated.

In the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey I met representatives of different of the aforementioned movements. We discussed missions as a factor to renew the church and as a practical result of such renewal (The general subject of the course for theologians was 'Renewal of the Church').

There was a feeling, that the RCH was ready to begin missionary work of her own now, but had no clarity on how and where to begin. Missionary possibilities in Indonesia were discussed and a co-operation with Netherlands Missions was suggested. These talks were summarized in different articles in the Hungarian religious press and arose at once an unexpected enthusiasm. The Synod of the RCH, the Free Council, The Missionary Union sought contact independently with the NMC and reported about the 'immense enthusiasm for the Indonesia-project'. The synod saw this as 'a sign of God' and asked for information about possible cooperation in the future. A representative of the Missionary Union (the leader of the Friends of Evangelism Rev. Békefi) came to Holland (May 1947) and invited the NMC to send a representative to Hungary.

This was decided, but at the same time the NMC conditioned to organize a program for its representative 'through consultation and cooperation of all the intrested groups'. There were good reasons to ask this. It became evident already, that the different groups acted without sufficient consultation. Moreover, we had a suspicious feeling, that the Indonesia-project was so tightly linked to total (for some groups compromising) program that it would be difficult for the whole church to support wholeheartedly this project.

To put it shortly, in October 1947 all the intrested groups were brought together and integrated in the Missionary Department of the RCH. The board of the 'Missionary Union' was invited to act as executive-board of this department. In an aide-mémoire (22 Oct. 1947) it was suggested that the Hungarian missionary enterprise should start along two lines,

a) . Direct contacts with churches in Indonesia to work together – when these churches should invite to do so - on the principle of partnership. The NMC was asked to pass this offer of the RCH to the Council of Churches in Macassar (East Indonesia).

On my return in Holland I had the opportunity to discuss these plans fully with Rev.W.J. Rumambi, (then) secretary of Macassar-council. From this moment on this line of action was a Hungarian-Indonesian affair.

For unknown reasons there have been no reactions on this proposal from Indonesia. During the Assembly in Amsterdam it was a painful surprise for both the Hungarian and Indonesian there present, that the delegates of the Indonesian Churches were not informed about these proposal. (A partial explanation may be that most of these Indonesians come out of Republican areas and had no contacts with East Indonesia). In Amsterdam the proposal to cooperate in full partnership

was repeated and officially the synods of the churches in Central- and East-Java were informed. Rev. Sudarmo (Central Java) was invited to tour Hungary, and I enjoyed a warm and friendly cooperation in with him in Debrecen.

b) .Another possibility was proposed to begin missionary work in the context of already-existing Dutch missionary work and to take over gradually the full responsibility for a part of this missionary work. Naturally this could only be done in areas where churches were not yet instituted.

The United Missionary societies (Oesgstgeest) accepted this proposal and suggested the RCH to send a team of 5 missionary workers (2 theologians, 1 doctor, deaconess, woman-missionary) to the missionary-college in Holland for further training to proceed later to New Guinea. It was stated, however, that Oesgstgeest could not take any financial responsibility.

Since May 1948 this Hungarian team is ready to leave the country, but passportdifficulties (on the Hungarian side) and entry-permit difficulties (on the Dutch side) have made it impossible thus far to enter Holland.

During my visit in 1948- I had an opportunity to discuss this project fully with the official board of the RCH. It was agreed upon, that the RCH will hold herself ready for both of these possibilities (a-b) t.i.:

The RCH on one had (a) waits now for an invitation to cooperate with churches in the Republican area. Meanwhile the synod of Central Java has a decide to accept this cooperation. Recent political developments (police-action, make it the more necessary to look for new missionary forces, now that (most probably) Dutch missionaries will not be acceptable in the near future.

On the other hand (b) a team of 5 Hungarians missionaries is held in readiness to travel to Holland (as soon as the financial-problems and the passport difficulties are solved). After training in the missionary college they will go to New-Guinea and take over in the future part of the work on this island for the full responsibility of the RCH.

Finance:

In principle the RCH has accepted the full financial responsibility for this N.G. mission. Considerable funds are collected already in the country. It is technically impossible, however to transfer these founds abroad. The RCH is therefore forced to ask Inter Mission Aid for an advance.

It is probable now that passport difficulties can be solved. Especially because a Hungarian passport will be issued now, as soon as one is in possession of a Dutch entry-permit. (The difficulty has been that the Netherlands Government did not allow an entry-permit to those people who had a Hungarian passport, because they were supposed to be communists.)The NMC will try officially now to obtain the Dutch entry-permit.

Conclusions.

The conclusions may be shortly summarized:

a). There is a strong enthusiastic missionary movement in the RCH, in which all the different groups are invited. The referent for missions Prof. A. Makkai, who has

the confidence of all groups, is the soul of this movement. The Missionary Department of the General-Convent (address, Református Egyetemes Konvent Elnöksége, Budapest XIV.21 Abonyi Ut). is the official agency for missions of the RCH.

b). It is of extreme importance that a possibility should be found – and this should be done as soon as possible – to have a first group of Hungarian missionaries come out of the country, before the iron curtain is totally closed. This missionary enthusiasm cannot be nurtured, when nothing happens.

This means practically that Hungarian missionary work has to start as ‘Orphaned Missions’. In the whole of World missions this little group may only have token-significance. For this church, however, awakened to a sense of responsibility it will be the most important to begin now. The dollars invested in this enterprise have a great spiritual surplus value.

c). It is natural that the RCH and the churches in the Netherlands cooperate in this enterprise. Both belong to the same denominational family and throughout history there have been warm and close relations between the churches. It has to be admitted regretfully that the churches of the Netherlands have only seldom tried (XVIIIth century) to draw the RCH into the missionary cause. But proofs the deep conviction that ‘we know ourselves sanguine Christi conglutinati with those distressed hearts in Hungary’ we –knew (synod of Utrecht XVIIIth century) give a solid foundation for a future missionary cooperation.

d). Of greater importance however is the fact that the RCH-missionaries will fit in the spiritual structure of the churches in Indonesia. The positive decision of the synod of the church in Central Java proofs this again.

e). Apart from the team of five missionaries for New-Guinea and some individual workers for the churches in the Republic, about 40 men and women have seriously volunteered for missionary-work. There may be some cases of escapism among them. The question arises however, whether these forces may remain unused for the missionary cause, when almost everywhere complains about the serious deficiency of workers are heard. (One of my most moving impressions has been the meeting of twelve students of theology, 6 miles of the Russian frontier, who volunteered for missionary work in Indonesia last year already and studied on their own the Indonesian language and different missionary problems).

5. Proposals.

The situation in Hungary might be put against the background of proposals for a ‘global christian strategy’ (Cf. W.v.Kirk, A Global Christian Strategy). This is not a new program. In fact John Mott has been already a Christian global strategist. The question is now who or what agency will succeed him in this post-Mott era. It is not this a – too much neglected - side of IMC activities. Time and again I was asked, why other churches or the IMC have not appealed to the RCH to join in the missionary enterprise before. A total strategy presupposes a total mobilization, and there are still potential resources in the churches of Central Europe, Hungary with

about 2.3 million protestants, Transylvania (now closed) 800.000, Czechoslovakia (nearly 1 million).

With the latter country we have had also some valuable contacts. We helped to organize a study circle on missions in Prague (1948) and recently the NMC was invited – (when it became known what happened in Hungary) – to send a delegate to Czechoslovakia to foster the missionary spirit. A strong evangelistic movement (conference in October with 1200 churchleaders) there has created a favourable spiritual climate for a strong missionary appeal. Through casual contacts only 5 Czechoslovak – theologians volunteered already for Indonesia, though no special arrangements are made until now.⁵ A Missionary Council of Czechoslovakian churches (together!) is in preparation and we await in Holland the visit of a Czechoslovakian theologian, whose task it will be to prepare the missionary Home Base. Even the possibility is mentioned of a Missionary Council of Central Europe, where Czechoslovakians and Hungarian churches will cooperate. This may not be feasible in the near future, but opens new possibilities.

Of these opportunities the most should be made of, as long as it will be possible (and that may be a short time only). In my opinion it will be of extreme spiritual importance, that these churches have people - and therefore vital interest – in other parts of the world church, before they disappear definitely behind the iron curtain.

Until now contacts with both these countries have been accidental. Could it not be done more systematically in the future?

I see the following possible ways,

a). This could be done by the IMC either through one of its secretaries or through national missionary councils.

But this will require much time, long visits and quiet tours through the country, many, many talks and it is questionable IMC or Nat. Council secretaries can give this time for this mobilization of the resources. (The Netherlands Missionary Council has some is until now, but is forced to stop this side of its work, because of financial difficulties).

b). It could also be considered to ask the WCC to include this kind of work in the functions of the future secretariate for Evangelism, so that he may see to it that in the evangelization-efforts necessary attention will be given to foreign missionary work. In this secretariate the interest of the WCC and the IMC necessarily overlap and it might be contemplated therefore to make this secretariate right from the beginning a joint enterprise (in practice). In this way the total resources of the churches may be mobilized for the total evangelistic task of the World Church.

30-12-1948

J. C. Hoekendijk.

⁵ The churches in Czecho Slovakia have only supplied two missionaries until now (Cameroon in the work of Paris Missions). [footnote in original]

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SAMENVATTING IN HET NEDERLANDS

De dienst van evangelisatie, de evangelisatie van de dienst. De invloed van John R. Mott, Hendrik Kraemer, Willem A. Visser 't Hooft en Johannes C. Hoekendijk op de ontwikkeling van het zendingsbegrip in de Gereformeerde Kerk in Hongarije (1910 – 1968)

De Gereformeerde Kerk in Hongarije (GKH) heeft nooit een eigen zendingsveld gehad. Tijdens de grote geografische uitbreiding van het christendom in de loop van de 18e en vooral de 19e eeuw, maakte Hongarije deel uit van de Oostenrijks-Hongaarse Monarchie, zonder overzeese koloniën en daardoor zonder standaard contacten met 'heidense volken'. Desondanks hebben verschillende invloeden – vooral via intensieve wetenschappelijke interactie tussen de Hongaarse en West-Europese protestantse geestelijke centra – ertoe bijgedragen dat het begrip zending een steeds grotere betekenis in de GKH heeft gekregen.

Aan het eind van de 19e en het begin van de 20ste eeuw wordt het begrip zending in de GKH gebruikt als synoniem voor de dienst onder de Hongaarse Gereformeerde diaspora binnen en buiten de grenzen van het historische Koninkrijk Hongarije met een viervoudig doel: versterking van het gereformeerde confessionele bewustzijn, oprichting van nieuwe gemeenten, behoud van de Hongaarse nationale identiteit en verspreiding van protestantse cultuur. In de loop van de eerste drie decennia van de 20ste eeuw vindt er in de GKH een radicale herdefiniëring plaats van het begrip zending. Het Zendingsreglement van 1931 en het nieuwe Artikel 'Over de Zending van de Kerk' in de Kerkorde van de GKH (1933/III.) werken met een zendingsbegrip dat als doel van zending omschrijft: 'de verkondiging van het evangelie van Jezus Christus en de uitbreiding van het Koninkrijk van God'. Deze herdefinitie van het zendingsbegrip kan als een paradigmawisseling worden omschreven.

Na de Tweede Wereldoorlog kwam Hongarije in de invloedssfeer van de Sovjetunie terecht. Een steeds invloedrijkere groepering van theologen in de GKH heeft een poging gedaan om deze historische ontwikkelingen theologisch te interpreteren. Zij hebben de machtsovername van de 'heidense' (communistische) Sovjetunie in Hongarije als een oordeel van God over de zonden van de kerk uitgelegd en hebben in dat verband het concept ontwikkeld van 'de genade werkend ook van buiten naar binnen toe'. Dit houdt in, dat men de ideologie van het communisme/socialisme beschouwde als een instrument in Gods hand, waardoor de Heer zijn kerk wil corrigeren en instrueren. Via een proces van 'beking tot de naaste' zou de kerk een voorvechtster moeten worden van wereldvrede en sociale gerechtigheid. Zending werd daarbij opnieuw gedefinieerd, namelijk als een dienst aan de naaste, als een vorm van sociale en politieke diaconie. De modificatie van

het Zendingsreglement van 1950 ging al in deze richting. Het nieuwe Zendingsreglement (1952) heeft dit nieuwere zendingsbegrip als het officiële en exclusieve standpunt van de GKH gecodificeerd. Een nieuwe – oftewel theoretische – paradigmawisseling in de definitie van zending binnen de GKH heeft daarmee plaatsgevonden.

Deze dissertatie beschrijft de resultaten van een onderzoek naar de vraag in hoeverre de ontwikkelende oecumenische beweging heeft bijgedragen tot de verandering van het zendingsbegrip binnen de GKH. De invloed van vier personen werd in detail onderzocht: die van John R. Mott (1865-1955), Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965), Willem A. Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985) en Johannes C. Hoekendijk (1912-1975).

Uit het onderzoek is duidelijk geworden dat de Amerikaanse leken-theoloog Mott een sterke invloed op het zendingsbegrip van de GKH heeft uitgeoefend door zijn bezoeken, correspondentie en geschriften. Op die manier heeft hij een belangrijke rol gespeeld in de eerste paradigmawisseling van het Hongaarse gereformeerde zendingsbegrip.

Veel minder invloed heeft Kraemer gehad. Ondanks zijn sterke Barthiaanse achtergrond en ondanks het feit dat zijn geschriften – hoe beperkt ook – in Hongarije bekend waren, was zijn invloed gering, vooral omdat zijn hoofdthema's (de christelijke boodschap vis- à-vis de wereldgodsdiensten) in de Hongaarse context als irrelevant werden opgevat.

Visser 't Hooft heeft vele contacten met de GKH gehad. Hij was invloedrijk op het terrein van kerkelijke politiek. Na de Tweede Wereldoorlog heeft hij de reformvleugel van de GKH ondersteund met het gewicht van zijn gezag, waardoor hij heeft bijgedragen aan de legitimatie van de nieuwe pro-linkse kerkleiding. Zijn standpunt heeft hij in de loop van de ontwikkelingen van de 50-er jaren veranderd en in 1956 heeft hij de kerkelijke oppositie ondersteund. Zijn positie blijkt afhankelijk te zijn van die van Karl Barth. Zijn invloed op het zendingsbegrip in de GKH is dus vooral indirect.

Hoekendijk heeft intensieve persoonlijke contacten gehad in de GKH na de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Hij heeft het proces van de 'verkerkelijking' van de zending in Hongarije ondersteund. Zijn concept van de 'Dienende Kirche', waarover hij in 1948 in Hongarije een belangrijke lezing heeft gehouden, wordt al gauw overgenomen en als de officiële theologie van de GKH gestempeld (cf. 'theologie van de dienende kerk'). Op dit punt kan zijn rechtstreekse invloed worden gedocumenteerd. Hoekendijk heeft intensieve invloed uitgeoefend op de herdefiniëring van het concept 'missio Dei' in de oecumenische beweging (4e Wereldconferentie van de WCC, Uppsala, 1968). De theologische constructie van de 'missio Dei' als Gods activiteit in de seculaire wereld en de theologische interpretatie van historische ontwikkelingen in de officiële theologie van de GKH vertonen opvallende parallellen. Ondanks dat Hoekendijk geen persoonlijke contacten heeft gehad met de GKH na 1956, kan zijn indirecte invloed door Uppsala 1968 gedocumenteerd worden. Uppsala 1968 en de 'seculaire omwenteling' van de theologie (en daarbij het zendingsbegrip) van de WCC wordt

als legitimerende factor in de officiële (politico-)theologie van de GKH gebruikt. De resultaten van dit onderzoek laten zien dat het veranderende zendingsbegrip van de oecumenische beweging een rol heeft gespeeld als bron van inspiratie, katalysator en referentiekader in de paradigmawisselingen van het zendingsbegrip in de GKH.

De GKH leeft vandaag in een drievoudige bestaansvorm: als minderheid in de Republiek Hongarije, in dubbele zin als minderheid (zowel etnisch als religieus) in de buurlanden van Hongarije, en in de diaspora in het Westen. Door de analyse van de theologisch legitieme en illegitieme veranderingen binnen het zendingsbegrip van deze kerk in het verleden, kan een nieuw, contextueel en authentiek zendingsbegrip voor de toekomst worden geformuleerd.

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