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the 20th SIPCC-Seminar in Bratislava, Aug 31 - Sept 5, 2009

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SIPCC - E-Book  
"Identities in Times of Changes"

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## Einführung

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Dieses Heft dokumentiert Beiträge und Ergebnisse des 16. Internationalen Seminars von SIPCC. Das Thema „Identität in Zeiten des Umbruchs“ nimmt dabei eine sehr vielschichtige Fragestellung auf, die vor allem von den Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus der Slowakei in den Vordergrund gerückt worden war. Die Slowakei und ihre Nachbarstaaten stehen für eine Region, die in einer für Europa einzigartigen Intensität von kultureller und nationaler Pluralität, aber auch von tiefen historischen Verletzungen zwischen den dort lebenden Gruppen und von politischen Umbrüchen bis in die jüngste Zeit gezeichnet ist.

*Der erste Teil* dieser Publikation thematisiert aus sehr unterschiedlichen Perspektiven einige Grundprobleme der Frage nach Identität in einer sich wandelnden, pluralen und zugleich sich immer enger vernetzenden Welt:

*Helmut Weiß* erinnert an die Wurzeln des christlichen Verständnisses von Identität und formuliert aus der Erfahrung der Arbeit der Gesellschaft für Interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung (SIPCC) „zehn Thesen“ zum Verständnis von Identität im interkulturellen Kontext.

*Mary Esperandio* problematisiert grundsätzlich das Streben nach Identität: In einer Zeit globalen Konsums drohe die Suche nach „Identität“ zu einer Falle zu werden, stattdessen gehe es um verantwortliche Subjektwerdung, die zugleich offen bleibt für Wandlung.

*Julius Filo* plädiert für ein „evangelisches“ Verständnis von Identität, das Weltverantwortung einschließt und damit konfessionelle und religiöse Grenzen überschreitet.

*James Farris* stellt schließlich den Begriff „interfaith pastoral care“ vor: Seelsorge als Interaktion zwischen Menschen unterschiedlicher Glaubensweisen, die der persönlichen und religiösen Identität jedes Einzelnen Rechnung trägt. *Daniel Shipani* konkretisiert dieses Anliegen und entfaltet „interfaith“-Seelsorge als ein elaboriertes Modell „weisheitlichen“ pastoralen Handelns.

*Im zweiten Teil* wird das Problem von „Identität in Zeiten des Umbruchs“ dann vor dem Hintergrund

konkreter politischer und gesellschaftlicher Konstellationen entfaltet. Hier zeigt sich noch einmal, wie vielschichtig die Fragestellung ist und wie stark das Ringen um Identität von historischen Erfahrungen und kulturellen Bedingungen mit bedingt (und eben auch: belastet) wird:

Zunächst richten *Jan Buncak* (Slowakei), *Emil Komarik*, *Zsolt Görözdí*, *Olga Lukacs* (Rumänien) ihren Blick auf die Region, in der das Seminar stattfand: das „postkommunistische“ Mitteleuropa, hier insbesondere die Slowakei und Siebenbürgen. Dass die jüngsten politischen Umwälzungen Osteuropas auch in Deutschland längst „angekommen“ sind - buchstäblich in Gestalt der großen Zahl von „Spätaussiedlern“ - zeigt *Reinhard Schott* (Deutschland). Es schließen sich drei Beiträge an, die ihre Schlaglichter nach Afrika (*Archiboldy Lyimo*), Indonesien (*Asnath Natar*), Indien (*Kumar Chand*) und Lateinamerika (*Ronaldo Satler-Rosa*) werfen. Auf den ersten Blick sehr „ferne“ Kontexte, die aber bestürzend „nahe“ Problemstellungen in sich bergen: Die Ambivalenz kultureller Identität im gesellschaftlichem Wandel; der Kampf um Gender-Rollen; Abhängigkeits-Verhältnisse in den Beziehungen zwischen Kirchen; die Herausforderung durch religiöse Individualisierung.

*Der dritte Teil* eröffnet Aussichten auf Wege, auf denen eine Heilung und Versöhnung gebrochener und belasteter Identität vorankommen kann:

*David Stevens* berichtet vom Versöhnungsprozess in Nordirland, *Dieter Brandes* stellt das Projekt „Healing of Memories“ in Rumänien vor. *Bernd Kähler* erzählt, wie die Bemühung um heilsame Erinnerung ganz lokal angestoßen werden kann, *Eberhard v.d. Heyde* und *Kumar Chand* lenken den Blick auf die zwischenkirchlichen Beziehungen. Die Beiträge zeigen, wie wichtig und zugleich anstrengend es ist, sichere, geschützte Räume zu erschaffen, wo Menschen sich begegnen können und sich mit ihrer Identität in aller Gebrochenheit, Verletztheit und Unvollständigkeit wahrgenommen und willkommen wissen. Eine Kernaufgabe seelsorglicher Tätigkeit!

Karl Federsmidt



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**FREITAG, 5. September 2008**

**Thema des Tages:  
*Identität entwickeln***

**FRIDAY, 5 September, 2008**

**Theme of the day:  
Building identity**

## Identity – Intercultural

### **A. Introduction**

Before I state my points I would like to mention a person just briefly, who intensively lived through the experiences we are targeting in this year's seminar subject "Identity in times of changes – challenges for pastoral care, churches and religions", and who dealt with this in his literary work and who made a major impact on the way we understand the Western Christian identity up to today.

I would like to make a few remarks in regard to St. Augustine, the great Church Father.

The time of his life (354-430) was marked by many upheavals and changes. Traditions got lost, new things came up with might - and amidst of the turnovers of his period he found orientation and gave orientation.

At first, there was a major change in his life. After he had a rather bacchanal adolescence and early adulthood, and had started a magnificent professional career he found his faith in Christ and a completely new identity. Then for many years he lived as a Bishop for a small congregation at the far

remote outskirts of the great world history, living ascetically in a monk like community in northern Africa.

Philosophically and spiritually, however, he worked through all of these experiences and worked up the major currents of his time and became even formative for the future.

He has pictured all this marvelously in his book "Confessions".

They clearly point out that he is searching for a recognition of the self and recognition of God

*"God, I want to recognize you who recognizes me, and I want to recognize you in the way you had recognized me."*

Henning Luther states in an essay about St. Augustine

*"For St. Augustine recognition of God is nothing else but radical recognition of the self."*(1)

Alongside these fractures and changes in his personal life there are the great changes in world history: the decay of the antique Roman Empire, the striving of new peoples to come to power. Systems and orders which had been able to bear nations and to bear 'the whole world' are breaking down. In the Roman Empire the Christian faith had become the state religion, but many diverse currents within Christianity were marking the field.

Finally, in the year 410, the city of Rome was conquered by the Goth people under the leadership of King Alaric and devastated.

Now the question came up: how does one have to interpret these radical changes in world history? How is it possible to give an interpretation of all this, based on Christian faith?

In just that situation St. Augustine writes his major opus "De Civitate Dei" (The City of God), where he deals with the relationship of living and acting in this world and of serving God at the same time, where he deliberates about how the history of the world and the salvation history of God may match.

Christian existence means to understand the world and all what is going on in this world, from the perspective of God, and to bring together all what is going on in this world with the history of God.

When we combine the ideas of both of his works – confessions and de civitate dei- then identity as to St. Augustine means that *"the very personal"* will be mirrored in *'the very political'* and that vice versa the political also is mirrored in the very personal." (2)

By the way: St. Augustine was a very good care giver.

The way he wrote was apt that he could reach the souls of his readers, so that they themselves could gain self-recognition, recognition of the world, and recognition of God.

And one can conclude that the same probably happened, too, when he was addressing and talking to people in person.

St. Augustine died in Hippo where he had been the Bishop for many decades, in the time when the Vandals were laying siege on the city.

## **B)**

### **10 statements regarding identity – from an intercultural point of view**

#### **1)**

##### **Regarding identity**

“To win identity, to find a profile of ones’ own that cannot be mistaken for someone else - both in ones’ own eyes and from the viewpoint of the others - and to be able to react openly and flexibly in view of the changes in ones own contexts, this is a constant task for each person and all mankind.” (3)  
And one has to add: the same statement would also apply for groups and for societies.

“A contemporary notion of identity has to catch up with the everyday experiences of discontinuity and fragmentation, because of the experience of our own inability to get clear views of our own life-worlds. Having this background one can describe identity as coming to pass in a process.” (4)  
That is: one does not have or possess identity; one can only strive for and frame ones identity in an ongoing process.

Elements of identity are: corporality, social network, labour and activity, security of means of life, norms and values.  
Identity shows up especially in those stories which we tell about ourselves.

2)

### **Identity is a social construct.**

Who I am, who we are, that is, my understanding of myself and of the community I belong to, all this is solely mediated by ways of cultural transmission.

Culture as the “second nature” of wo/man shapes the view of the life-world a person has.

When we pick up again those elements of identity mentioned above, then this will become clear very soon. The understanding of corporality, of community, of labour, of security and of values, each of this at a time is culturally given and has to be developed further by ways of cultural work.

All these elements depend on language, - language probably being the outstanding feature of culture.

All these elements also depend on what kind of meaning is ascribed to the single person and to the community.

And again, these meanings have to be worked out and moulded in ways of cultural work.

How and in which ways labour or security of means for life are appraised this may differ very much in various cultures; and –more than this- it may differ which values are set out to strive for.

3)

### **But now: what is culture?**

Today it wins recognition more and more not to look at culture any more in the way of the nineteenth century, when man made works and structures as realized by means of language, by art expressions, by orders and institutions, have been considered to ‘be culture’. (5)

Since the work of Clifford Geertz and his *interpreting cultural anthropology*, one understands culture to be a system of meanings, appearing in symbolic forms of gestalt, a system, by the help of which people are able to share wisdom about life and attitudes towards life, and to preserve it and develop it further. (6) According to this notion hence culture isn’t an “established, immobile work”, a “real entity”, but symbol, interpretation and life-style. “Systems of symbols are pushing their way in between the people and the reality, which –so to say- are wrested from mankind, due to our biological set up and meant for the sake of survival.”(7)

### **4) Meaning emerges in intercultural discourse, even in altercation**

Culture and meaning emerge only in discourse, in the struggle of tradition with presence and future, in the struggle of a community with the respective streams within itself and with its individual members, in the struggle between ‘the own’ and ‘the alien’. In this struggling and discourse time and again, it is

necessary to construct “meaningful symbols”, which can provide orientation and meaning for the people to survive.

Cultural work, therefore, will always be exposed to ambivalences and conflicts.

It is very important that -as much as possible- all persons within a group participate in this work, that is, in creating symbols and meaning. If people are excluded from this process, they become ‘meaningless’; a culture of disregard arises.

Admittedly: a high amount of conflict resolution skills is an integral part of intercultural competence.

### **5) Identity emerges where meaning is attributed to a person, a group, a society**

If meaning is an earmarking feature of culture, and if culture creates identity, then identity is emerging wherever one creates meaning. This means: persons, groups and societies will find identity when they engage actively in creating meaning, and they will find identity when they will be given share and space in the creation of identity.

### **6) Identity emerges where people and groups interpret the world in which they live and where they are able to construct relational networks.**

Cultural work is a constant ongoing discourse and struggling between realities and 'worlds' and the people who live in them.

By way of symbols people construct relations and configure their life-worlds by doing so.

For all this it is necessary to construct connections and establish relationships, and to understand them.

When this is successful, identity will emerge.

Or in other words: identity does not emerge when people withdraw into themselves, identity emerges only in their constant ongoing relational work.

### **7) Identity in a multicultural world**

In a multicultural world where simultaneously many cultures are around us and provide interpretations for us, where traditions and hitherto existing values lose their meaning as established, clear-cut norms, in this situation we need constant ongoing struggling and discourse.

Once again and in other words: identity is the task to bring tendencies into play -and to withstand in this playing-, tendencies which may be in themselves contradictory and/or controversial.

### **8) Which cultural values shall be the obtaining ones?**

In or the present situation where it is possible to find many interpretations and meanings occurring simultaneously, it is the more important to deal with the question which cultural values shall be the obtaining ones.

We never have cultural values in an absolute way. A certain value may be important in a certain life situation whereas the same value may be disastrous in another life situation, for example the exploitation of the Earth.

Just to have the catchword 'culture' does not guarantee for 'the good' to be the outcome of it.

Which meaning, for example, shall be attributed to globalization?

Thus the question arises whether culture can be constituted by itself and founded in itself.

The human being, can she/he be constituted by her/him-self and founded in her/him-self?

Or the question, whether culture needs a reference to an 'ultimate reality'?

This would include the question whether identity needs a reference to 'a form of transcendence'?

These are the very important questions of today, but they had been raised by St. Augustine already!

### **9) My position**

Identity is ranging and inter-depending between three poles, that is, my meaning/relevance I have for myself - my meaning/relevance I have in the community to which I belong - my meaning/relevance I

have in the reference and relation to 'an ultimate reality', that is to God.

In Jesus Christ, the "image of God" (8), we find a highly significant "symbol" (or 'confession' !) of human and Godly identity, not as an immobile, static 'principle' or an unalterable doctrine, but as a constant contention about how one can interpret life and how life can gain meaning/relevance/significance.

**10) Identity - as seen from an intercultural perspective:**

**This means to provide space for human beings and to open it for their use, that they may engage in such discourses, struggling, striving, contentions, as groups as well as single persons.**

**C)**

**Pastoral Care and Counselling as 'identity work'**

Pastoral Care and Counselling is a space where the discourse on identity takes place, where cultural work takes place - and where both *have to* take place.

The point in pcc formation is always to 'symbolize' reality, to deal with the question of meaning and the question of identity.

That is: who am I? Who are we? How can I shape my life and how should I shape (my) life?

In concluding I am coming back and refer to St. Augustine. He, when he was praying to God, answered in this way: "Thou hast created us unto Thee!" (9)

# Identity and Care (Cure)

## *In times of change is a definition of identity meaningful for Pastoral Care and Counselling?*

Dr. Mary Rute Gomes Esperandio<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This text discusses the notion of identity arguing that, in times of rapid changes both in the social configuration as well in the constitution of existential territory, the concept of identity is no longer enough to think about the problems surrounding the contemporary subjectivity. It underlines that one of the challenges for Pastoral Care and Counseling today relates itself to the necessity of seeking a way of thinking (and of exercising pastoral care) that escapes from the identity reference – “*identitytraps*”. The *identity reference* prevents the process of creation of singular ways of life. In this sense, Pastoral Care and Counseling should support the destabilization of subjectivity for the purpose of promoting the process of cure and creation of modes of existence that affirm and expand the life.

**Key-words:** subjectivity – identity – cure – care – *identitytraps* – Pastoral Care and Counseling

### ***Introduction - The idea of identity***

When we refer to the word identity, what comes to our minds? Name, Personal number, marital status, family, nationality, occupation. We use these elements to “identify” ourselves. In other words, these elements can say what we are. They express something about our “essence”.

We have the feeling that everybody knows what we are talking about if we mention the word “identity”. But what do we really mean by identity? Identity, from Late Latin *Identitate*, means *the same*, identical. From a psychological perspective, it refers to our inwardness, our substance. The idea of identity implies some regularity, some permanency. It refers to the essence of an individual who repeats itself, is self aware and becomes identical to itself. One’s essence makes him identifiable, traceable by the law, by the rules, by moral standards and by social identification. That is why there is “cultural identity”, “religious identity”, “professional identity”, “gender identity” and many others. Paradoxically, even though it is the identity that allows one to identify, define, differentiate an individual’s form, a group, a nation, there seems to be something always missing in the idea of identity. Besides, the constantly changing modern world requires from us a constant

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<sup>1</sup> Psychologist. Doctor in Practical Theology. Adjunct Professor. Postgraduate Program in Theology – Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná.

changing identity as well. How do we deal with the identification and recognition issue – which is connected to long-lasting permanence – considering the world is in constant movement? Not only is there something in the idea of identity which needs to be apprehended and perceived – something difficult to grasp – but one feels unsettled without understanding exactly why. How can we reflect about identity in a world of constant change? What challenges does the topic carry for Pastoral Care and Counselling? Would a more precise definition of identity contribute effectively to the practice of care and counselling? What is the connection between identity and changing times?

## ***I –The crisis in the notion of identity***

Maurits Fondse, a Dutch singer, shows in a very creative way, some problems around the identity issue in times of change.

### **Identity<sup>2</sup>**

*I blog and I write/I twitter and type/I google an skype/I join the hype/I mail and I chat/In my digital community/I Pod and I Mac/I Phone and I check/Myspace and my hyve/In my Second Life/I 'm a happy cat/In my virtual reality/I wonder and search/And feed the urge  
To find some truth/Am I on You Tube?/But am wondering still is it me or is it me?/I'm asking myself: what is my identity?*

*I RSS/And do nothin' less/I Ebay and sell/In heaven and hell/I am making new friends/It's virtual humanity/I pop and I surf/But don't have the nerve/To go out on a date/And now it's too late/So I google and chat/In my personal community/I don't have enough time/I'm running behind/Right now I live/A thousand lives/So I blog and I hyve/Tell me is it really me?I wondering still: what is my identity*

*Ooooooooh/Its all about me me me me me me/Dont send me emails baby/I only want me-mails baby/I blog and I write/I twitter and type/I google an skype/I join the hype/I blog and i chat/It's my multi-personality/I wonder and search/And feed the urge/To find some truth  
Am I on You Tube?/But am wondering still is it me or is it me? I'm asking myself: what is my identity?*

In his song, Fondse has wisely expressed some problems around the idea of identity. He surrenders to the contemporary demands that require from him a personal positioning about his personality. No one has ever had to say who one is, to show one's face, to introduce oneself to the world with such frequency. Blog, Chat, Mail, Myspace, Myhave, Youtube, Orkut e SecondLife. Fondse mentions the pain originated by such an identity based on appearance. "I am multiple". I blog, I pop, I surf, I google, I type, I write.. The virtual version of myself, is it the real me? . "You tell me: Is it really me?" Fondse is not worried about the conflict between the inner-self and the outer-self. No! What Fondse sees as an image of himself is not strong enough to work as self awareness. It is not going to take him any further from recognizing that the effort to have certain looks does not allow him to be. At the most, it might help him realise that the effort to have certain looks does not mean he can live up to that appearance. It's what he says, for instance, when he sings: *I am making new friends/ I pop and I surf/ But don't have the nerve/ To go out on a date.* He then gives excuses to himself: *"And now it's too late". "I don't have enough time. I'm*

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<sup>2</sup> This video-clip is available on: [http://www.upstream.nl/comments.php?id=768\\_0\\_1\\_0\\_C18](http://www.upstream.nl/comments.php?id=768_0_1_0_C18)

*running behind*". Fondse admits: *Right now I live A thousand lives*". And pain begins: who am I after all? Am I what I look like? *"Tell me is it really me?"*

Maybe, just a few of us here would identify ourselves with the problem expressed by Fondse. But you probably agree that most youngsters would recognise themselves in it. Let us consider Fondse as an example of a contemporary model identity. No matter he is Dutch. He could be American, German or Japanese. We can find others "Fondses" around the world, also in Brazil, specially among young people. Fondse expresses feelings that arise from the lack of identity consistency, from a weak identity and from the inability of recognising oneself in one another – in a real world.

Let us analyse another case in which some of the issues concerning identity are raised - a group identity.

## ***II – "Identity on sale" – The offering of a capitalistic religious identity***

"Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus" – The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) is a Brazilian church. But according to its own declarations, this church is in over 170 countries. In 2006, it stated to be in 90 countries. Some years ago, I carried out a research on this religious phenomenon. I would like to present shortly a story<sup>3</sup> that shows just how that religious group operates.

It was Monday. I was standing in front of a Universal Church of the Kingdom of God temple in downtown Porto Alegre, Southern Brazil, waiting for the SIPCC group when they went to Brazil in 2006. A horror scene unfolded before my eyes: a woman in shabby clothes, probably a homeless beggar, was violently thrown out of the temple. She fell down on the pavement while a church security guard kicked her in the stomach and grabbed a plastic bottle of water from her hands. He opened it and poured out the content onto the street, throwing the empty bottle at her while she screamed and rolled on the ground in pain. Probably she had taken the bottle of water from somebody in the temple. Some people got angry watching the scene and called the police. Inside the temple about five thousand people were taking part in a so-called "Meeting (or Congress) for Businessmen".

If the scene itself generates horror because of its unprovoked violence, cruelty and "boldness" involved, the horror increased when a woman, member of the church, approached me, vigorously defending that act of violence. She argued that *"It was a demon who tried to ruin the meeting. But he has been thrown out of the temple and will not disturb us anymore!"* To make sure that her explanation was right, she added: *"now, after this spectacle (involving the police, reporters and many people assembled outside the meeting), the demon is sleeping quietly."* She was referring to the fact that the beggar, assaulted a while ago, was now calm, lying still on the ground with her eyes closed.

While that was happening, I saw a beautiful woman, neatly dressed, entering the church. She was the owner of a successful bakery established on the west side of the city. I had interviewed her six months before. She told me about how her life had changed by this church. Deeply depressed, on the brink of committing suicide, she found herself deeply in

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<sup>3</sup> This story is a free translation from Esperandio, M. R. (2007, p. 64-66).

debt and regularly attended Afro-Brazilian religious ceremonies. One night, when she was planning to commit suicide, she watched one of the UCKG TV programs and followed exactly what the bishop said to do. She put a glass of water on top of the TV set and, after a prayer blessing the glass of water, she drank it. For the first time after a month with very little sleep, she could finally sleep all night long. From that day on, she began attending the meetings, specially taking part in the "sacrifice campaigns" and now she feels happy to testify of her financial and emotional success which was a direct result of obeying all that the bishop said to do on TV. In short, "sacrifice campaigns" means: give much money to God (to the church) and God will give you back more than double in return.

These are powerful stories. Regarding the first one, Yvan Droz, a Swiss ethnologist, makes similar remarks describing the way the UCKG treats the poor in Kenya. He says: "beggars and tramps are excluded from the services. They must not bother the audience with their appearance or constant requests for alms (...). Nevertheless, poor people, like beggars or homeless children, are fed by the church (...). They are not abandoned. But they can't be on their own since their proper place is outside the walls of the temple" (Droz, 2003, p. 119). Therefore, the ones who stay outside are those who can't be mirrors for the others.

The second story serves as an example both of the fragility and the strength of what the UCKG system requires to put an end to suffering: just make a sacrifice (in fact, a "self-investment"). The successful and happy person is the one who can make an offering as sacrifice.

What is the relation between the conflict of identity presented by Fondse and the religious phenomenon called UCKG?

Fondse shows the pain of not knowing who we are, of not being what we look like, to be paradoxically connected to the world and yet feeling alone. Actually, Fondse pictures the emptiness of the contemporaneous being. If the notion of identity refers back to the idea of consistency, permanence, acknowledgment, identification and belonging, all those elements seem to be fragile and not enough to shape the contemporaneous identity, as described by Fondse. In a context of permanent change, building one's identity has several possibilities. Such multiplicity can be simultaneously rich or debilitating. You can easily go from inventing something peculiar to no identity at all, or even accepting a ready-to-wear identity - *prêt-à-porter* – such as the one provided by UCKG.

We are therefore led to suspect that the problem of identity does not require a more precise definition. The problem is in fact linked to the identity reference – especially in terms of stability, balance and permanence. We could name this problem as "identity traps". And that is where some of the challenges for the practice of Pastoral Care and Counselling are found.

### **III – Some kinds of Identitytraps**

There are several kinds of *identitytraps*. But I would like to mention only three. From my point of view these three demand a carefully attention to Pastoral Care

#### **1. The identitytrap of believing in the existence of an *ideal identity***

The process of building oneself – an identity – is basically related to relationships. There is no identity if not through those processes. Among others, two basic elements of the process are identification and acknowledgement. The feeling of being and existing is dependent on the identification experiences of recognising one another and begins with our early experiences in life. The feeling of “myself-in-the-world” arises from the mother-child-environment experiences. However, nowadays family relations are weakened and not seen as a safe, stable place of identification and recognition, so this need is fulfilled by the eyes of the other – any other – who offers a minimum mirror-like awareness which allows the individual to identify and recognise itself. It is therefore a flat identification, which only confirms the individual as similar to the character images he recognises in its official map, defined by the socio-economic-cultural environment.

This “personal identity” which is based on the identity relations and recognition seeks identification “bonds” of belonging as well. A personal identity is not built separately from the social identity. The feeling of belonging along with the processes of identification and recognition are forces that give consistency to the shape of existential territory, which are called “identity” or “subjectivity” – two words referring to our way of being in the world which is built somewhere in time and as time passes by.<sup>4</sup> Still, there is a difference between the notion of subjectivity and identity: identity refers to the more visible, identifiable and stable form of subjectivity. It is related to a side of subjectivity that can be captured by the law, the rules, moral standards and at the same time allows the individuals to be distinguished from each other. Identity indicates some regularity, predictability and permanence. On the other hand, the idea of subjectivity, such as developed by Deleuze, Guattari, Foucault and Rolnik, relates to the process of constitution of a being that is produced in constant change. An existential territory – a subjectivity – is nothing more than a production of power relations, power games and knowledge production, which altogether creates a certain subjective character that arises in the social field. In this sense you can see that each historical age produces certain types of subjectivity to substantiate their system. The production of “flexible subjectivities” in the globalised capitalism open to the frequent changes in the open market is a good example of it. These continuous changes caused by new universes which are produced in a very short time, originate in the contemporaneous subjectivity a feeling of extreme fragility, vulnerability, fear of “falling apart”. In this sense, the identity reference is revealed as a trap. The belief in the identity reference interprets the destabilization of the subjectivity as an evil power which destroys the subjective territory. So it is necessary to “anesthetise” the subjectivity in order not to allow the process of dismantling the established identity territory. It is necessary to neutralise the identity territory against the destabilisation felt. It is ignored that the forces which form a certain territory are mainly creative. The concept of organization of a new territory which may mean a new way of existence is mixed with the loss of an identity first assumed as ideal. The loss of a certain identity mode is interpreted as mental death. The process of creating the new is stopped due to an identity reference, without proper evaluation of life affirmation possibilities which might be caused by the destabilisation when a new subjective territory is created. Therefore, the a priori “ideal identity reference” not only is an illusion as it might be a trap that can prevent the movements of creation and expansion of life.

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<sup>4</sup> According to D. WINNICOTT (1990, p. 29) “the human being is a sample-in-time of human nature”.

## **2. The identitytrap of consumption of *ready-to-wear identity***

The times of continuous and permanent change characterized by the cultural and economic globalization and by technological achievements, put us face to face with a reality that tests our identity references. There are so many identity models spread worldwide that make us feel threatened. This “identitytrap” is originated when - by feeling the destabilization everywhere – the subjectivity decides for certain models of *prêt-à-porter* identities, not taking into account that destabilisation is an opportunity to reorganise the existential territory and not the thoughtful replacement of an identity for another. Thus, having in mind the new offers, there is a trap which holds two contrasting vectors: on the one hand the creation and choice capacity is paralysed due to an excess of offers; on the other hand the false belief that self recognition can only happen if in accordance with the current identity model. Therefore, the old form is discarded without careful thought and replaced by a new one, which in turn will be substituted by another one in a short period of time, and so on. The standard identities are offered “according to each orbit of the market, ready to be consumed (...) and not linked to the geographical, national and cultural context” (Rolnik, 1997, p. 19). They are presented as a “way out” to handle the emptiness of meaning and lack of contemporaneous insignification of the subjectivity, which facing changes happening in at an unprecedented speed, does not allow enough time to create a new consistent subjective territory, to give room to another and so forth. Not by chance a significant number of people with strong features of a borderline way of being have come to therapy and even to pastoral counselling with severe difficulty to maintain a minimum of meaningful bonds.

## **3. The identitytrap of capitalistic *standard-identity*: prosperity, success, happiness and well-being.**

What represents success, wealth and happiness is the standard identity image of the globalised capitalism, which could be called “capitalistic subjectivity”. The current regime presents, in an unstoppable way, new products, new services, new forms of life, created by marketing, publicity and design departments and broadcasted by the media that make us believe that the consumption of such models of existence are indispensable to the configuration of a subjective territory. In this sense, those who do not recognize themselves as possessors or “customers” start to believe that they are nothing, because they identify themselves with the “less” type of people: homeless, jobless, landless, shirtless, moneyless, healthplanless, healthless, etc. They suffer the humiliation and shame of an existence with no value and no dignity – that is a concrete reality to many and a threat that haunts some, reminding the possibility of someday find themselves among the “less”.

The contemporary subjectivity is exposed to a process of identification with the images of the world broadcasted by the media and the mass culture that fight for the instauration of values that will direct the choices of the customers (Lazzarato, 2006, p. 101-102). The proliferation of these images spreads some imperatives lived in a paradoxical way: as an order to be obeyed and a way of obtaining pleasure. For example: “be successful!”, “be happy!”, “be healthy!”, and, above all: “be flexible!”. These imperatives

give the map of happiness and point the way of living (how to eat, to dress, to live, to love), the manner of obtaining success (permanent education, profitable work, individual performance able to beat the competitors, etc) the way to be healthy (measures of the ideal body<sup>5</sup>, the fitness, the diets and consumption of diet/light products), etc.

The desire turns towards the world of products and profit, and it is seduced by offerings of consumption of the objects and consumption of worlds which transmit the promise of pleasure and the illusion of “belonging”. New sufferings are attached in these worlds that promise happiness, but they found masked under the postfordist society imperatives’ which demands an individual search for success, prosperity and a perfect healthy and happy body. The effects of producing these ideals, as well as the offerings to “correct” or “increase” such images, generate pathologies such as: depression, anxiety, anorexia, bulimia, different compulsions (for food, for buying things, etc), panic disorders, drug addictions, etc.

Here we can understand the success of UCKG. In this mode of religiosity the subjectivity recognizes itself in the *undifferentiated mass* of people that gather in the same place, with the same goal, seeking a way to ending their fragility and discontentment. They believe that through the technique of sacrifice they can reach prosperity, success and happiness. This church produces, in my opinion, a “religious-capitalistic-subjectivity”, grounded on pleasure and happiness that come from the profit that can be reached in the exchanges.

#### ***IV - Challenges for pastoral Care and Counselling - Conclusion***

I believe that one of the greatest challenges to the pastoral care and counselling nowadays is helping to detect the strategies that brake the process of creation, the traps holding the subjectivity and cause pain expressed in several pathologies. In that sense, pastoral counselling can never be set apart from an analytical practice of a social reality and from a subjectivation policy simultaneously individual and social. If the identity is subservient to the market, it is up to us to set life free from its chains, creating subjectivation policies to promote the cure of the identity. In times of change, the identity is sick, facing death, or as said by Pessoa, “A postponed, procreating corpse”<sup>6</sup>. How can we provide cure in times when identity pathologies are produced, when the identification needs succumb to the search of identity bonds - in other words: does the feeling of belonging become more important than the feeling of being?

The practice of pastoral care and counselling in times of change entails promoting the identity cure. The word cure comes from the Latin – curare – and it means care, attention, “worry about”. It is not by chance that the title of the Higinó’s Fable is “cure”

Once when 'Care' was crossing a river, she saw some clay; she thoughtfully took up a piece and began to shape it. While she was meditating on what she had made, Jupiter (Zeus) came by. 'Care' asked Jupiter to give the shaped clay spirit, and this he gladly granted. But when

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<sup>5</sup> The book organized by Mirian GOLDENBERG, *Nu e Vestido*, shows that, in 2001, approximately 400,000 plastic surgeries were done in Brazil.

<sup>6</sup> Fernando PESSOA. Sebastian, King of Portugal. In: Message. Translation by Mike HARLAND, 1997. Available on: [http://homepage.mac.com/mikeharland/dtup/litbits/mensagem/mens\\_135.html](http://homepage.mac.com/mikeharland/dtup/litbits/mensagem/mens_135.html).

she wanted her name to be bestowed upon it, he forbade this, and demanded that it be given his name instead. While 'Care' and Jupiter were disputing, Earth arose and desired that her own name be conferred on the creature, since she had furnished it with part of her body. They asked Saturn (Time) to be their arbiter, and he made the following decision, which seemed a just one: "Since you, Jupiter, have given its spirit, you shall receive that spirit at its death; and since you, Earth, have given its body, you shall receive its body. But since 'Care' first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is now a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called "homo," for it is made out of humus (earth). (Heidegger: 1988, p. 263-4)<sup>7</sup>.

This parable shows several elements which lead us to think about Being, time and care issues – elements related to the subjectivity creation – as opposed to the idea of identity ( identical, repeated and identifiable). The 'Being' can only be alive and creative when its power is taken by the care – which is previous to it, goes across it and made of it. In the fable, care asks the time (Saturn) for help to solve the identity conflict of the name and identification. Saturn solves the identity problem by expressing the belonging of the 'Being' to the 'Care'.

Thus, it seems to me that the creation of the Being in constant change in time – the subjectivity – can only be supported by the care. Therefore, it is up to the care (in pastoral counselling practice), to assure the Being in its identification needs, recognition and belonging, supporting the subjectivity destabilisation in order to help it creates, with its own suffering, fragility and vulnerability, existence possibilities. Such peculiarities would not be related to a supposed identity, but once free from identity, would be able to confirm life in its expansion movement.

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<sup>7</sup> The Parable of Care as quoted by Rollo May in Love & Will. Also quoted in Heidegger's "Being & Time, and Goethe's Faust.

## Identität und Weltverantwortung – theologisch betrachtet

Wenn man über Identität spricht, heißt die entscheidende Frage: Wie breit soll der Umkreis der Identitätsbildung gefasst werden? Das gilt nicht nur kulturell, geografisch, sondern auch theologisch. Was kann Identität theologisch und religiös bedeuten? Man könnte über die Identität theologisch im konfessionellen oder im ökumenischen Sinne sprechen, oder über Identität in einem allgemeinen religiösen Sinne. Je weiter der Kreis wird, desto schwieriger lässt sich davon sprechen. Theologisch scheint es am leichtesten, das Thema auf eine der „Konfessionsfamilien“ zu beziehen, obwohl auch das eine sehr anspruchsvolle Aufgabe sein kann. Es gibt z.B. konfessionelle Gruppierungen, die sich bislang auf kein einziges Bekenntnisdokument geeinigt haben. Für mich erscheint es am einfachsten, zuerst über die evangelisch-lutherische Identität nachzudenken. Bekanntlich gilt in der evangelischen Kirche die Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments als Norm für das Leben und für die Theologie. Die auf die biblische Basis gegründete Identität der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche sollte darum nicht nur eine konfessionelle, sondern auch eine ökumenische Qualität haben. Wie steht es in der Wirklichkeit darum?

### Identität der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche

Im Jahre 1977 hat das Ökumenische Institut des Lutherischen Weltbundes in Straßburg eine Studie mit dem Titel „Lutherische Identität“ ausgearbeitet. Es war ein Schlussbericht des Projektes „Die Identität der lutherischen Kirchen im Kontext der Herausforderungen unserer Zeit“. Dieser Bericht formuliert in 10 Punkten (die jeweils im historischen und aktuellen Kontext erklärt werden) die „theologischen Grundüberzeugungen lutherischer Identität“. Ich werde sie hier nur schlagwortartig benennen:

1) Das Bekenntnis zur sich entäußernden Herablassung Gottes als dem einzigen Weg zum Heil (Inkarnation Gottes in Jesus Christus); 2) Die Bezeugung des rechtfertigenden Handelns Gottes in Jesus

Christus als Inbegriff der Heilsbotschaft (Evangelium), als Maßstab kirchlicher Verkündigung und als Grund der christlichen Existenz; 3) Die Unterscheidung von Gesetz und Evangelium zur Wahrung des Gnadencharakters der Heilsbotschaft; 4) Die Hervorhebung von Verkündigung und Sakramentspendung als heilsnotwendigen Mitteln, durch die Christus im Heiligen Geist seine Kirche schafft, erhält und sendet; 5) Die Betonung des Priestertums aller getauften Gläubigen als Hinweis auf die Gleichheit aller Christen vor Gott und auf die apostolische Verpflichtung der ganzen christlichen Gemeinde; 6) Die Bejahung der Welt als der guten Schöpfung Gottes, der durch Wort und Geist Leben schafft und die Erde seiner Herrlichkeit zuführt; 7) Die Bestimmung der weltlichen Verantwortung der Christen als gehorsames Mitwirken an Gottes Handeln in der Welt; 8) Der Gebrauch der heiligen Schrift als Norm für Verkündigung und Lehre der Kirche unter gleichzeitigen Beachtung der Unterscheidung – aber nicht Trennung – zwischen Evangelium und Schrift; 9) Die Bindung an kirchliches Bekenntnis als Mittel zur Wahrung rechter Evangeliumsverkündigung und kirchlicher Gemeinschaft; 10) Das intensive theologische Bemühen um die Wahrheit der hier und jetzt zu geschehenden Verkündigung.

Die *Verantwortung für die Welt* bleibt dabei eine wichtige Dimension der Identität. Die Welt ist der Gegenstand der Liebe Gottes und das Ziel des ganzheitlichen Dienstes der Kirche. Unsere Identität wird theologisch vor allem in Beziehung zur Welt der Menschen definiert.

### Die theologische Qualität der Grundwerte unserer Welt

Die Welt, in der wir leben, hat einige Grundwerte erkannt, die unsere gemeinsame Identität bilden und eine tiefe theologische Qualität haben. Im Jahre 1948 hat die Generalversammlung der UNO die

„Allgemeine Deklaration der Menschenrechte“ verabschiedet. In ihr tritt in unwiederholbarer Form das Wertesystem der Menschheit hervor, das theologisch gedeutet werden kann und theologische Qualität hat: Die Menschenrechte können als Frucht der langfristigen Wirkung des Evangeliums und der Grundsätze der Gerechtigkeit Gottes in dieser Welt verstanden werden. Die entscheidende Aussage steht im ersten Artikel: „Alle Menschen sind frei und gleich an Würde und Rechten geboren. Sie sind mit Vernunft und Gewissen begabt und sollen einander im Geist der Brüderlichkeit begegnen.“ Dieser prominente Kodex menschlicher Werte zeigt eine untrennbare Verbindung zwischen den Grundwerten. Am deutlichsten wird das m.E. im Artikel 3: „Jeder hat das Recht auf Leben, Freiheit und Sicherheit der Person.“ Das Leben, die Freiheit und die Sicherheit bilden höchste Werte der menschlichen Identität – und auch diese haben eine tiefe theologische Qualität und sind miteinander eng verbunden. Es ist wichtig, dass dabei das Leben an der ersten Stelle kommt.

Zugleich muss man feststellen, dass diese Grundwerte sich in der menschlichen Geschichte oft gegenseitig bedroht haben. Eigene Freiheit kann auf Kosten der Freiheit, der Sicherheit oder sogar des Lebens von anderen gehen. Auch im Interesse der eigenen Sicherheit kommt es oft zur Bedrohung der Freiheit, der Sicherheit oder sogar des Lebens anderer Menschen. Die militärische Doktrin einer gut bekannten Supermacht heute spricht von „collateral damages“ (begleitenden Schäden), wenn es um die Tötung der Zivilbevölkerung bei der Bombardierung militärischer Ziele geht. Die Tötung in Selbstverteidigung oder die Tötung eines ungeborenen kleinen Menschen im Leibe der Mutter in den ersten Monaten des Lebens, wie sie die Gesetze vieler Ländern letztlich erlauben, sind nur einige wenige Beispiele für die Konflikte der grundlegenden Menschenwerte und Menschenrechte. Eine theologische Qualifizierung der jeweiligen Werte, die eine Identität ausmachen, ist darum entscheidend, trägt zur Stabilität des Systems der Grundrechte bei und beseitigt die gegenseitige Bedrohung dieser Werte. Nach einer solchen theologischen, oder zumindest einer gemeinsamen religiösen Qualifizierung der Werte, könnte wohl auch leichter über einen Konsensus der Religionen der Welt gesprochen werden. Man kann sagen, dass die Charta der Menschenrechte eigentlich schon jetzt so einen Konsensus darstellt.

Ist es notwendig, die gegenseitige Beziehung dieser drei Grundrechte zu definieren? Dürfen sie nebeneinander gestellt werden oder sollen sie hierarchisch geordnet werden, um die gegenseitige Bedrohung zu

vermeiden? Im Sinne des ersten Verbots des Dekalogs (du sollst nicht töten) muss man sicher an der Priorität des Lebens als des ersten Grundrechtes der Menschheit, so wie es auch der erste Artikel der Charta besagt, festhalten.

### **Die Beziehung zwischen Freiheit und anderen Werten unserer Identität**

Ich verstehe Freiheit als einen Wesenszug des evangelischen Glaubens. Gott hat uns mit Freiheit beschenkt und möchte, dass wir seinen Sohn in Freiheit erkennen, als unseren Retter akzeptieren und mit unserem Leben bekennen. Nur eine freie Entscheidung hat vollen Wert. Freiheit ist aber ein Grundwert der Identität, der eigentlich eher Rahmenqualität hat. Wie wird die Freiheit mit Inhalt gefüllt? Das bleibt eine ständige Herausforderung.

In der Identität, die sich aus den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Theologie zu definieren versucht, werden sich andere Werte als Partner für die Freiheit anbieten. L’udovít Štúr, der Begründer der Schriftsprache der Slowaken, ein evangelischer Schriftsteller und die führende Persönlichkeit der nationalen Erweckung im 19. Jhd., hat einmal gesagt: „Freiheit und *Bildung* gehen Hand in Hand und unterstützen sich gegenseitig.“ Freiheit und Bildung zusammen sind auch die Wahrzeichen der evangelischen Identität in unserem Lande. Die evangelischen Schulen sind bis jetzt eine wichtige Form des Dienstes der Kirche für die Gesellschaft.

Theologisch hat die Bildung ein Ziel: *Mündigkeit*. Auch dies wiederum ein Wert und ein Ziel, das der theologischen Qualifizierung bedarf. Hier wird in der evangelischen Theologie noch mehr gesagt werden müssen. Die Mündigkeit erreicht man auf dem Weg über eine *Emanzipation*. Die Fähigkeit, in Gemeinschaft zu leben, ist das Ziel der Erziehung zur Mündigkeit nicht nur unter den Christen, sondern auch in der modernen Gesellschaft. Theologische, religiöse und menschliche Züge der Identität nähern sich so in der menschlichen Geschichte aneinander an. Die Macht des Evangeliums kann an ihrer Qualität erkannt werden.

**FREITAG, 5. September 2008**

**Thema des Tages:  
*Identität entwickeln***

**FRIDAY, 5 September, 2008**

**Theme of the day:  
Building identity**

**INTER-FAITH SPIRITUAL CARE  
AND QUESTIONS OF RELIGIOUS AND PERSONAL IDENTITY**

The term Inter-Faith Spiritual Care raises various complex and challenging questions. For example: What does "Inter-Faith" mean? What is "Spiritual Care"? How do cultural contexts affect "Inter-Faith Spiritual Care"? How can I, and my community, honor and be faithful to our identity and at the same time care for others who believe in ways that can be very different from ours? For example, how can I, a Christian, pray with, or care for the spirituality of someone who is a Hindu, Moslem, or Buddhist?

The concept Inter-Faith can be easily confused with Inter - Religious, which generally deals with questions of how to communicate between different religious traditions. Inter - Religious dialogue deals with how to approach practical, ethical and theological experiences between, for example, Christianity and Buddhism. Inter-Faith is a broader term. Assuming that faith involves the construction of universes of meaning, it includes both Inter - Religious and Inter - Denominational dialogue. Inter - Faith includes how to share experiences between both different Religious and Denominational traditions, and, at the same time, honor and maintain our identity. This is important because it points to the central place of dialogue between Religions and Denominations within Religious Traditions. But, what does dialogue mean when I do not believe in the same way as another? What does dialogue mean when the other person believes in ways that are fundamentally different from my own?

Spirituality is another complex concept. However, in order to avoid the seemingly infinite discussions regarding what is Spirituality, I will use a fairly simple, and classic, understanding of the term. Spirituality is the creation and fostering of Communion between persons, groups, creation, and God. What this means and how to do it is infinitely complex, and varies widely between Religions and Denominations. However, the essence, or ground, of Spirituality seems to always return to one central question: "How do we create, foster, and live in Communion with ourselves, our neighbor, or world, and our God?" Our spirituality is deeply linked to our identity. Who are we in relation to others, who can be very different, and have radically different concepts of Communion, Community, and God?

The word "God" immediately raises problems, because Spirituality, in its broadest sense, does not necessarily include the concept of "God", and religious traditions often understand "God", or Imago Dei, in ways that are quite different. However, since Inter – Faith is a broad and inclusive concept, it is well worth considering that, in the words of Paul Tillich, the concept of "God" reveals and expresses our "ultimate concern".<sup>1</sup> God does not necessarily reflect the beliefs of any one Religious Tradition, but is that which organizes, orients and expresses our deepest beliefs and values. "God" is the "ground of our being", and orients our life, and the meaning of Communion.

This is very similar to the idea of Rudolf Otto that "God" reflects a universal human experience that is A Priori.<sup>2</sup> It is a part of our consciousness. The possibility of experiencing the "Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans", The Mystery, The Power and The Attraction of the Infinite is built into our existence. How we experience and express this deep reality varies enormously, but it is there. It is always a presence and potential. Inter – Faith Spiritual Care respects this presence and potential in all of its complexity and variety, and seeks to find ways to live in Community and express Communion. Put in other terms, Inter-faith Spiritual Care requires a deep respect for our identity, and the identity of another.

Finally, Care is how our community seeks to create, foster and live in Communion and Community, in practical terms. Or, in other words, how is it that we seek to live in such ways that are faithful to our beliefs about the nature, presence, and will of God? Within various Monotheistic traditions, Care is intimately related to the Care of Souls. Traditionally, it includes healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling, and

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Tillich. *Dynamics of Faith*. New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1953.

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Otto. *The Idea of the Holy*. London, Oxford University Press, 1923.

educating. It is an expression of deep mutual correction, encouragement, and solidarity which embraces the totality of life. In this case, the term "Care of Souls" refers to the totality and integrity of human beings in light of the nature of the Divine, which is always beyond our full grasp, or understanding. As such, individual and institutional humility are of fundamental importance.

Finally, Inter – Faith Spiritual Care seeks to create and foster Communion between persons of diverse religious traditions and denominations. It is how we express the Love of God, the Ground of our Being, both within our Communities of Faith, and beyond them. If there is one question that dominates Inter – Faith Spiritual Care it is: "How do we build bridges, and at the same time maintain and respect our own identity and community of faith?" There are, of course, no simple answers.

Dr. James Farris  
São Paulo, Brasil  
2008

## A WISDOM MODEL FOR INTERFAITH PASTORAL COUNSELING

Daniel S. Schipani<sup>1</sup>

Greetings and gratitude  
Acknowledging Johan Comenius (Ján Amos Komenský)  
Acknowledging the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SIPCC International Seminars  
Pertinence of the overall theme of the SIPCC Conference, and the focus of my lectures

The unfolding process of globalization<sup>2</sup> together with the manifestations of post-modernity<sup>3</sup> are key factors that inform the social context of pastoral care practices in our time. The growing presence of a plurality of faith expressions (religious as well as non-religious)<sup>4</sup> in our culture is indeed a major dimension of the social reality. Christian pastoral care specialists,

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<sup>2</sup> The globalization process under way includes political, economic, technological, and cultural dimensions. Interconnected systems of communication, transportation, and political organization tend to weave our world together into a single global locality. Indeed, globalization is restructuring the ways we live in diverse areas such as sexuality, family life, and the socialization of youth. See, Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives* (New York: Routledge, 2000). For a comprehensive introduction to the subject of globalization, see David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1999). We agree with authors such as Robert J. Schreiter that “globalization” is the broad category to use in describing the signs of the times, “postmodernity” needing to be viewed within such a larger conceptual framework. See, for instance, Schreiter’s *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), especially chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> We are working with a straightforward account of postmodernity: a pluralist society in which not only are many theories and worldviews tolerated and accepted but there is also a profound suspicion of grand theories and ideologies, of systems which make claims to truth (which are viewed as inadequate to reality and coercive). As an ideology, *postmodernism* celebrates the pluralism and fragmentation of so-called postmodern societies as a condition in which “true freedom” is possible. Further, postmodernists typically highlight alternative ways of knowing, restate the human value of emotions and feelings, wonder and mystery, and appreciate the experience of a “second naivete” (with an emphasis on the significance of living in the master stories as stories rather than as factual historical accounts). For an overview of the different sources and expressions of postmodernism, and an evaluation from a Christian perspective, see Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> We adopt the understanding of *faith* as a human universal that may or may not find expression in terms of a specific religious tradition and content (beliefs and rituals). It is the understanding articulated by James W. Fowler in his classic work: *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981). See also, *Weaving the New Creation: Stages of Faith and the Public Church* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991); *Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996); and *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, rev.ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

both as practitioners and as pastoral theologians, need to work within, and reflect upon such reality in the light of normative claims of the Christian faith tradition (e.g. convictions about Jesus Christ, the church, the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the Reign of God). Actually, pastoral caregivers have always had to engage in interfaith communication even if they have not always reflected critically and constructively on such phenomenon in a systematic way.<sup>5</sup> Some of them, however, have taken advantage of the contributions of *intercultural* study to pastoral care and counseling, which offers an opportunity for further exploration of *interfaith* pastoral caregiving as a structurally analogous experience.<sup>6</sup>

The questions that this lecture addresses concern the effective practice of *therapeutic*<sup>7</sup> *communication* that becomes “good news” (i.e. gospel) of hope and healing in pastoral care settings, and in pastoral counseling especially. It is our thesis that Christian pastoral caregivers can engage effectively and consistently in the practice of therapeutic communication in interfaith

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<sup>5</sup> An exception is the collection of essays in Robert G. Anderson and Mary A. Fukuyama, eds. *Ministry in the Spiritual and Cultural Diversity of Health Care: Increasing the Competency of Chaplains* (New York: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 2004). See also, Sue Wintz and Earl P. Cooper, *Learning Module for Cultural and Spiritual Sensitivity and Quick Guide to Cultures and Spiritual Traditions* (2000) [www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org). These valuable resources, however, do not include a systematic consideration of theological foundations and perspectives for interfaith spiritual care; further, they do not address the epistemological and methodological issues involved in the interplay between the human sciences and theology, which is essential for an adequate understanding and an effective practice of interfaith caregiving from a Christian perspective.

<sup>6</sup> During the last two decades a number of books addressing the challenges of intercultural caregiving have been published, especially in the areas of counseling and psychotherapy. Recent research connects issues of cross-cultural communication and spirituality, as documented, for example, in Mary A. Fukuyama and Todd D. Sevig, *Integrating Spirituality into Multicultural Counseling* (Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage, 1999). On the one hand, *interfaith* spiritual caregiving can be viewed and practiced as a special form of *intercultural* caregiving, as caregivers and care receivers share meaning and values. On the other hand, the former presents unique features pertaining not only to the specific content of the verbal and non-verbal interactions between caregiver and care receiver but, especially, to the norms that guide and help to evaluate the very quality and effectiveness of those interactions.

<sup>7</sup> “Therapeutic” is here used with the twofold denotation of *ministerial* (from *therapeutes*, one who attends or serves, ministers) as well as *clinical* (literally, at the bed side). Simply put, then, *therapeutic communication* denotes the kind of verbal and nonverbal interaction experienced by the care-receiver as deeply caring in the senses of nurturing, supporting, guiding, reconciling and healing.

situations as a special way of *caring Christianly*.<sup>8</sup> Such practice may necessitate the transformation of Christian religious and theological language while remaining focused on the communication of good news for care-receivers regardless of their religious affiliation, the nature of their faith, broadly speaking (including, for instance, religious and non-religious humanism) and the overall quality of their spirituality.<sup>9</sup>

### A WISDOM MODEL FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING

For the past several years I have sought to serve with a nonmedical model of pastoral counseling, both in the congregation and in the medical setting of a community health center where I volunteer. In my view, pastoral counseling can be best understood as a specialized form of care giving ministry, centering on spiritual wisdom rather than mental health as its ground metaphor.<sup>10</sup> In pastoral counseling, *human emergence*<sup>11</sup> is uniquely sponsored through a distinctive way of walking with others—individuals, couples, family members, or small groups—as they face life’s challenges and struggles. The overall goal, simply stated, is that they

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<sup>8</sup> By “caring Christianly” we mean the kind of spiritual caregiving that stems from three interrelated dimensions of the Christian faith: a particular vision of reality and the good life; a disposition to care as a form of love of neighbor (especially the care-seeking “stranger”) inspired by Jesus Christ; and a certain sense of vocation to serve in partnership with the Spirit of God. These dimensions of the Christian faith define the caregivers’ identity and ministry.

<sup>9</sup> The term “spirituality” is meant here as the overarching construct, connoting a fundamental human potential as well as need for meaning and value and the disposition for relationship with a transcendent power. “Faith” is used by us as denoting developmentally patterned ways of being “spiritual” in terms of Fowler’s contribution.

<sup>10</sup> See Daniel S. Schipani, *The Way of Wisdom in Pastoral Counseling* (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> The expression, “human emergence” in this context denotes a process of humanization viewed primarily in theological perspective. It is about becoming “more human” in terms of (our understanding of) God’s gift and promise of authentic freedom and wholeness; further, it connotes human becoming according to the wider ethical-political and eschatological framework biblically symbolized as the reign of God, that is, the normative commonwealth of love, peace, and justice. Hence the process of “emerging” involves the kinds of formation and transformation in people’s lives that is associated with *Christomorphic* moral and spiritual growth. Therefore, human emergence must not be merely equated with psychological notions of development and maturation, even though connections with “natural” human development and with psychological understandings of human flourishing must be adequately established in the theory and practice of pastoral counseling.

may live more wisely in the light of God.<sup>12</sup> My practice is aimed fundamentally, although not exclusively, at awakening, nurturing, and developing counselees' moral and spiritual intelligence. Simply put, moral and spiritual intelligence is about how to live well, especially in the face of conflict, crisis, difficult decision making, disorientation, trauma, suffering and loss.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, this ministry may be viewed as one dimension of the larger work of caring toward health and wellness.

This lecture presents such an understanding of pastoral counseling as a ministry of the church. It illustrates the contours of a new paradigm for the field of pastoral care and the discipline of pastoral theology, one that is centered on wisdom in the light of God. I will discuss a case from my counseling practice and, in relation to that case, offer a systematic discussion of the key components of the wisdom model.<sup>14</sup> I have chosen to discuss my work with a “non-Christian” counselee because both in counseling practices and in hospital chaplaincies, Christian pastoral caregivers must learn to care well for increasing numbers of “other-than-Christian” care seekers. I assume that we are called to care not only *Christianly*, as already indicated, but *pastorally* as well as. The pastoral nature of our work is determined, first of all, by our pastoral identity, including some form of ministerial accountability to the church regardless of the setting

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<sup>12</sup> This characterization is thoroughly explicated in Schipani, *The Way of Wisdom*, pp. 91–114.

<sup>13</sup> The notion of *moral intelligence* is sometimes used as a present-day equivalent to *practical wisdom (phronesis)*, which in Aristotle's ethical writings meant the intelligence or wisdom of the good person, closely associated with virtue and good character). My use of moral intelligence includes a holistic consideration of virtue and character in spiritually grounded and theologically defined moral formation. Further, I use the term *spiritual intelligence* specifically in reference to *wisdom in the light of God*, which necessarily includes and transforms moral intelligence.

<sup>14</sup> The following illustration is based on a real pastoral counseling situation. I have changed several pieces of information, however, in order to preserve confidentiality.

within which pastoral counseling is practiced. Second, our care is pastoral to the extent that we consistently work with a pastoral-theological frame of reference.<sup>15</sup>

### **Case Illustration**

*Annelies was a single woman, thirty-seven years of age, who had recently become chief executive officer of a major company. During the year prior to the counseling she had begun to wonder whether she should discontinue a close friendship with her former boyfriend, thirty-nine-year old Matt. Matt had married somebody else and become the father of two children, but had been separated from his wife for a couple of years. From time to time, Annelies had entertained the idea of reuniting with Matt. She recognized, however that, even though they could have much fun together, they were two very different people and not really compatible as a couple. For several weeks before pastoral counseling started, Annelies had had what she called “strange dreams” involving angels trying to communicate something to her. Her need to understand what was going on in her life and a deeply-felt desire to resolve her existential crisis became the occasion for counseling. She was referred to me by a mutual acquaintance.*

*Annelies had been raised in a Catholic family but she considered herself a non-religious person with deep spiritual sensitivities. From time to time she had enjoyed practicing diverse expressions of Eastern spirituality and “new age”-like activities aimed at holistic cleansing, enlightenment, enhanced appreciation of beauty, and the freedom to create and to love.*

*In the first pastoral counseling session, while sharing her life story, Annelies confided that during the time she was originally involved with Matt she had had an abortion, about eight years earlier. Now at thirty-seven she deeply regretted the decision, which Matt had encouraged, and felt sorry about it. She indicated that she was sure that the child would have been a girl and, in fact, started to call “her” Naomi (the actual name of a dear, close relative). After clarifying mutual expectations, we agreed to meet for a short-term pastoral counseling process.*

*Annelies received as a hopeful sign my observation that the name “Naomi” means “pleasant.” She also realized that we would need to revisit painful memories and to find ways to deal constructively with her sense of loss and guilt. I encouraged her to welcome her dreams and, as much as possible, write down their content so that, by considering them together in the counseling setting, we might be able to find meaning and a sense of direction. We also agreed that angels may symbolize “messengers” as well as “guardian spirits.”*

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<sup>15</sup> For a systematic discussion of such a frame of reference, see Daniel S. Schipani, “The Pastoral-theological Nature of Pastoral Counseling,” in Daniel S. Schipani, ed. *Mennonite Perspectives on Pastoral Counseling* (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies 2007), pp. 7-29.

*In addition to the attempt to reconcile and integrate unconscious material by attending to her dreams, Annelies found it especially helpful to engage her imagination in the manner of writing letters to “Naomi” and sharing them with me, including the possible response that she might have received from her child. As a therapeutic method, that activity became a fruitful way of processing both her grief and her guilt. It also made it possible for her to begin to visualize a way forward opened by a unique experience of forgiveness. No longer inhibited by the power of a buried secret, she decided to tell her mother and siblings about the abortion for the first time as well as about her work in therapy. Not surprisingly, she began to experience new freedom from bondage to the past as well as a sense of hope.*

*From the beginning I encouraged Annelies to consider her experience of loss and distress both as an emotional trauma and also as a spiritual struggle. At one point I told her that I always pray that I may be the best possible conversation partner in counseling, and I also pray for the counselees whether they know it or not. She indicated appreciation for my praying in her behalf. Interestingly, by the end of the counseling process Annelies had come to perceive me not only as a guide and as witness to her ongoing healing process but as a messenger (or “angel”) as well.*

The wisdom model of pastoral counseling that I have developed has four interrelated components, which are: (1) a four-dimensional view of reality and knowing; (2) interdisciplinary assessment and agenda; (3) complementary goals for care-seekers and caregiver, and (4) an overarching purpose and fundamental approach. I believe that this model is especially useful in interfaith situations, as I will try to demonstrate in the remainder of this lecture.

### ***A four-dimensional view***

As a bright, energetic, socially popular and fun-loving woman, Annelies had been enjoying life surrounded by many friends and co-workers. She had accomplished much, yet she had begun to experience increased restlessness associated in part with her complex relationship with Matt, her long-time former companion, and the demands and opportunities of a successful professional career. Annelies was actually entering a new chapter in her life that presented serious challenges, including a changing sense of identity and conflicting desires regarding sexuality and the possibility of motherhood, as well as an increasing wish somehow to “get

settled” in life. Her distress and disorientation involved several dimensions of her self and her lived world. Therefore, pastoral counseling would need to address a number of biological, emotional, and relational issues.

Our model, however, calls for an analytic framework and counseling strategy larger than the two dimensions—*the self* and *the lived world*—implied in the previous paragraph. We must also include two existential-spiritual dimensions—*the Void* and *the Holy*, as James E. Loder describes them. Loder writes that “[b]eing human entails environment, selfhood, the possibility of not being, and the possibility of new being. All four dimensions are essential, and none of them can be ignored without decisive loss to our understanding of what is essentially human.”<sup>16</sup> These dimensions were also part of Annelies’s experience and potential for healing and growth. The faces of the Void, the implicit threat of nonbeing, was experienced with existential anxiety connected with a deeply felt sense of loss—the loss of the opportunity to give birth to a child. Her choice to have an abortion, which she now regretted, was accompanied by the lingering effects of suppressed grief. Another face of the Void for Annelies was the fear that she might not be able ever to love and be loved again. That multidimensional threat had to be confronted in the counseling setting as I sought to guide her through a process by which she might experience the gifts of grace and freedom. Annelies’s distress might thus be transformed into a new experience of light and love—that is, a negation of the negation—resulting in some degree of growth into “new being” or “being more.” Her spiritual sensitivities and wholehearted search for reorientation and renewal were, of course, indispensable resources which elicited hope.

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<sup>16</sup> I allude here to James Loder’s notion of “the fourfold knowing event”—which involves the lived world, the self, the Void, and the Holy. See *The Transforming Moment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1989), page 69.

I seek to address the existential-spiritual dimensions in all counseling situations. I believe it is essential to evaluate those situations four-dimensionally, along the lines proposed by Loder. We must not only consider transactions between self and lived world, which is the limited horizon normally addressed in other forms of counseling and psychotherapy.<sup>17</sup> We must also work within a larger framework that includes the threat of nonbeing—the Void—and the possibility and invitation to new being—the Holy. Further, we must view and use the setting and the process of pastoral counseling as a Christian ministry of care according to the four dimensions (for example, by concretely honoring our partnership with the Spirit in our ministry practice).

### ***Interdisciplinary perspectives and assessment***

In light of this component of the wisdom model, Annelies and I agreed that we needed to address interrelated issues. We needed to address her sense of loss and related guilt and depression, while keeping in mind systemic dynamics related to her family background as well as her current interpersonal, social and professional situation. Specifics of the pastoral counseling agenda that we identified included the following:

- Annelies's image of herself as a woman, in connection with her roles as a professional person, friend, and lover; this agenda included an understanding of the nature and the

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<sup>17</sup> Excluded from this generalization are counseling and psychotherapy that intentionally address spirituality issues and practices in a nonreductionistic manner. See P. Scott Richards and Allen E. Bergin, *A Spiritual Strategy for Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1997); and William R. Miller, ed., *Integrating Spirituality into Treatment: Resources for Practitioners* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1999). These contributions address spirituality both as a subject matter in its own right (including, for example, issues of acceptance, forgiveness, and hope) and as a resource for therapeutic intervention (meditation and prayer, for example). For an explicitly Christian perspective, see Mark R. McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996).

dynamics of her *false self*<sup>18</sup> nurtured by multiple superficial relationships, a number of sexual affairs, and professional overachievement.

- Relationships with significant people in her life, especially her former lovers, friends, and family, and the challenge of facing and dealing with suppressed anger, guilt feelings, and unresolved inner conflict.
- Appropriate identification of present needs as well as hopes, including her vocational sense of direction and projections concerning professional work.
- Availability of internal and external resources that would potentially contribute to the healing process.

In addition to these and related issues, the explicit pastoral-theological care approach that I brought to the counseling process elicited a number of concerns which can be illumined by a theological perspective, such as these:

- An appropriation of grace and care in connection with hurtful experiences in the past and inadequate processing and resolution, which might be characterized in terms of moral failure, and the possibility of transformation and healing.

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<sup>18</sup> The notion of “false self” refers to a person’s interaction with her world when it is determined more by the demands and expectations of others than by her own needs and desires. The concept comes from pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott and his study of the psychodynamics of early self-development (see, *The Maturational Process and the Facilitating Environment* [Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1965]). As pastoral theologian Gordon Lynch helpfully notes, two significant implications stem from Winnicott’s idea of the false self: “First, this concept indicates that attending to the needs of others can, for some involved in caring work, have a compulsive and pathological dimension to it. Second, Winnicott believed that individuals can recover more of their true selves in adult life through being in relationship with others who demonstrated reliability, attentiveness, responsiveness, recollection and durability. This highlights qualities which might usefully be embodied in pastoral relationships.” (“False Self,” in Wesley Carr, ed. *The New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 124.

- Views of shame and guilt as well as acceptance, forgiveness, and reconciliation in the light of Annelies's own sense of moral integrity and responsibility, possibly connected in some way with a reconstructed memory of her early Christian views and practices.
- The meaning and function of Annelies's unique spirituality and its possible role in reshaping her life story, identity, and sense of life vocation.
- The overall potential for spiritual growth as the core of human flourishing to be uniquely experienced in a more wholesome life and in fashioning a better future.

The application of interdisciplinary perspectives and assessment is the second component of the wisdom model of pastoral counseling. We can state this guideline as follows: it is indispensable to identify the pertinent issues of the counseling agenda both from a psychological and a theological perspective, even as we work with an integrated understanding of those seeking care as well as the very setting and process of pastoral counseling. Therefore, we must affirm the integrity of the disciplines of psychology and theology. We must avoid reducing either to the terms of the other, even as we maximize the potential for complementarity between their unique contributions. At the same time, we must give priority to the pastoral and theological nature of our ministry work, including systematic reflection on the practice of pastoral counseling itself.<sup>19</sup> This priority is worth emphasizing, because of the ways theology addresses fundamental questions of life and thus distinctly informs the normative dimensions of pastoral counseling. What does it mean to live well in the light of God's reign and to seek wisdom in the midst of our

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<sup>19</sup> These three methodological and epistemological principles are viewed and explicated in detail by pastoral theologian Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger as the threefold "Chalcedonian pattern" applicable to the relationship between psychology and theology in pastoral counseling theory and practice. See Hunsinger's *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), especially chapter 3. See also, by the same author, "An Interdisciplinary Map for Christian Counselors: Theology and Psychology in Christian Counseling," in Mark R. McMinn & Timothy R. Phillips, eds., *Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology & Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 218-240.

life's challenges and struggles? What is the shape of human completion and wholeness? How do we understand and foster maturity, and how do we know which is the way forward in human emergence?<sup>20</sup> Theology is uniquely suited to address such questions, always in creative conversation with the human sciences. By helping people like Annelies to make choices oriented to a more wholesome life, pastoral counseling can foster spiritual intelligence and moral and spiritual growth in wise living.

### ***Complementary goals***

I set for myself, and regularly review, goals that serve not only to provide overall orientation to my pastoral counseling ministry but also to evaluate that practice. These goals are indispensable to keep in mind as I remain accountable to the care-seekers, to colleagues with whom I work, and to the church I represent, which validates my ministry. Some of the general goals that apply to all kinds of counseling situations are:

- To welcome care-seekers in a safe and caring space where they can express themselves freely, clarify the nature of their challenges and struggles, make wise choices, and be empowered to move on.
- To faithfully represent the healing Christ and the church as a community of wisdom and healing, a role that includes the attempt to mediate grace in compassionate and generous ways.

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<sup>20</sup> These are questions explicitly addressed by, among others, the following: James W. Fowler, in *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Human Development and Christian Faith*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); James E. Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998); and Neil Pembroke, *Moving Toward Spiritual Maturity: Psychological, Contemplative, and Moral Challenges in Christian Living* (New York: The Haworth Press, 2007).

- To become a temporary companion in people’s journeys toward (re)orientation, transformation, reconciliation, and healing.
- To minister as a caregiving sage who practices counseling with clinical and therapeutic competence, especially by adequately employing the manifold resources provided by psychology and psychotherapy as a practical human science.

I needed to keep in focus these general goals as I tried to help Annelies in facing the crisis precipitated by her current existential disorientation and distress. At the same time, however, I also had to identify pastoral counseling objectives in light of her need for support and guidance. These specific objectives, which at the risk of oversimplification may also be considered desired outcomes of the counseling process, included the following:

- For Annelies to experience emotional relief through catharsis.
- For Annelies to begin to understand the nature of the crisis she was experiencing and to appreciate and integrate the reality of her pain and sense of loss and disorientation.
- For both Annelies and me to identify and activate available resources, both internal and external, in order to cope in healthy ways with the crisis and its ramifications.
- For both Annelies and me to help strengthen—emotionally and spiritually—her sense of personal identity and integrity.
- For both Annelies and me to develop a plan of action for her beyond the counseling setting.

I needed to apply therapeutic methods and resources commonly associated with the strategies of crisis, supportive, and narrative pastoral care and counseling.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, specific objectives for my caregiving endeavors with this counselee included the following:

- To be carefully hospitable to Annelies while keeping in mind that she had a spiritual and theological background, and a moral and ethical framework different from my own.
- To become a supportive pastoral presence and a source of emotional and spiritual comfort by listening responsively to Annelies, helping her find her voice, and making available resources from diverse sources (the human sciences, the Christian faith tradition and the local faith community) in order to sustain her process of painful recalling, lamenting, and grieving.
- To help Annelies clarify her own feelings and articulate her ways of understanding her experience of disorientation and loss in her own terms.
- To encourage Annelies to make healthy new choices in the face of the new realities in her life, and to guide her in reality testing in terms of her chosen path to restoration and healing.
- To sponsor Annelies' spiritual growth by exploring ways to nurture life-giving practices, both individual and communal, including new forms and disciplines such as meditation, journaling, and prayer.

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<sup>21</sup> For descriptions and illustrations of supportive, crisis, and bereavement pastoral care and counseling, see Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), chapters 7, 8, and 9, respectively. Howard W. Stone, *Crisis Counseling*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); and, especially, Christie Cozad Neuger, *Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

- To encourage Annelies to reach out to other people who might extend responsible support and gentle accountability beyond our short-term pastoral counseling.
- To convey my openness to be available for further counseling for the next several days, while exploring where she could turn for caring support among her family and friends.

The third indispensable component of the wisdom model of pastoral counseling I work with consists in identifying and integrating two distinct sets of pastoral counseling goals. On the one hand, goals (in the sense of desired outcomes) must be selected from the perspective of the person seeking care, in consultation with the pastoral caregiver, as they emerge from the counselee's felt needs, hopes, and resources. On the other hand, pastoral counselors must also seek clarity about goals for their work as they guide the counseling process. More importantly, Christian pastoral counselors must seek to honor their call to mediate divine grace and wisdom as representatives of the caring church and the healing Christ, regardless of the nature of the care seekers' spirituality and (religious or nonreligious) faith.<sup>22</sup> Their character must reflect their ongoing participation in faith communities attuned to the reign of God in the world<sup>23</sup> and their commitment to minister not only as competent clinicians or therapists but also as moral and spiritual guides.<sup>24</sup> In fact, these personal characteristics—call, character, competence, and

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<sup>22</sup> See note no. 9 on the use of the term "spirituality".

<sup>23</sup> For an illuminating discussion of the relationship between the reign of God as ethical culture, the church as an ethical community, and the therapist as an ethical character, see Alvin C. Dueck, *Between Jerusalem and Athens: Ethical Perspectives on Culture, Religion, and Psychotherapy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).

<sup>24</sup> Rebekah L. Miles notes that good guides have distinctive knowledge and wisdom, and as practical pilgrims they are constantly training and preparing themselves for their art. Further, good guides are confident leaders who know their limits and temptations, know when they need help and are willing to seek advice, remember that others are free and responsible, teach others the lessons of pilgrimage and guidance, and develop excellent capacities for discernment. They not only know the rules but also know that the rules must sometimes be bent or even changed, and they remember the most important things—the shared destination and the source of power. *The Pastor as Moral Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 6–7.

commitment—along with explicit formal accountability to the church, are essential elements of counseling that is truly pastoral.

***An overarching purpose and fundamental approach***

Each pastoral counseling situation calls for specific objectives, however we may articulate them. Each situation also requires the application of pertinent strategies to reach those objectives. At the same time, it is also apparent that all pastoral counseling situations have much in common. I believe that those commonalities, which center on issues of overall purpose and fundamental process, the fourth component that point to wisdom in the light of God as a fitting, heart-of-the-matter metaphor for pastoral counseling.

Annelies had voluntarily entered a pastoral counseling relationship because she was experiencing disorientation and distress. In the course of our short-term counseling process, she was invited--implicitly rather than explicitly, to be sure--to become a wiser person in the light of God as we worked together in the face of the challenges and struggles she was encountering at this particular juncture in her life journey. The overarching purpose of becoming wiser included three inseparable aspects of her search for relief and resolution. As pastoral counselor, I needed to keep in mind that each of these aspects integrates psychological as well as theological and spiritual perspectives on the self.

***Growth in vision.*** First, the counseling experience was meant to help the counselee find new and better—more holistic—ways of knowing and understanding reality, including the dimensions of self, the lived or social world, the threatening Void and the gracious, embracing Holy. From a Christian formation viewpoint, Annelies needed to grow in her ways of seeing, so that she is increasingly able to perceive reality (especially herself and other people) with the eyes of God, metaphorically speaking. Such growth in vision would entail the practice and

development of dispositions and behaviors such as heightened awareness, attentiveness, admiration and contemplation, critical thinking, creative imagination, and spiritual discernment.

***Growth in virtue.*** Second, the counseling experience encouraged the care-seeker to discover more fulfilling and faithful ways of being and loving, with specific focus on her relationships with others—friends, family, and co-workers, especially--with the gracious Spirit, and with herself. In Christian formation terms, Annelies' heart needed to be increasingly conformed to the heart of Christ. Such growth in virtue entails an ongoing process of formation and transformation, shaping the inmost affections and passions, dispositions, and attitudes—habits of the heart—and defining the content of her moral and spiritual character. In short, in and through the counseling process, God was calling her to become a unique expression of human love.

***Growth in vocation.*** Third, the counseling experience sought to empower Annelies to make sound choices and to invest fresh energies in relationships, work, leisure, spiritual nurture, and service, and to find ways to sustain those choices with integrity. She needed to find a freer and more hopeful orientation toward life, especially her social situation. Such growth in vocation may be viewed theologically as participating increasingly in the life of the Spirit in the world. For that counselee, it could open the possibility of a fruitful and joyful response to the invitation to collaborate with God in creative, liberating, sustaining, and renewing purpose and activity. As her ways of being and living became increasingly consistent with a wisdom understanding of divine purpose and activity, I anticipated that her life would receive the gifts of further meaning, value, hope, and courage.

In summary, the overarching purpose of pastoral counseling was to help Annelies to know how to live a more hopeful, moral, and wholesome life. In order to realize its potential as a ministry of care, pastoral counseling would need to awaken, nurture, and empower her moral and

spiritual intelligence, as characterized above. Understood as wisdom in the light of God, spiritual intelligence transforms emotional and other forms of intelligence, whenever the latter have merely promoted adaptive or conforming aims and means of conventional and pragmatic wisdom in any given social and cultural milieu.

Though in each pastoral counseling situation we need to select diverse, appropriate counseling strategies and methods, nevertheless, our collaborative work in all cases must always involve the fundamental approach and pivotal practice of discernment as an essential aspect of pastoral counseling. Viewed from my perspective as pastoral counselor and theologian, a multidirectional critical conversation must always take place. The conversation includes the counselee's personal stories and hopes, located in family and sociocultural contexts; human science viewpoints, insights, and tools (especially from personality theory, psychodynamic and cognitive therapy, narrative and family systems theory and therapy); and theological, spiritual, and pastoral resources.<sup>25</sup> Stated in other terms, this hermeneutical activity of discernment leads us, first, to ascertain what a particular situation calls for; second, to search for alternatives and to develop a course of action; and third, to evaluate ongoing responses to the challenges and struggles the counselee is facing.

From a theological perspective, the setting and the process of pastoral counseling encompasses more than counselors and psychotherapists usually recognize (at least explicitly). The four-dimensional understanding of reality—and of knowing, in particular—determines the

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<sup>25</sup> To say that a *critical* conversation took place means that the resources of the human sciences and theology, together with my personal and professional experience and expertise, were also subject to evaluation, correction, and improvement, even as they illuminated the counselee's life challenges and struggles and suggested ways to resolve them satisfactorily and wisely. In other words, the uniquely hermeneutical work characterizing the process of pastoral counseling that occurred in the counseling situation must be viewed dialectically. The implication, in this light, is that pastoral counseling is a way of doing practical theology, and must always be practiced as a dialectical-hermeneutical process.

nature of the overall approach and the discerning activity we are discussing here. Counseling that is truly pastoral occurs not only in a safe therapeutic space but also in a sacred place where the presence and activity of the Spirit is acknowledged (at least by the pastoral counselor). Further, we seek to minister in partnership with the Spirit in the process of our endeavoring to know the real nature of the problems and the best ways creatively to confront and transform them.

Comprehensively viewed, therefore, the activity of discernment conditions the process (the *how*--approaches, methods, and techniques) as well as the content (the *what*--agenda, themes, and issues) of pastoral counseling in significant ways. Further, learning the very practice of discernment, especially as a collaborative, dialogical, and even prayerful endeavor, also becomes a distinct and overarching objective, a desired outcome for counselees in all cases. Indeed, an indicator of growth and progress for Annelies and countless other care receivers is their willingness and ability to engage in discernment. In other words, growth in wisdom always entails discerning and choosing wisely, as well as learning to act and to relate to other people wisely in a consistent manner. *Wisdom in the light of God* thus supplies the guiding principle and the master metaphor, because the way of wisdom thus understood and appropriated is a process of knowing how to live a better life in the midst of our existential and social circumstances.

That is what happened to Annelies. After we had completed the counseling process by mutual agreement, she wrote several e-mail messages to tell me about helpful conversations she had had with Matt and with key family members. She was also making good decisions in different areas of her life, even as she continued to heal. By Grace and Wisdom, the experience of interfaith counseling sustained with therapeutic love for a stranger with whom I partnered, had contributed to restoring her soul.

## INTERFAITH CARE AS LABORATORY FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

Daniel S. Schipani<sup>1</sup>

Greetings and gratitudes

Acknowledging Johan Amos Comenius (Ján Amos Komenský)

20th Anniversary of the SIPCC International Seminars

Pertinence of the Theme of the SIPCC Conference, and the focus of my lectures

### INTRODUCTION

The thesis I wish to explore in this lecture is reflected in the title—“Interfaith Care: Laboratory for Education and Society”. I propose that the *private* ministry of interfaith care and counseling serves as a special place where we can envision not only a good life or a better life but where we can also envision the good community. Therefore, such potential contribution should have an impact on the *public* realm of education for the good society.

Whether in a pastoral counseling relationship or at the bed side in the hospital, interfaith spiritual caregivers can help create an alternative culture guided by an ethic of care that affirms our common humanity. It is an ethic that encourages respect, understanding, solidarity, collaboration, reconciliation, healing, and community building. And such care can create sacred spaces for transformation on different levels. Indeed, pastoral counseling of individuals, couples, families, or small groups; and chaplaincy ministry, are two different but potentially transformative modalities of spiritual care, especially in multi-faith settings and interfaith situations. In the case of hospital chaplains, in addition to the semi-private occasions for visits with patients and conversations with family members and staff, they often can influence the very institutional culture of the health care system.

In the remainder of this lecture I will present the following themes: first, becoming better interfaith caregivers by learning from a Jesus story; second, guidelines for growth in pastoral wisdom; and finally, how this reflection may illumine educational endeavors from a Christian perspective.

### LEARNINGS FROM A DIFFICULT ENCOUNTER<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the centuries, Christians have interpreted and used the story of Jesus' encounter with the Syrophenician/Canaanite woman in many ways. In recent years writings

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<sup>2</sup> For a more comprehensive study of Jesus's encounter with a Gentile woman as paradigmatic for interfaith care, see Daniel S. Schipani, “Biblical Foundations: Challenges and possibilities of Interfaith Caregiving”, in Daniel S. Schipani & Leah Dawn Bueckert, eds. *Good News in the Hospital: Understanding and Practicing Interfaith Spiritual Care* (book in process).

from a variety of perspectives reflect renewed interest in this fascinating story.<sup>3</sup> Working with a practical theological perspective, I will address two interrelated questions: how may this biblical text become foundational for caregiving ministry?<sup>4</sup> how may this unique story further illumine the challenges and opportunities of intercultural and interfaith care for Christian caregivers?

*Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly. (Matthew 15:21-28, NRSV)*

### **The meaning of the text**

A plain reading of the story presents a clear and unique instance in which Jesus yields. One could argue that here he is bested in an argument. The most striking and problematic part of the story is, of course, Jesus' initial response to the request of the woman: First a deafening silence, then an uncharacteristic affirmation of boundaries, followed by parabolic refusal. At that moment he appears to regard the woman's request as inappropriate, even as outrageously *out of place!* Only in this particular Gospel story does Jesus clearly ignore a supplicant, place the barrier of ethnicity before a plea for help, and then use offensive language to reiterate the barrier. Without question, "dog" is a disdainful metaphor, though Jesus uses a diminutive form ("puppy," "little bitch"). The implication, of course, is that the Gentiles/dogs have no place at the table. The woman, however, appears to play along with that harsh image and simply urges Jesus to take it one step further. She appeals to him as "Lord," asserts her claim, and demonstrates her faith by arguing that at the very least both children (Jews) and dogs (Gentiles) are under the same caring, compassionate authority.

One need not infer that the woman agrees with the Gentile/ dog analogy. Nor do we need to conclude that she considers herself unworthy and less than human, or that she identifies herself as a dog. On the contrary, we may assume that she is requesting that she

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<sup>3</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza took the title of her book, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Pr., 1992), from the story of the Syrophenician-Canaanite woman. In her view, the story "represents the biblical-theological voice of women, which has been excluded, repressed, or marginalized in Christian discourse" (11).

<sup>4</sup> As a practical theologian, I use the terms "foundational" deliberately and precisely. For me, the Bible is foundational in at least four interrelated ways: (a) It informs my normative framework and perspective for practice and reflection, especially regarding wisdom (knowing how to live in the light of God); (b) it offers key content disclosed in the teachings, narratives, and other materials (poetic, prophetic, apocalyptic, etc. ) which express the written Word in ways that illumine and address our human condition; (c) it calls for engagement in an interpretive process for the sake of discernment and wise living; and (d) it grounds my own spirituality as a man of faith and as a ministering person (pastoral counselor and pastoral care supervisor), theological educator, and theologian.

and her daughter be included, that she hopes for a place at the table and challenges Israel's excluding ideology. When she says, "Yes, Lord...", she agrees with Jesus that it would be wrong to throw the children's bread to the dogs. But she also reminds Jesus that if even dogs may eat what their masters waste, she and her daughter should receive bread, too. The Canaanite woman understands the grave meaning and the implications of Jesus' initial response, but she proceeds wisely and daringly to reframe and recast it. Jesus' original challenge to the woman merely restates the status quo of gender, ethnic, cultural, religious, and political division. Her counter-challenge calls him to look to the place of new possibilities across and beyond the established boundaries. Instead of accepting the dichotomy of children (insiders/receive food) versus dogs (outsiders/no food), she imagines that both the children and the dogs can be graciously fed inside, within the same household and from the same table.<sup>5</sup> Stated in other terms, the foreign woman is facing the "Void"<sup>6</sup> as she tries to deal with the painful reality of her daughter's torment, and begs for mercy. Jesus, however, initially appears to cling to the very two-dimensionality that he had earlier rejected. He seems to be pushed to face the possibility of his own faithlessness and abandonment of God at this point and, thereby, to come face to face with the holiness of God "across and beyond the boundaries" at the prompting of the foreign woman.

The dramatic import of this encounter in the borderlands is heightened as we recall its historical and textual background. "Show them no mercy," Moses had said to the people of Israel (Deut. 7:2). "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David," the Canaanite woman implores the New Moses of Israel. This Canaanite woman thus shatters the lingering image of wicked Canaanites, who presumably offer their children in sacrifice to their gods; she pleads on behalf of her daughter, who cannot speak for herself.<sup>7</sup> Well aware of his people's position and privilege as "chosen," Jesus initially reasserts the exclusiveness of his mission. But in the end, he welcomes the woman, and she receives what she had sought with passion, courage, and determination.

Finally, this story parallels that of the Roman centurion in Matt. 8:5-13. These are the only two healings in this Gospel explicitly involving Gentiles and accomplished from a distance. In both cases Jesus deems the people worthy of the gift of healing. In fascinating reversals, both Gentiles even become exemplar figures.

### **The significance of the text**

The text before us suggests and calls for several kinds of stretching. Geographic, ethnic, gender, religious, theological, socio-cultural, moral, and political dimensions are involved. No wonder, then, that the intrusion of the woman into his life and sense of vocation

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<sup>5</sup> Elaine M. Wainwright lucidly argues this point in *Shall We Look for Another? A Feminist Rereading of the Matthean Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis Bks., 1998), 86-92.

<sup>6</sup> In Loder's model, the Void ultimately denotes human existence "destined to annihilation...irrevocable drift toward utter emptiness and nothingness which accompanies human existence from the time of birth [and] has many faces—such as loneliness, depression, and death." (*The Transforming Moment*, p 230).

<sup>7</sup> For this way of restating the meaning of the encounter, I am indebted to my former student Leticia A. Guardiola-Sáenz, who shared with me a paper written during her doctoral work at Vanderbilt University (Summer 1998), "Jesus' Encounter with the Canaanite Woman: The 'Hybrid Moment' of the Matthean Community."

and ministry stunned Jesus. Because this narrative has much spatial and contextual import, it is fitting that our interpretation underscores that this marginal Canaanite woman emerges as the center of the story! In fact, the story is primarily her story. We observe a surprising, transforming reversal: Jesus comes to acknowledge that she has *great* faith. This Gospel uses that adjective to describe faith only once. The woman's faith encompasses her persistent demand for inclusion in the face of Jesus' resistance; her challenge to the gender, ethnic, religious, political, and economic barriers; her recognition of Jesus' authority over demons; and her reliance on his power.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps Jesus' praise includes a realization we can appreciate today as well: In that encounter in the borderlands, the Canaanite woman became a prophetic and wise teacher. Out of her desire for healing for her daughter, she acted and spoke counter-culturally and counter-politically as she reminded Jesus of the larger vision of the reign of God. And she did so in a way consistent with the converging prophetic and wisdom traditions with which Jesus/ Wisdom (Sophia) is interpreted in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>9</sup>

Put in other words, the Syrophoenician/Canaanite woman had approached Jesus as a care seeker on behalf of her daughter; in the process of her encounter with Jesus, she also ministered to him by eventually focusing on *negating (or contradicting) the negation* inherent in the dog-Gentile analogy traditionally used by the Jews. In terms of transformational logic, her bisociating insight indeed amounted to a constructive act of the imagination<sup>10</sup> which eventually resonated with Jesus' own imagination work. The encounter itself—the unique relationality linking Jesus and the foreign woman--was transformed: confrontation became a kind of collaborative work. And while the disciples seemed to fade in the background, the foreign woman became spiritually closer to Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

The most vexing question for us as pastoral caregivers and theologians is, of course, why Jesus would act as he initially did in this encounter. An answer requires that we maintain the tension between two historical realities pertaining to his socio-cultural reality or lived world. On the one hand, we must assume that Jesus had been socialized into the conventional wisdom of his time and dominant culture. According to such socialization, prudence involved keeping clear boundaries; adhering to certain criteria of what is proper, clean, normal, and appropriate; and holding to right categories and patterns of perception, thought, relationships. This socialization was undoubtedly part of Jesus' identity as a first-century Jew. From a human science perspective, we do not expect that Jesus would have

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<sup>8</sup> Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 324-5.

<sup>9</sup> Wainwright, *Shall We Look for Another?*, 88.

<sup>10</sup> According to James Loder's own definition, "bisociation" denotes the surprising convergence of two incompatible frames of reference to compose an original and meaningful unity; bisociation is the basic unit of an insight, which may include several bisociations to form a complex new meaning. And "constructive acts of imagination" are those insights, intuitions, or visions that appear—usually with convincing force—in the borderline area between consciousness and unconsciousness; they convey, in a form readily available to consciousness, the essence of a conflict resolution. Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, p. 222.

<sup>11</sup> A formal definition of when it is appropriate to identify change as *transformation*, is in order. According to Loder, "transformation occurs whenever, within a given frame of reference or experience, hidden orders of coherence and meaning emerge to replace or alter the axioms of the given frame and reorder its elements accordingly." *The Transforming Moment*, p. 229.

been exempt from dealing with prejudice. Neither do we expect that he would have spontaneously developed the kind of understanding enabling him to readily appreciate and communicate with the woman across vast ethnic, social, cultural, and religious differences. On the other hand, we must also recognize that Jesus of Nazareth was himself a marginal person.<sup>12</sup> He was rejected by the dominant groups and became a friend of marginalized people such as tax-collectors, outcasts, women, the poor and oppressed, "sinners," and Gentiles. In other words, Jesus related abnormally well to those people and was accepted by them, because he was himself an outsider, a homeless person (Matt. 8:20) living in two worlds without fully belonging to either.<sup>13</sup> In sum, from a theological perspective, whenever we look at Jesus the Christ we should see that the historical and existential reality of the incarnation is not only about "body" (*sōma*), but is also about "soul" (*psychē*) and "spirit" (*pneuma*). In other words, we propose to take seriously the New Testament references which point to a holistic anthropology.

An outsider, a multiply marginal person, challenged Jesus to relate and minister across and beyond those boundaries. She gave him an opportunity to respond in tune with God's alternative wisdom expressed in an ethic and politics of compassion and radical inclusiveness. It is fitting to conclude that Jesus faced a major conflict and temptation, indeed a temptation from within, and that eventually he chose wisely, even as he was creatively challenged by the foreign woman.<sup>14</sup>

As Jesus appropriated the woman's insight significantly expanding the contours of compassion and care, energy was released (he praised the woman in unusual terms, her daughter was healed, and then more miracles took place), and Jesus further engaged in interpretation and ministry in the light of God's reign. The personal drama and the behavior of the Syrophoenician/Canaanite woman became a kind of catalyst of the multifaceted transforming encounter in the borderlands: many barriers broke down, temptation was overcome, understandings were deepened, faith was affirmed, and a child was healed.

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<sup>12</sup> For a scholarly treatment of the marginality of Jesus, see John P Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> Jung Young Lee has insightfully discussed the question of Jesus and marginality in *Marginality: The Key to a Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr., 1995). Writing from an Asian (Korean) American perspective, Lee proposes "a new theology based on marginality, which serves not only as a hermeneutical paradigm but as a key to the substance of the Christian faith" (1).

<sup>14</sup> This conclusion need not compromise the christological conviction about the nature and work of Jesus as Christ. As Hebrews 4:15 puts it, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin." If we accept this interpretation, we must reject three other interpretations: (a) that Jesus was testing (that is, playing games with) the woman while knowing all along what he should and would do; (b) that he wanted to teach the disciples a dramatic lesson about loving enemies; or, as proposed by some radical feminists, (c) that Jesus had to be converted (repent from sin). The biblical text supports none of these interpretations. On the contrary, it is our view that the text implies the triumph of Jesus' (and the foreign woman's) spirit grounded and sustained by the Spirit of God. In fact, in addition to pertinent christological consideration, this gospel story illumines the question of how the spiritual life can become transcendent and at the same time preserve its immanent integrity in the context of human experience.

The story as it unfolds makes clear that both the woman and Jesus became boundary walkers and boundary breakers. By eventually choosing to relate and to minister "out of place," Jesus and the woman pointed the way to God's utopia. "Utopia" means literally "no place," not in the sense of never-never land, illusion, or fantasy, but as the stuff of realizable prophetic dreams. From a biblical perspective, utopias are places that are not yet, not because they are mere ideals beyond reach, but because evil and sinful structures and behaviors resist and contradict God's will for multidimensional (that is, ethnic, social, cultural, and religious) justice and reconciliation.

## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL AND VOCATIONAL FORMATION

We started considering the story of Jesus' encounter with the foreign woman with two questions: how may this biblical text become foundational for caregiving ministry?; how may this unique story illumine the challenges and possibilities of intercultural and interfaith spiritual care for Christian caregivers?

### **Applying the lessons from the text**

We may realize the creative and liberating potential of this narrative in many ways on personal and communal levels. The following interrelated guidelines illustrate how this text has become foundational for me and other pastoral caregivers or involved in intercultural and interfaith situations. Without trivializing the import of this wonderful story, I will briefly discuss three ways our text foundationally illumines specific and interrelated principles—that is, dependable guides to practice—for interfaith care ministry.

### **Marginality, vulnerability, and *vision***

First, contrary to what dominant cultures hold, the borderlands can become privileged places for the blessings of creative and transformative caring and for personal and communal growth and healing. Conventional and pragmatic wisdom favors the safe havens of familiar territory, the shrewd and sensible stance of "playing it safe." The story of the Canaanite woman who confronts Jesus helps us realize that we can see reality better at places of marginality and vulnerability and from the vantage point available to us at the borders. Our vision may thus be transformed. Hence, we are called to creative "willful contextual dislocations."<sup>15</sup> This story asks us to move deliberately beyond our comfort zones, either by going out or by welcoming into our midst the stranger, the alien, or the different other. By moving from the center to the margins, we will find our perspectives significantly changed: we will become aware of the lenses through which we view the world, and our cultural and ideological captivities will be unveiled. We will be open to see better how God wants us to live and care for others in creative, redeeming, and empowering ways wherever we are.

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<sup>15</sup> I have described the notion of willful (or voluntary) dislocation in connection with transformative learning in Daniel S. Schipani, "Liberation Theology and Religious Education," in *Theologies of Religious Education*, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Birmingham: Religious Education Pr., Inc., 1995), 308-10; and "Educating for Social Transformation," in *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning*, ed. Jack L. Seymour (Nashville: Abingdon Pr., 1997), 37-8.

Interfaith spiritual care situations present unique challenges and opportunities for pastoral caregivers to grow in *vision*, in the sense of perceiving care seekers and the very relationship of care with the eyes of God, as it were. That growth includes a number of dimensions and practices such as these: attentiveness, contemplation, and respectful and appreciative awareness of the uniqueness and value of the care receiver; critical thinking and creative imagination to deal with, and transform, barriers to communication and understanding and collaboration; spiritual discernment: (a) to recognize the care receivers' actual needs, hopes, and resourcefulness in their own terms; (b) to make available specific, pertinent care; and (c) to be intentionally open to receiving the spiritual gifts provided by those of other faiths. Finally, growth in *vision*, thus understood, must be considered together with growth in *virtue* and *vocation*, as defined below.

### **Conflict, suffering, and virtue**

A second guideline suggested by our study is that situations of conflict and suffering can become opportunities for transformation, for renewal and healing, and for witnessing God's amazing grace. People who hunger and thirst for wholeness, justice, freedom, and peace are especially close to the heart of God because their desire reflects God's own longing for all people. For this reason they are blessed (Matt. 5:3-11). For this reason the Canaanite woman was blessed. That is the meaning of the claim of liberation theologies, that God has a preferential option for the poor and oppressed, for the victim and the weak. According to the four Gospels, Jesus not only taught about this preference, he also showed concretely what it involves. In our story, the demonstration happened in a context of conflict and against Jesus's human inclinations! Christian pastoral caregivers are sent to continue his ministry and to embrace the ailing and suffering neighbor who longs for healing and hope. As we respond, our hearts will be nurtured and transformed.

Interfaith spiritual caregiving thus presents unique challenges and opportunities for pastoral caregivers to grow in *virtue*, in the sense of their hearts being formed in the light of Jesus Christ. In other words, the notion of "virtue" (singular) in this essay denotes the moral character of the caregiver. It can be described in terms of our innermost dispositions and attitudes, that is, the "habits of the heart" which help define the content of "Christian character." These are the deep affections and passions and, especially, the kinds of virtues (plural)<sup>16</sup> that, at their best, faith communities seek to foster and form in their members as genuine expressions of divine love and a way of life in the power of the Spirit. For pastoral caregivers, therefore, interfaith situations may become special places of grace as we are led and empowered to practice the values and the virtues essential for caring as representatives of Christ, such as humility, hospitality, love, compassion, patience, hope, generosity, and courage.

### **Mutuality, mission, and vocation**

Third, as Jesus himself may have experienced, ministry at its best is a two-way street, a mutual practice and process. For us in North America, the center of the center in the ongoing globalization process, this kind of ministry poses special challenges. To become

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<sup>16</sup> "Virtues" (in the plural) are those specific moral strengths, skills or capacities, and habits, which have particular moral significance. They are values that become character shaped by practice and discipline. Virtues are thus personal qualities constitutive of the moral character of pastoral caregivers, hopefully reflective of the character of the very faith communities they represent.

truly “missional,” our faith communities will have to undergo a conversion to the margins. Many of us Christians need to shed our exclusivist ideology of chosenness to better attend to our deepest yearnings, limitations, and needs, as well as to the potential and resourcefulness of others. We bless and we are in turn blessed, sometimes the hard way, in spite of our blinders and shortcomings. Often we will unexpectedly find ourselves being ministered to. In fact, we cannot truly participate in other people's liberation and healing without allowing them to participate in our own liberation and healing.

Interfaith spiritual caregiving presents unique challenges and opportunities for pastoral caregivers to grow in *vocation*, in the sense of partnership with the Spirit as the essence of our ministerial practice. In the process of interfaith caregiving our common human vocation in the light of God can be reconfirmed and sustained. Furthermore, for us today the twofold blessing of mutuality and partnership may include an additional realization: caring and being cared for in the borderlands, across and against boundaries of culture and faith, again and again becomes the sacred experience of encountering and loving Christ anew. In due time it will be revealed to us, as in the eschatological parable of Matt. 25:31-46:<sup>17</sup> "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

### **Growing in *pastoral wisdom***

How might the notion of “pastoral wisdom” help us to develop the thesis that interfaith care can serve as a laboratory for education and society? I want to share briefly with you my understanding of *pastoral wisdom* as further elaboration of the guidelines discussed above.<sup>18</sup> Wisdom in interfaith care involves not only what we know but also what we are and what we do. In other words, we may view pastoral wisdom as the integration of *knowing*, *being* and *doing*.

#### **On *knowing***

In order to grow in pastoral wisdom, spiritual caregivers must participate in the so-called “circle of learning”, which includes four dimensions: actual experience of being cared for and caring for others (learning by “feeling”); observation and reflection on care provided by others (learning by actively “seeing” and “hearing”); analysis of those practices of care (learning by “thinking”); and active experimentation with new ways of caring well for others (learning by “doing”). The more intentionally and consistently we participate in the four dimensions of the “circle”, the more likely that our knowing of interfaith care will increase. Therefore, supervision, seminars and consultation groups are fertile settings for developing knowledge and

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew's judgment scene in 25:31-46 is the culmination of a two-chapter eschatological discourse, and it has been interpreted in diverse ways. In any event, two things should be kept in mind. First, for Matthew, Jesus is identified with the (marginalized) community of disciples, and he is present with them as they engage in mission to communicate the gospel (18:20, 28:20). Second, in this text Jesus praises the actions of the righteous from "all the nations" (presumably Gentiles as well as Jews and Christians) because they have lived out the gospel by caring for the poor, oppressed, and marginalized; the actions of these "sheep" blessed by the Father are the practices of service expected of gospel bearers, followers of Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> For the following understanding of “pastoral wisdom” I am partially indebted to John Patton's thought as presented in his book, *Pastoral Care: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), chapters 1,2,3.

understanding related to spiritual care in interfaith situations.<sup>19</sup> Such comprehensive *knowing* in turn must always be closely related to the *being* and *doing* dimensions of pastoral wisdom.

### **On being**

Pastoral wisdom is also a matter of “being” as well as “being with,” that is, *presence*. Caregiving in interfaith situations involves special sensitivity and self-awareness regarding what one feels and experiences in the relationship. It also involves the sense that one represents not only a religious tradition and community but also, somehow, healing Grace. Indeed we deem such embodiment essential to remind care receivers that the Divine caring presence is available. Therefore, the sense of personal and professional (ministerial) identity is an essential component of being and presence. It is in fact indispensable to engage the care receiver in a relationship characterized first of all by respectful attending and listening. Such relationship allows the spiritual caregiver to be a witness, not primarily to “tell” things, let alone to tell care receivers how to fix their situation, but rather to “ad-mire”, to behold with love and hope the mystery that is the stranger.

### **On doing**

*Guidance* is a word that names well what we actually do in spiritual care. On the one hand, pastoral caregivers are responsible for guiding the actual caregiving process as such. In that sense, guidance is a form of leading which includes, for example, setting appropriate boundaries of time, space, contact, and remaining fully aware of what is going on in the caregiving process. Guidance may of course include gently probing questions, encouragement and support, instructing, confronting, and mediating. On the other hand, except in certain emergency or crisis situations, spiritual caregivers will not be directive and try to resolve the problems and struggles faced by care receivers. Especially in interfaith situations, wise caregivers will rather remind patients or counselees of specific spiritual resources that have been part of their lives or that may be now available for them. In short, guidance will optimally be a practice of wisdom—to know how to actually care well in interfaith situations.<sup>20</sup>

In light of this presentation so far, it is clear that the theological education and ministerial formation of interfaith spiritual caregivers must include three equally important and interrelated dimensions, namely, academic, personal-spiritual, and professional. The *academic* formation is obviously indispensable because, among other contents, it includes learning about one’s own religious tradition and heritage and as much as possible about other traditions; it also includes learning about the social and cultural contexts of our work. The *personal-spiritual* formation focuses on our identity and integrity as spiritual caregivers who represent a given tradition; it

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<sup>19</sup> Together with chaplain Leah Dawn Bueckert I co-led a year-long (2006-07) seminar group jointly sponsored by the Associated mennonite Biblical Seminary and the Pastoral Care Department of Lutheran Hospital of Indiana. Activities aimed at increasing the knowledge of interfaith spiritual care included preparation and analysis of spiritual care situations, discussion of readings and special topics of concern, and engagement in conversation with other health care professionals.

<sup>20</sup> There is actually an interesting etimological connection between *wisdom* and *guidance*. In English, the words *wisdom* and *wise* dwerive from an Indo-European root, *weid-*, which means *to see* or *to know*. They are related to the Greek *eidos* (idea, form, seeing), to the Latin *videre* (to see), and to the modern German *wissen* (to know). And the word *guide* comes from an ancient Romanic word, *widare* , which means to know. The words *wise*, *wisdom*, *wit*, and *guide*, all share the same origin.

involves nurturing our moral character. And the *vocational-professional* formation centers on the development of those clinical and other competencies necessary for caring effectively well.

I started with a focus on the risks and possibilities of interfaith care by examining Jesus' encounter with a foreign woman. I then proceeded to draw some lessons applicable to present practice and introduced the notion of pastoral wisdom. I will now suggest two sets of implications for our educational endeavors in our times of globalization, pluralism, fragmentation, and search for identity, vocation, and community.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

As I mentioned earlier, in this lecture I am exploring a thesis which is reflected in the title—"Interfaith Care: Laboratory for Education and Society". I propose that the *private* ministry of interfaith care and counseling, regardless specific settings where it can happen, serves as a special place to envision not only a better life but also the good community. Therefore, such potential contribution should have an impact on the *public* realm of education. I believe that reflection on interfaith care indeed helps us to illumine educational endeavors for the spiritual formation of persons and communities.

Spirituality and spiritual formation, broadly speaking) belong in the curriculum and in public policy because education, together with psychotherapy, counseling, and pastoral care, is a *practical human science*. We may recall that philosophy of science classifies scientific disciplines including "practical human sciences" as one of the categories. These disciplines are concerned with human life and behavior in the context of family and community systems, institutions and cultures. They must necessarily deal with formation and transformation processes in persons and communities with the help of certain normative frameworks that define "growth" and "maturation", "good life", "good community" and so on. They must also deal with corrective, re-orienting, and transformational processes. In fact, the practice of those human sciences aims at promoting human development and good quality of life; therefore they are inherently directive at least in a general sense. Both educators and caregivers must intentionally structure, guide, and assess those processes of learning and growth and healing in light of fundamental questions such as these: what is the way forward in human becoming?; "how shall we contribute to sustain quality human life and the integrity of the non-human environment?; how shall our efforts lead to community building and to live in peace, justice and freedom? In the following section I will briefly propose two closely related ways in which the laboratory of interfaith care may illumine the public domain of education: the first has to do with our understanding of knowing and the second with our view of the human self.

#### **Epistemological Reformulation**

Wisdom is concerned with the creation, nurturing, flourishing, and restoration of the good life. If we view *wisdom* as the key metaphor for both pastoral care and counseling and the science of education, the common interests of these two disciplines and fields of action and the potential for mutual illumination between the two become more and more apparent.

First of all we must recognize the limitations of the dominant epistemology in the western philosophical-cultural tradition, especially those associated with the Enlightenment and Modernism such as a narrow view of rationality, objectivism, empiricism, elitism, and dualism. In short, that epistemology betrays reductionism and has been challenged by the “postmodernist” movement. Within this rather amorphous movement, contributions from feminist epistemology are of special interest. I believe that it is helpful to reject traditional reductionisms and critically and creatively consider so-called postmodern views of knowing, meaning making and truth in order to better appreciate the notion of wisdom in the light of God and spiritual formation as a goal in both caring and educating.

Secondly, we must recover the rich biblical tradition of wisdom as a way of doing theology which can supply rich foundational material for both care and counseling and educational ministries.<sup>21</sup> From a practical-theological perspective, such wisdom is functionally understood as the human spirit seeking to be in tune with the creative, redemptive and empowering Spirit of God.

The term *wisdom* connotes a holistic way of knowing which includes discernment, making good choices, and living well in community. Another way of underscoring the significance of this notion is by using as equivalent the concept of *moral and spiritual intelligence*. I propose that an essential goal of both care and counseling and educational ministries, is awaking, nurturing, and developing the moral and spiritual intelligence. Moral and spiritual intelligence includes not only multidimensional cognition but much more: ethical and moral dimensions on personal, interpersonal, and socio-political levels are included as well. In fact we may consider this wisdom or spiritual intelligence as the key manifestation of the human spirit (which I will characterize a bit later in terms of *vision, virtue, and vocation*).

Wisdom thus understood includes not only the search for meaning but, especially, the competence of discernment. Discernment is the capacity not only to choose the better ways to reach certain goals and realize certain ideals but also to identify the better goals to pursue and ideals to follow. Therefore, wisdom may also be viewed as an existential disposition to live with integrity; it includes, of course, the disposition and capacity to suffer and even to die with integrity as well. Wisdom thus defines not only the behavior but also the character of the person.

Even though we can define “wisdom” in simply terms—knowing how to live well—the concept has complex connotations. The sources of wisdom are, on the one hand, internal resources (e.g. disposition to learn, wish grow, will to heal; positive values and virtues; emotional, social, and spiritual competencies, etc.). On the other hand, growing in wisdom also depends on external resources (e.g. significant and consistent examples of wise living; encouragement and support for learning and growing; moral and spiritual orientation, etc.). In any event, as already indicated, wisdom is a unique expression of the human spirit. And, from a theological perspective, wisdom in the light of God is the essential foundation and ultimate goal of our best human endeavors, such as the practices of caring and educating.

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<sup>21</sup> See Daniel S. Schipani, *The Way of Wisdom in Pastoral Counseling* (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2003); and Peter C. Hodgson, *God’s Wisdom: Toward a Theology of Education* (Louisville; Westminster John Knox Press, 1999).

## Anthropological Reformulation

When we talk about connecting spirituality and education we may think of certain specific behaviors, qualities and potential that are uniquely human. We are “spiritual” because we are “human”. Human beings are fundamentally spiritual. In other words, spirituality is not a condition that some people have or somehow gain by their own efforts or by divine grace. Spirituality is not a synonym for religiosity or for a certain way of living out religious faith. Instead, we might say that we are genetically equipped as spiritual beings. As such we are capable of loving, appreciating and developing a sense of transcendence, embodying values and purposeful vocation, creativity, meaning and hope, among other possibilities. Those uniquely human potentialities need to be actualized; however, for a variety of reason, they can be distorted, suppressed, or misdirected.

Of course, these topics have been considered throughout history with a variety of philosophical and theological perspectives on the human spirit. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the starting point for reflection is the claim that only humans represent the image of God created “in his image, “according to [his] likeness” (Gen 1:26-27). In the words of Paulo Freire, Brazilian pedagogue and philosopher of education, we human have an *ontological vocation* to create community, culture, history even as we are at the same time reshaped by community, culture, and history. Freire also identified condition of “submersion” connected with oppressive social structures as well as ways to foster human emergence (humanization, human becoming) with transformed educational and health care systems at the service of the people.<sup>22</sup>

To reclaim a central place for spirituality and spiritual formation as a principal goal in the educational curriculum calls for an anthropological re-framing, that is, a change in our way of conceptualizing the human self as spirit.<sup>23</sup> I propose that we change the view of the threefold structure of the self as psyche in light of a normative pastoral theological frame of reference. In that light, I suggest that the categories discussed earlier--*vision*, *virtue*, and *vocation*—serve to structurally define the shape of the human spirit. Therefore they can also be considered to formulate the overarching educational goal of education for human development and community building. The following descriptions include the traditional understandings in a new configuration.

**Vision** in this context has a multiple meaning. It denotes ways of paying attention, admiring and contemplating other people and relationships, the world, life, history, wondering, etc. As a dimension of the human spirit, vision is also perspective and viewpoint (consider for example the epistemic value of marginality underscored earlier). Human development in terms of vision is also about critical awareness and thinking and creative imagination (for instance,

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<sup>22</sup> See Paulo Freire main works, such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* rev. ed.(N.York: Continuum, 1994); and *Pedagogy of Hope* (N. York: Continuum, 1994)

<sup>23</sup> “Self” traditionally refers to the embodied configuration of rationality, affectivity, and volition, that uniquely defines and expresses our personhood. Those dimensions have also been traditionally identified with roughly equivalent labels such as “mind”, “heart”, and “will”. In the history of psychology in the West, this traditional division of human behavior and the corresponding view of the psyche as such goes back at least to Aristotle (see his *De Anima*). Philosophers and psychologists have repeatedly employed analogous tripartite organizations in terms of cognition, feeling, and conation. Interestingly enough, similar categories have been used to articulate educational goals and objectives in education (including Christian and theological education) in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral “domains”.

visualizing “utopian” possibilities in the face of struggle or injustice). This notion of vision also includes discernment in search of knowing and truth. Therefore, “vision” is more than cognition and is closely related to *faith* (broadly as well as narrowly understood) as an essentially human disposition—a way of seeing and knowing, a search for and construction of meaning and valuing.

***Growing in, and teaching for vision***, theologically speaking, connotes to learn to see reality with God’s eyes, metaphorically speaking (or, with the “mind of Christ”, I Cor 2:16). “Vision” here means not only perception of the world and oneself but also the sensitivity and disposition to see what God wants and to look in godly ways (e.g. with compassionate longing for healing and community). The point I am trying to make is that, from a Christian perspective, it is possible and indeed necessary to contribute to redefine specific educational objectives for our times, for example by promoting among the learners the practices highlighted above (appreciation of mystery, wonder, attentiveness, etc.). Those goals and objectives, like in the case of spiritual care, must also include resistance to and transformation of the contradictions to “vision” in our culture and institutions such as inattentiveness, illusion, deceit and reality distortion, denial, ignorance, and meaninglessness.

***Virtue*** refers to character and the formation of the heart. Interestingly, the “later” Freire emphasized the need for educators to cultivate indispensable virtues (in plural), that is values which become character: humility, hospitality, respect, compassion, generosity, patience, courage, joy, among others.<sup>24</sup> The idea is that those and other virtues are formed in the very process of teaching and learning and in consistency with our religious, political and ethical convictions. If vision connects directly with faith, “virtue” (singular) is fundamentally associated with *love*, the greatest virtue of all.

***Growing in, and teaching for virtue***, from a Christian theological perspective is about developing the character of Christ with the qualities of Spirit fruit (Gal 5:22-26), especially in terms of human relations on all levels. In other words, from this perspective, I claim, it is possible to promote spiritual formation in non-sectarian ways while advocating the ethics and politics theologically interpreted as consistent with *shalom* (comprehensive peace with justice and wellbeing for all) and the reign of God. Therefore, it is also necessary to resist and confront the manifold contradiction to “virtue” in our culture and institutions, such as the pervasive lure of conventional morality and conformity, and the domestication of conscience and character.

***Vocation*** is the third dimension in the proposed model of the human spirit. Human development in terms of vocation includes, in the words of James W. Fowler, the orchestration of our relationships, our recreation and leisure, our work, our private and public lives, and the gifts, energies, time, and resources we steward. It is focusing our lives in the service of God, in the love of neighbor, and in the care of the nonhuman world as well.<sup>25</sup> Rightly understood, vocation gives coherence and larger purpose to our lives. Vocation also involves a process of commitment, and ongoing discerning of talents and giftedness in community. Therefore, vocation is closely connected to vision and virtue as briefly described here, and is a function of

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<sup>24</sup> Paulo Freire, *Letters to Cristina: Reflections on My Life and Work* (N. York and London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>25</sup> James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christia: Human Development and Christian Faith*, rev. ed. (S. Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), chapters 4,5.

*hope* because, without hope, it is not possible to sustain life, to struggle and to create and recreate.

***Growing in, and teaching for vocation***, in Christian theological perspective, means to find ways of living in the world that are consistent with the purposes and activities of God. Practically speaking, then, the focus on vocation encourages us to become partners with the Spirit in ways that are creative, sustaining, guiding, reconciling, liberating, empowering and healing. Further, vocation thus understood also involves not only a set of activities and relationships but a whole lifestyle. In light of our proposal, such lifestyle can present creative alternatives to those socio-cultural realities that generate apathy or mere accommodation in terms of prevailing values and practices such as individualism, competition, over-consumption, and militarism. In sum, the dream of the good society is a realizable dream!

I have tried to demonstrate that the private ministries of interfaith care and counseling supply useful material for consideration in the public domain of education. This is the case when we perceive education as focused primarily on the formation and transformation of the human spirit. May we all have the blessed experience to participate in some way in the multifaceted arts of guiding learning and fostering growth and healing. May we be inspired anew by the legacy of John Amos Comenius, with a hope-filled, prophetic and ecumenical vision of solidarity, reconciliation, and peace.

## Changes in the society and the churches The social situation in Slovakia today

Ján Bunčák, PhD

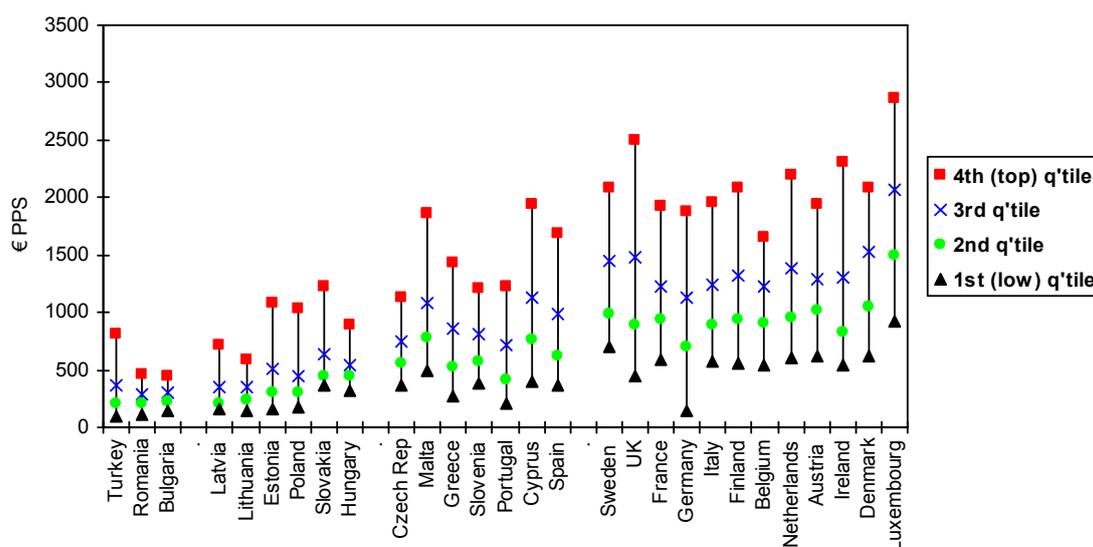
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### I. The social situation

Slovakia and other post-communist countries, have been confronted with the task of a establishing a new social policy. They still have to cope with problems relating to the painful process of system transformation and economic restructuring. These large-scale social and economic changes have resulted in an increased risk of social exclusion and poverty for some social groups. However, the collapse of the socialistic system has offered them the chance to establish innovative social protection systems.

According to the conclusions of European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the richest former EU state (Luxembourg) has a GDP per capita 2.8 times that of the poorest (Greece). This is already a wide regional disparity. In the USA, by contrast, the richest states such as Connecticut and Massachusetts have an economic output per capita that is less than twice that of the poorest states such as Mississippi and Arkansas. However, when the EU increases to 25 states, the disparity in GDP per capita between Luxembourg and the poorest new state (Latvia) will widen to a 6.5 fold differential. Moreover, many of the former communist countries in central and eastern Europe experienced sharp economic decline following the collapse of communism in the late 1980s. Some countries, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia weathered the transition relatively well. Large proportions of the population in other countries, however, suffered from economic insecurity and loss of living standards. Even countries such as Lithuania, currently experiencing rapid economic growth, are still only returning to the level of economic output and macroeconomic stability they experienced prior to 1989. Thus, they are not only disadvantaged relative to the EU average but also relative to their past.

Figure 1: Median household income in income quartiles



People in post-communist countries partially compensate for low income by growing vegetables or keeping livestock. On average, more than 40% of households in those countries report that they grow crops or keep livestock in order to increase their standard of living, compared to only 8% in former EU 15 countries. Hence, people participate in multiple economies to earn their living.

By and large, living space is smaller in those countries, homes are less comfortable, and neighbourhoods are not as safe. One in five households have housing problems such as rotting windows, damp and leaks, or no indoor flushing toilet: in former EU 15, fewer than 10% of households face these problems. In the case of the post-communist countries, the privatisation policy of the 1990s gave many people the opportunity to turn from tenant to home owner, this certainly helps people to get by on a smaller income.

People in eastern Europe work longer hours than their western EU counterparts. Around 40% of employed men report working 48 hours or more a week, compared to one third in the western EU 15. Women also work longer, since full-time arrangements are the norm in those countries.

Family patterns are somewhat different across Europe, particularly for the young and for the elderly. Altogether, the young remain longer in the parental home in central-eastern Europe than in western Europe, but they become parents earlier. In general, one-person households are more prevalent in western than in eastern Europe. In general, support from family members is found to be more important.

Subjective well-being is lower in the post-communist countries. This is true for life satisfaction and happiness, which overlap to a large extent. There is a considerable gap in subjective well-being, echoing the gaps found in objective living conditions, especially economic resources and living standards, working conditions and health. In most western EU countries, the least satisfied groups are still more satisfied than affluent groups in eastern Europe. This mainly reflects the huge difference in living standards between these two groups of countries. In the Nordic countries - Denmark, Sweden and Finland - only a small minority of citizens have to deal with material deprivation, economic strain, poor housing conditions and dissatisfaction with life. Even in the lowest income quartile, living conditions and subjective well-being are for the most part better than for a huge share of the population of the eastern Europe. In contrast, low income, low levels of education, and unemployment affect quality of life much more strongly in the less well-off countries. Hence, in the post-communist countries, differences in quality of life between rich and poor, highly and poorly educated, and high-status and low-status occupations are much more marked than in the West.

However, individual well-being is also affected by the social context in which individual lives are embedded. Countries where citizens have little trust in the quality of political institutions, or perceive the societies they live in as conflict-ridden, lack an important element of welfare; a lack of trust in political institutions or in the organisation of society breeds insecurity and promotes worries about the sustainability of the existing level of personal welfare. The widespread discontent with the public sector in the post-communist countries probably reflects quality gaps in public provision, deficits of which east European citizens are obviously painfully aware.

Hence, country groups, which are faced with very different living conditions, have become apparent with EU enlargement: (1) The old northern and western European Member States; (2) the old Mediterranean Member States (Greece, Portugal and Spain), (3) the most well-off new EU countries (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Malta and Slovenia) and (4) the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) together with Hungary, Poland and Slovakia followed by Bulgaria and Romania.

## II. Churches and religious life in Slovakia and in post-communist Europe

Table 1 shows the relation to faith as a whole in the transforming countries of Central Europe in 1998. Tomka and Zulehner (Miklós Tomka and Paul M. Zulehner: *Gott nach dem Kommunismus*, Religion in den Reformländer Ost (Mittel) Europas. Eine Studie des Pastoralen Forums. Wien, 1999.) divide the Central European countries into three groups:

a) Catholic countries with a minority of people without denomination (Poland 89% Roman Catholics, 11% without denomination; Croatia 82% Roman Catholics and 16% without denomination; Lithuania 66% Roman Catholics and 29% without denomination; Slovenia 62% Roman Catholics and 32% without denomination; Slovakia 57% Roman Catholics, 28% without denomination, and 10% Protestant minority; Hungary 42% Roman Catholics, 40% without denomination, 15% Protestant minority);

b) Eastern Orthodox countries with other religious minorities or a significant proportion of the people without denomination (Romania 71% Orthodox, 12% Protestants, and 9% Roman Catholics; Ukraine 22% Orthodox, 6% Greek Catholics, 68% without denomination);

c) Countries with the majority of persons without denomination (the former German Democratic Republic area within Germany 74% without denomination, 20% Protestant, 5% Roman Catholic; Czech Republic 73% without denomination and 23% Roman Catholic minority).

**Table 1: Religious denomination in Central European post-Communist countries**

	Profess religio n	Roman Catholi c	Byzanti ne Catholi c	Orthod ox	Protesta nt	Other	Withou t denomi nation	Christe ned – non- membe rs	non- Christe ned	Christe ned – excom municat ed	Did not answer
Romania	96	9	1	71	12	4	4	2	0	0	2
Poland	90	89	0	0	0	1	11	5	0	1	5
Croatia	84	82	0	1	0	1	16	10	5	0	1
Slovakia	72	57	4	1	9	1	28	21	5	0	2
Lithuania	71	66	0	2	1	2	29	23	3	1	2
Slovenia	65	62	0	1	0	2	35	23	7	1	4
Hungary	60	42	1	0	15	2	40	29	7	1	3
Ukraine	32	1	6	22	0	2	68	55	11	0	2
Czech Republic	27	23	0	0	1	3	73	37	34	1	1
Germany (GDR)	26	5	0	0	20	1	74	19	36	16	3

In Slovakia, between 1991 and 1999 the number of persons professing specific religion increased from 71 to 77%. Table 2 shows the increase in the number of persons belonging to the Slovak Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of the Augsburg Confession, the Byzantine Catholic Church and small non-Christian Churches. There are two factors that

might cause the growth in small and smaller Churches. The first is the slower return of their potential members, who had been christened but did not practice religion, to their traditional religion inherited from their parents. The second factor might be the rediscovered fascination, particularly of the young people, by the warmth of the community and emotionality of the small Churches. The converts belonging to the generation brought up under the Communist rule are convinced that the "true" religion is a matter of the purely individual decision. Religion is to them something that they have experienced themselves during their conversion.

**Table 2: Religious denominations in Slovakia**

Church	1991	1999
Roman Catholic	58	59
Evangelical (Lutheran)	7	9
Byzantine Catholic	3	5
Other Christian	2	2
Orthodox	1	1
Other	0	1
Not given	29	23

After 1989, Slovakia witnessed the change in the climate from anti-religion to pro-religion and the return to the acceptance of the religious faith as a social norm. Symptomatically, the people's declarations of whether they are believers or non-believers showed a decrease, particularly in the number of undecided persons indifferent to the issue of faith, whereas the proportion of non-believers and convinced atheists remained almost the same. The change of the religious atmosphere in Slovakia as a whole is also evident from the pro-religion orientation of the new political elite. The switch in the behaviour of the politicians and civil servants, former members and functionaries of the Communist party is transparent: they introduce themselves in public as people who have always been believers, but had to conceal their positive relation to the Church under coercion. We can even express a hypothesis that emphasizing one's personal Christian orientation, similarly as stressing one's personal nationality and ethnicity became after 1989 one of the frequently used vehicles for the protection of the endangered prestige. I look therefore at the change of the religious orientation of those undecided and indifferent as a manifestation of social conformity.

**Table 3: Regard themselves as:**

	1991	1999
A religious person	69	77
Not a religious person	16	13
A convinced atheist	3	4
Don't know	12	6

The Church is, in the opinion of the respondents in 1991 and 1999, competent chiefly in satisfying the spiritual needs. All or almost all those who profess a faith agree with such a position and the competence of the Church increased just as the number of its members. The competence of the Church in Slovakia is significantly lower in answering the moral problems of an individual and the problems of the family life. In 1999, a bit more than 50% of respondents regarded the Church as competent in those areas. The Church in Slovakia is only exceptionally viewed as competent in solving the topical social problems.

**Table 4: Views on the competence of the Church in Slovakia**

<b>Do you think that your Church is giving, in Slovakia, adequate answers to:</b>		1991	1999
The moral problems and needs of the individual	Yes	47	55
	No	27	26
	Don't know	26	19
Problems of the family life	Yes	46	53
	No	32	30
	Don't know	22	17
People's spiritual needs	Yes	62	72
	No	17	14
	Don't know	21	14
The social problems facing Slovakia today	Yes	22	22
	No	49	52
	Don't know	28	26

The historical reality interconnecting the central European countries is the experience with the Church policy of the communist regime. Elimination of the Church from public life, violation of their organisational structure, restriction imposed on religious education and other repressive measures against their independence belonged to the communist anti-religious policy. One of such general measures was the introduction of legal and political equality between great "historical" Churches and small denominations. All Churches, regardless of their historical and political significance were placed on the same level of social unimportance as the smallest legal religious organisation. The pressure led to the interruption of the consciousness of any connection between the Church and the religious life on the one hand and the expansion of society on the other hand.

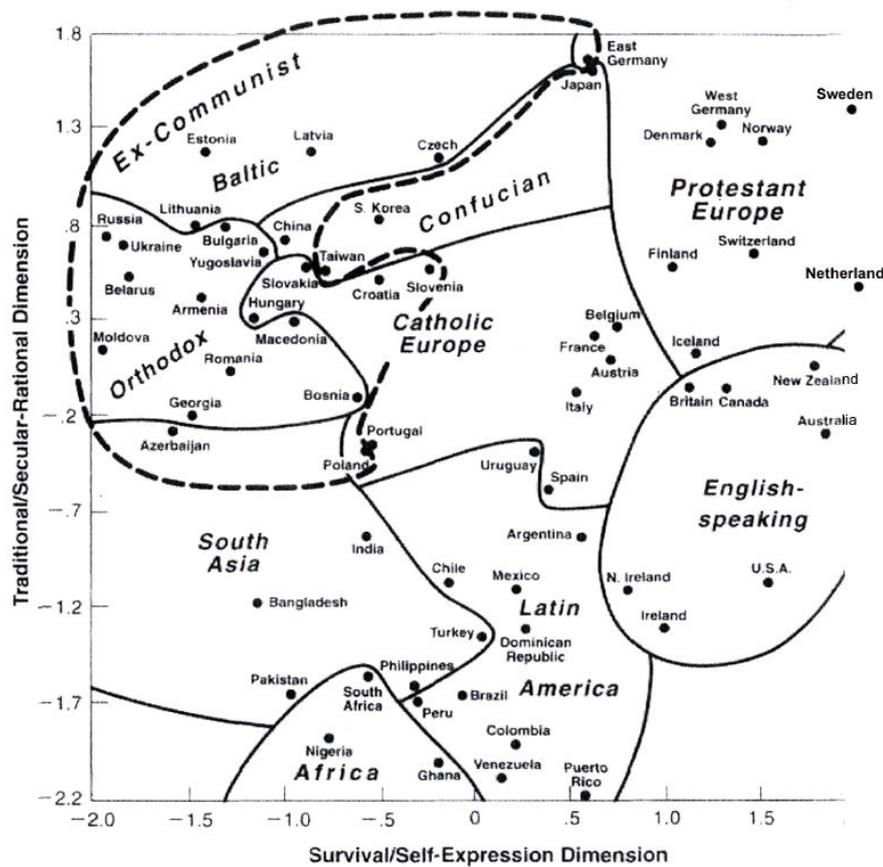
Before World War II, traditional churches were significant actors in the process of modernisation, especially in education, in social and health care and in the general public education, e.g., in the area of suppressing alcoholism and the introduction of modern forms of the organisation of public life. In Slovakia, these activities also involved the area of mutual economic assistance (building fraternities), banking and co-operatives. The connection between the Church activities and the building of the foundations of modern society dates from the mid-eighteenth century, that is, the beginnings of the Enlightenment and of the national revival in Slovakia. The fact that the Church could not fulfill the role of the conservative actor of social modernisation made the great Churches in Central Europe after WW II into the protectors of the traditional folk religion and the elementary religious instruction. The Communist regime weakened the Churches' positions and complicated the search for their place in the contemporary phase of modernisation.

No adequate name has been found for the period of the 1950s. The concept of secularisation does not elucidate either the relatively high religiosity in the years of the greatest persecution immediately after the Communist coup d'état or the surprisingly sudden growth of religiosity in the 1960s and 1970s. The religious revitalisation in the 1980s fully contradicts any prognoses based on the theory of secularisation. Understanding of religious changes in the period of Communism and after requires new theoretical constructions.

In spite of the similar functions of the religion in their support of national identity and common experience with communism, there are significant differences between the countries

of Central Europe in their relation to religion. In addition to differences in the declared religious denomination some authors alert to the differences in the structural arrangement of the values associated with the religious faith. R. Inglehart and W. Baker point to the extraordinary structural closeness of the basic value orientations in Hungary and in Slovakia. (R. Inglehart, W. Baker, "Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values", *American Sociological Review* 65, 1, 2000, pp. 19–48.) Slovakia's declared type of the relation to religion is close to that in Hungary. It significantly differs from the type that is characteristic of the Czech Republic. Generally, we can observe the closeness of basic value orientations in all former Old Hungarian Kingdom countries.

**Figure 2: Similarities in value orientations across the world**  
(R. Inglehart and W. Baker)



### III. Faith without trust: problem in post-communist countries and Slovakia

To measure the quality of a society at a very general level, the question whether the citizens trust each other is usually employed in the social sciences. In this understanding, it paraphrases a kind of social capital, which is a necessary ingredient for the functioning of a society. To compare the 25 European countries in terms of social capital of their societies, we asked the respondents (in European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions survey) to rate their trust on a scale from one (can't be too careful in dealing with people) to 10 (most people can be trusted).

The old EU countries' citizens are most trustful, they show the highest mean (5.8). The Scandinavian societies perform best in this field, and Finland (with a mean of 7.1) is at the top. Lowest trust in people within old EU countries is to be found in Greece (4.7) and Portugal (5.0). For new members countries Estonia, Slovenia and Romania show the highest trust (both 5.4), the lowest level in this respect have Cyprus (4.1), Bulgaria (4.4) and Slovakia (4.5). At least the results for Greece and Cyprus can be interpreted as a kind of a mentality pattern of the Greek people. The differences in the mean between several social groups within the countries - which are not shown in detail here - hardly exceed one scale point, confirming this way the mentality hypothesis, because all citizens of a given society come to the same evaluation.

**Table 5: Trust in people: groups of EU countries**

10 point scale (10=high trust)

Mean over 6	Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands
Mean from 5 to 6	Ireland, Austria, UK, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Estonia, Slovenia, Romania, Luxembourg
Mean from 4 to 5	Portugal, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Czech Rep., Malta, Poland, Greece, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Cyprus

Comparing level of trust in other people with number of those professing a religion in post-communist countries, we can easily observe serious discrepancy between trust and religious faith. According to figures, even believers do not trust to other member of the same religious community. Life in post-communist countries is very sad, it life in which people are living without common trust. This living situation is pushing them to accept religious and many other faiths, for example faith to esoteric thinks, lucky charms, reincarnation, and in Slovakia in a special invent, angelology. But their life is still without trust, and I am afraid, even "In God we Trust" from American dollar bills is completely not understanding in many post-communist countries.

Origin of that fact we may partially find in thinking people were told under communism. It was world, where people were led by the state order – prohibition system. This communist authoritarian world was in months changed do democratic one, working on the principle of recommendation or warning. Unfortunately it is not the end of story. Democracy is accompanied by free market, where recommendation – warning is legally abused by market oriented companies. Public relations, marketing and omnipotence advertisements industry presents public recommendations and strategies of gaining the trust of people as integral part of business. Would you trust to the information that you will got ability to fly after use of energetic beverage? Or to information, you will be very rich after investing your life savings into some investment company? Many people in Slovakia trusted.

Unfortunately, transition to democracy in post communist countries had place in so called post-modern times, when many institutions, altogether with churches, changed their public strategies. It was the period of increasing religious fundamentalism. In present times, big traditional churches often prefer order – prohibition than recommendation – warning attitude to social phenomenon. Abortion or homosexual partnerships are good illustrations in case of Christian Churches. In Slovakia in situation, when people accept competence

On this place I must finish, here is the limit of sociological explanation and ability to give an advice. The place is open for moral philosophy, theology and pastoral work. My question is clear: how to overcome the gap between faith and trust in post-communist countries?

## Slovak identity: psychologist's view

Emil Komárik

Ladies and gentlemen

It is almost impossible for a psychologist to speak about the word "identity" - a word that has so many definitions that nobody knows what the actual identity is! So let's start with the basic framework of the issue.

It could help us to better comprehend this "identity" if we would agree that one substantial part of it is a faith about oneself. I am speaking about faith because it comes from the same source as the religious faith. It is the part of the one's worldview describing what a man (or a woman) believes about oneself: "*that* he is" or "*what* he is."

Faith is inescapably united with language. By this I mean that we could not have any belief without a declaration of the content of this belief. This is, however, only one part of the truth. Our brains and minds are self-governed by two communication channels, and we manage our life in two languages. The first is the language that our cells use to communicate within our body. The second is the interpersonal language that we use to communicate with people around us. We become integrally human only when BOTH of our languages go together and work in accordance with each other. Therefore, faith cannot be only the affair of words. Our identity needs the deep consent of our body.

The problem of identity arises from the fact that we, as persons, are not able to live without the interdependence of others and without being weaved into the network of relationships. **We also cannot live independently of certain collectivities. Like prisoners, we (sometimes) act with our hands, but not our minds.** Someone else decides what we have to do and we simply obey. Nevertheless we have installed some kind of fuse, which prevents us from being drowned in the collectivities in which we live.

The problem of identity consists mainly in the question of how an individual (knowing that he cannot only be a particle of collectivity) resolves the dilemma of his conformity to the masses on the one side, and his irreplaceable individuality on the

other.

An individual approaches collectivity from two perspectives. He may either accept collectivity as a shield to cover oneself from the evils of the world (and so is supposed to pay for it with his obedience and surrender), or he can consider the collectivity his possession to which he is obligated and which he can rule at the same time. (*Remember Thomas Becket with this regard*).

The specific type of collectivity and the individual's status within its framework are significant factors upon which faith in oneself depends. The family is the first of such collectivities. Our names are the elementary beliefs we carry inside of us within the family. We believe that the names themselves declare our individuality. Other kinds of identity within the family are transitive. We proceed from a dependent child to a responsible adult, able to form our own family. The same process can also be seen in artificial groups of individuals formed for cooperative work. Here also individuals go through the period of "storming" in the battle for positions of responsibility and power, which ends by accepting the identity of oneself and every other member.

Cultural groupings, and culture as a whole, are built on the language. A cultural unit cannot be created, unless the people are able to communicate. Their language becomes an important identifier of the cultural identity (*Remember the "shibboleth"*). Cultural units are also being put together on the base of beliefs about the virtues and abilities of collectivities to be able to provide for their participants, to save their lives, give them safety, peace, and just conflict resolution and give them the protection of their possessions and their personal dignity. Although the cultural units historically are the products of human endeavor, the specific individual is thrown into them; he is born and raised into the membership of cultural entities.

When we look on the identity of the Slovak people, from this point of view, we have to accept some specific temperamental traits prevailing in the Slovak population. Among others it is to mention some stubbornness, industry, hospitality and inability to make a business from them.

With regard to the social factors we can state that families in Slovakia are a very important part of their identity. A specific trait in Slovak history is the absence of

long lasting family chains that are based upon nobility or property ownership. Nobility was always identified with the Hungarian nation and separated from others by language (first by Latin and later by Hungarian). A family's land could not serve as the inter-generational basis of identity, because according to Hungarian law, property was to be divided among all the heirs. Families were not anchored together by the identity of ownership. Only two working family lines can be found in Slovak history: the families of Lutheran pastors and the families of urban craftsmen. So the "time" dimension of Slovak families generally does not exceed four generations. But the "space" dimension is fairly rich. Kinship, in-law and co-paternity principles are still taken as the source of the close family network.

As to the culture, Slovak society is firmly bonded to ones village, birthplace, and neighborhood. There is a saying that Slovaks live the way of carrier pigeons. Whenever they go away, they tend to come back to their homeland or even to their hometown.

Taken historically, Slovaks see no value in the concept of statehood. States were always perceived as alien phenomena. Obedience used to be a shield and a ruler, but never a value which to be responsible for. **It was unknown in language**, run by foreign officers and mostly provided only oppression. It is good to know that the same expectations prevail recently with regard to the EU as well!

The church in Slovakia (instead of a state) has been the unifying cultural institution. Being in a religious community, it allowed the overcoming of language barriers in the multi-ethnic society. Religious wars in later years created very strong allegiances to specific denominations. (Proverb: *Firm as a Helvetic faith*). Church affiliation is still a strong aspect of self-definition, although it frequently has nothing to do with personal religious faith. The presence of different denominations in the same territory has led to remarkable religious tolerance.

The Slovak people have lived for a long time in connection with two peoples: Hungarians and Gypsies (Romas). Actually, Slovaks and Hungarians share the same value system (with the exception of language), and these two peoples are more similar than anybody is willing to accept. The language differences and vestiges of the common history make them slightly vulnerable to political seduction. This is a

different situation than that of the Gypsies. Here, the cultural differences are very deep and the value systems are almost opposite (the farmer's culture against the hunter-collector's culture).

The third level of coping with the collectivities is the emancipation of personality. Personality emerges from the culture and changes person first and later the society as well.

Development of this top-level identity is a long life struggle. As James Marcia pointed out it is based on choice and commitment.

Identity formation has been most extensively described by Erik Erikson in his theory of developmental stages, which extends from birth through adulthood. His theory arose from the study of the Oglala-Lakota children, who had lost their traditional framework for identification and found no substitute for it in the standard American cultural framework. Erikson's conclusion was that the majority of children find themselves in a very similar situation. Afro-Americans, Asians, European immigrants, rural children, etc. have some problems with their identity. Erikson himself experienced similar situation in his childhood. He was a tall, blond, blue-eyed boy, who was also Jewish. At temple school the kids teased him for being Nordic; at grammar school they teased him for being Jewish.

According to Erikson, identity formation, while beginning in childhood, gains prominence during adolescence. Faced with physical growth, sexual maturation, and impending career choices, adolescents must accomplish the task of integrating their prior experiences and characteristics into a stable identity. Erikson coined the phrase identity crisis to describe the temporary instability and confusion adolescents experience as they struggle with alternatives and choices. To cope with the uncertainties of this stage adolescents may overidentify with heroes and mentors, fall in love, and bond together in cliques, excluding others on the basis of real or imagined differences. According to Erikson, successful resolution of this crisis depends on one's progress through previous developmental stages, centering on fundamental issues of trust, autonomy, and initiative. By the age of 21, about half of all adolescents are thought to have resolved their identity crises and are ready to move on to the adult challenges of love and work. Others, however, are unable to

achieve an integrated adult identity, either because they have failed to resolve the identity crisis or because they have experienced no crisis. J. E. Marcia identified four common ways in which adolescents deal with the challenge of identity formation. Those who experience, confront, and resolve the identity crisis are referred to as "identity-achieved." Others, termed "identity-foreclosed," make commitments (often conventional ones, identical or similar to those of their parents) without questioning them or investigating alternatives. Those, who are "identity-diffused", shrink from making defining choices about their futures and remain arrested unable to make whole-hearted commitments to careers, values, or another person. In contrast, those in the "moratorium" group, while unable to make such commitments, are struggling to do so and experience an ongoing though unresolved crisis as they try to "find themselves."

Although the phrase "identity crisis" was initially popularized in connection with adolescence, it is not limited to this time frame: Erikson himself initially formulated the concept in connection with World War II veterans. A variety of changes that affect one's work, status, or interpersonal relationships can bring on a crisis that forces one to redefine oneself in terms of values, priorities, and chosen activities or lifestyle. Daniel Levinson proposed a structural framework for changes in identity which take place during the adulthood.

At the center of Levinson's theory is the life structure. This is an underlying pattern of an individual's life at any given point in time. A person's life structure is shaped mainly by their social and physical environment, and it primarily involves family and work. Other variables such as religion, race, and status are often important as well.

In his theory there are two key concepts:

- 1) *the Stable Period* - This is the time when a person makes crucial choices in life.
- 2) *the Transitional Period* - This is the end of a person's stage and the beginning of a new one. Life during these transitions can be either rocky or smooth, but the quality and significance of one's life commitments often change between the beginning and end of a period.

There are 6 stages of adulthood in Levinson's theory titled "Seasons of a Man's

Life":

1) *Early adult transition (17-22)* - leave adolescence, make preliminary choices for adult life

2) *Entering the adult world (22-28)* - make initial choices in love, occupation, friendship, values, lifestyle

3) *Age 30 transition (28-33)* - changes occur in life structure, either a moderate change or, more often, a severe and stressful crisis

4) *Settling down (33-40)* - establish a niche in society, progress on a timetable, in both family and career accomplishments; are expected to think and behave like a parent so they are facing more demanding roles and expectations.

5) *Mid-life transition (40-45)* - life structure comes into question, usually a time of crisis in the meaning, direction, and value of each person's life. Neglected parts of the self (talents, desires, aspirations) seek expression. Men are seen more as parents than as "brothers" to other men who are somewhat younger than them and this message comes as an irritation at first. Also at this time, men becoming increasingly aware of death and they are reminded of how short life really is. They become involved in trying to leave a legacy and this usually forms the core of the second half of his life.

6) *Entering middle adulthood (45-50)* - choices must be made, a new life structure formed. Person must commit to new tasks.

\* Some sources also stated that there was a *late adulthood* stage during which time a man spends time reflecting on past achievements and regrets, and making peace with one's self and others (including God).

Although both Erikson's and Levinson's theory propose the useful tools to understand the dynamics of a life, in my opinion they omitted one crucial point.

Let me remind St. Augustine "*Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.*"

The highest level of identity, the spiritual identity of personality, is based on the choice of a personal center of value and power (the personal deity) and the commitment to it. As the human body, family, culture live in different environments they manage their behavior the way to be able to cope with them. But within the

body their control centers are organized in hierarchical order. Lower levels limit higher ones by their capacity and requirements. Higher levels rule the lowers by using their capacities for their own goals and transforming them to achieve better functioning. The higher level of control acts to the lower as a hegemonikon. The term was introduced by stoic philosopher Poseidonios of Apamea some 100 BC.

As the personality stands over the culture, there is no natural source to become hegemonikon for personality. And because all control centers are built the same way. No one can function without orders from above.

The geniture of personality is based on deep change, when an individual accepts responsibility for his own destiny, is delivered from inborn bonds and accepts the direction of his life, based on hope, and on "things that cannot be seen." (I call this change the Abrahamic revolution). With that change, new collectivities can be created by choice (according to shared personal values). It is the moment when a man makes the decision regarding "whom he is to serve" and it is a decision for the rest of his life.

Hegemonikon of personality can be transcendent or we can be committed to some lower level of being, to the family, to the state, to the church, to the politic party, to property or even to own body. The consequence of the choice and commitment is the way of life after that. Social entities based on the personality are created by the mutual choice are value based, informal and sharing common goals.

Value based collectivities are relatively new reality among Slovak people. Unfortunately many of them are based on destructive values e.g. criminal gangs, violence gangs, special interest political cliques and so on.

But in Slovakia, it is still present in the strong minority of people who accept Jesus Christ as the source of their identity.

Many people unfortunately seek their identity in the powers of this world. Many still dream about the communist past, expecting their safety from political leaders and many also place their hope in money. The smaller gods destroy hope, which causes them to fear and revile anything that does not offer immediate provisions. This same anxiety prevents also people from taking action to defend their rights.

In this situation, a new task arises for the church – no more the church as a

cultural institution, but the church as a community of faith, *comunio viatorum*.

Slovakia needs more courage; more trust and hope, more justice and righteousness. Slovakia needs to discover the faith and grace.

## Die ungarische Minderheit in der Slowakei Perspektiven für die Seelsorge

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### 1. Historischer Hintergrund

Im Vertrag von Trianon (1920) wurde Ungarn aufgeteilt und verlor zwei Drittel seines ehemaligen Staatsgebiets. Damals entstand die Tschechoslowakei - ein Staat, der nun Gebiete umfasste, wo kaum Slowaken lebten, sondern mehrheitlich Ungarn. Die Ungarn haben das in ihrem Erleben nur schwer verarbeiten können. Bis dahin waren sie durch ihren Staat in dieser Region die dominierende Nation gewesen. Ihre Werte, ihre Vorstellungen waren richtungsweisend - ab 1920 galt das plötzlich nicht mehr. Vor dieser Zeit waren die Beziehungen zwischen Ungarn und Slowaken auch nicht problemlos gewesen. Die ungarische Regierung hatte die slowakische Intelligenz oft in ihren Bemühungen behindert, ein eigenes kulturelles Leben aufzubauen. Manchmal wurden die Slowaken von den Ungarn abfällig betrachtet - sie hätten z.B. keine bedeutende Literatur und Kunst, nur sehr wenige gehörten der Intelligenz an. Diese so abfällig betrachtete Nation hat nach 1920 ihre Macht über die Ungarn entsprechend herausgekehrt. Das konnten die Ungarn dann nur schwer ertragen.

In der sog. „Ersten Republik“ in der Geschichte der Tschechoslowakei war die Slowakisierung sehr stark. Die Regierung verlangte z.B., dass in den reformierten Kirchen nur auf slowakisch gepredigt wurde. An den ungarischen Hochschulen durfte man nicht mehr auf Ungarisch unterrichten. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg wurden wir Ungarn - genau wie die Deutschen - generell als Kriegsverbrecher bezeichnet; die entsprechenden Gesetze sind praktisch bis heute lebendig. Alle Deutschen mussten das Land verlassen, viele Ungarn wurden zur Zwangsarbeit nach Tschechien deportiert. Mehrere Tausende von Ungarn wurden nach Ungarn zwangsausgesiedelt. Die slowakische Regie-

rung nannte das „Bevölkerungswechsel“. Im Rahmen dieses sog. Wechsels durften die Slowaken aus Ungarn in die Slowakei kommen, auf freiwilliger Basis. Wer es wollte, konnte diesen Schritt tun und durfte den eigenen Besitz mitbringen. Die Mehrheit der Ungarn hingegen durfte bei der Aussiedlung aus der Slowakei nur 50kg an Hab und Gut mitnehmen. Es gibt viele Geschichten dieser Art: Slowaken kamen in Bauerndörfer mit ungarischer Bevölkerungsmehrheit in der Slowakei, zeigten mit dem Finger auf den Hof eines ungarischen Bauern, und sofort gehörte der Hof ihnen. Die ungarischen Bauern mussten in die Ställe umziehen und dort wohnen. Es war prinzipiell verboten, ungarisch oder deutsch zu sprechen. Viele deutsche Familien, die geblieben waren, haben ihren Kindern überhaupt nicht mehr die deutsche Sprache beigebracht - vielleicht haben es die Großeltern noch heimlich getan. Es war unmöglich, den Kindern auf ungarische Art Namen zu geben. Alle weiblichen Vornamen mussten z.B. auf *-a* enden, Familiennamen mussten die Geschlechtsendung *-ova* haben.

Seit der sog. Revolution ist die Situation nun ganz anders: Wir haben jetzt die erste eigene ungarische Universität mit drei Fachbereichen und auch Mittelschulen. Man darf und kann Ungarisch sprechen. Es gibt keine größeren Probleme. Aber die negativen Erfahrungen miteinander werden doch noch über diese lange Zeit hin auf beiden Seiten bei den Menschen lebendig bleiben.

### Zur Frage der Identität

Bei der Frage nach der Identität von Ungarn in Slowakien sind zwei Situationen zu unterscheiden:

a) *Ungarn, die in „national gemischten“ Gebieten leben*, etwa in den größeren Städten. Sie haben alltägliche Kontakte mit den Slowaken, sie sprechen miteinander, arbeiten zusammen und es gibt immer mehr gemischten Ehen. Größere Probleme begegnen hier nicht. In dieser Gruppe von Ungarn gibt es nur selten Gespräche über „historische

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Schmerzen“ oder über Nationalitätsfragen. Sie selbst fühlen sich noch als ungarisch, erziehen ihre Kinder aber nicht mehr so, dass sie auch in das Gefühl hineinwachsen, ungarisch zu sein. Es findet hier also eine starke Assimilation statt. Die Eltern schicken ihre Kinder in slowakische Schulen, oft sprechen Sie auch mit ihnen in der Öffentlichkeit slowakisch. Für viele von ihnen ist es ein Ziel, zur Mehrheit zu gehören, nicht anders zu sein, nicht auffällig zu sein, keine Probleme zu machen. Solch ein Verhalten gab es ja auch schon im alten Israel: „Wir sind eine Minderheit; alle Völker ringsum sind anders; wir möchten ihnen ähnlich sein!...“ Dort war das in religiösem Sinne gemeint, in der Slowakei verhalten sich diese Menschen ungarischer Abstammung im nationalen Sinne so.

b) *Ungarn, die in größeren „ungarischen Blocks“ leben.* Hier ist eine Art von Isolation charakteristisch. Diese Ungarn lernen slowakisch schwieriger, die älteren Leute sprechen es kaum, haben es vorher in ihrem Leben auch nicht gebraucht. Diese Sprachschwierigkeiten und das „Im-Block-Leben“ führen zu einer anderen Identität. Weil sie wenige Kontakte mit Slowaken haben, kennen Sie die andere Nation nicht und umgekehrt. Das führt zum Misstrauen, zu Irrtümern und Denkfehlern.

Dazu kommt die Propaganda von Seiten bestimmter Politiker: Politiker ziehen die „ungarische Karte“, um bei Wahlen auf die Emotionen der Bürger zu setzen. Gibt es ein Problem, das man nicht lösen kann, bleibt immer noch die Möglichkeit, über die Ungarn zu sprechen als über Feinde, oder umgekehrt über den Schaden, den die Ungarn den Slowaken in der Vergangenheit zugefügt haben. So sind verschiedene Mythen über Slowaken und über Ungarn entstanden bzw. entstehen im Alltag bei den geringsten alltäglichen Situationen und werden als Gerüchte weitergetragen: Ein Auto, das im jeweils anderen Siedlungsgebiet beschädigt wurde; in einer Kneipe im jeweils anderen Siedlungsgebiet seinen die jeweils Fremden verprügelt worden; usw. Das geschieht von der einen wie von der anderen Seite in gleicher Weise.

Die Identität der Minderheit wird auch von der Sicht der Mehrheitsgesellschaft auf diese Minderheit beeinflusst. Auf slowakischer Seite gibt es immer wieder Reflexionen von Politikern und Historikern, in denen beklagt wird, dass die Slowaken mehr als tausend Jahre lang in nationaler Unterdrückung leben mussten. Daraus wird geschlossen, dass Ungarn schlecht und gefährlich seien. Dies wiederum ruft Widerstand in der Minderheit hervor, Abwehr und die Umkehrung der Schuld-

zuweisung. So setzt sich der Streit ewig fort. Andere Streitigkeiten beruhen darauf, dass historische Ereignisse und Situationen von der einen und der anderen Seite jeweils sehr unterschiedlich gedeutet werden: Die Beneš-Dekrete, der Vertrag von Trianon, der Nationalismus usw.

### **Seelsorgerliche Perspektiven**

Die Slowaken und die Ungarn sind Christen (wir sagen das hier etwas simplifiziert und in guter Hoffnung), meist römisch-katholisch oder protestantisch, lutherisch und reformiert. Beide Gruppen gehören in der überwiegenden Mehrheit also zum westlichen Christentum. Es geht hier also nicht um eine interreligiöse Seelsorge. Die Kirchenzugehörigkeit ist auch nicht an die Nationalität gebunden, so als ob alle Slowaken katholisch und alle Ungarn reformiert wären. Die Zugehörigkeiten sind gemischt. Auch die kulturellen Wurzeln sind gleich. Slowaken und Ungarn lebten in einem Staat zusammen und beide Gruppen haben das, was man eine „mitteleuropäische Tradition“ nennen könnte, als ihr Erbe. Sogar in der Mentalität haben Slowaken und Ungarn sehr viele Ähnlichkeiten, auch wenn die Mehrheit auf beiden Seiten gegen eine solche Feststellung protestieren würden. Einige Historiker sagen (meist jedoch nur hinter vorgehaltener Hand), dass es in ganz Europa keine zwei anderen Nationen gibt, die sich derartig ähnlich sind wie Slowaken und Ungarn. Das wird m.E. auch durch das statistische Material belegt, das Jan Buncak in seinem Beitrag (in diesem Heft S. ...) präsentiert. In der Seelsorge mit Ungarn in der Slowakei geht es also weder um eine „interreligiöse“ noch um „interkulturelle“ Seelsorge im klassischen Sinne. Dennoch gibt es viele Erkenntnisse, Beobachtungen und Warnungen aus der Erfahrung mit interkultureller Seelsorge, die auch in unserem Falle wichtig und zu beherzigen sind:

#### *1 Theologische Grundlagen:*

Es ist wichtig, Menschen dabei zu helfen, eine richtige Identität auf biblischer Grundlage zu finden und fähig zu werden, diese auch zu verbalisieren. Die biblische Grundlage bei der Identitätsbildung ist darum so wichtig, weil meine Identität nicht durch das bestimmt wird, was andere Menschen sagen, auch nicht durch einige Meinungen – und seien sie noch so diskriminierend – der Mehrheitsgesellschaft, sondern durch das, was Gott über mich sagt.

Ich möchte als Beispiel an die „Geschichte der Kundschafter“ (4. Mose 13,16-33) erinnern. Mose „sandte die Männer aus, um das Land zu erkunden. Und sie erzählten ihnen und sprachen: Wir sind in das Land gekommen...; es fließt wirklich Milch und Honig darin... Aber stark ist das Volk, das darin wohnt, und die Städte sind befestigt und sehr groß; und wir sahen dort auch Riesen..., und wir waren in unsern Augen wie Heuschrecken und waren es auch in ihren Augen.“ Gott hatte ein Bild über die Möglichkeiten und die Zukunft seines Volkes, aber die Fremden haben nur kleine Männer gesehen, die sich auch selbst unterschätzt haben.

Wichtig ist also, was Gott über mich sagt und über meine Möglichkeiten, meine Werte und Würde. Ich verweise hier auch auf Joh. 3,16: „Denn also hat Gott die Welt geliebt, dass er seinen eingeborenen Sohn gab, damit alle, die an ihn glauben, nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige Leben haben.“ Gott hat alles für mich gegeben. Ich bin nicht minderwertig. Andererseits: Weil Gott alles für meine Gerechtigkeit geben musste, kann ich nun nicht umgekehrt sagen: Ich bin größer als die anderen – die Fremden zum Beispiel.

Die Grundlage meiner Identität so theologisch zu betrachten ist keine bloße Kompensation, kein Aufbau einer „Ersatzidentität“. Es geht vielmehr um eine Sakralisierung der Identität – und das hat seine Legitimität. Zu den biblischen Begründungen gehören auch die paränetischen Perikopen im Neuen Testament und ähnliche Abschnitte im Alten Testament, wo unsere Pflichten gegenüber dem Nächsten beschrieben werden. Auch auf die Bergpredigt ist zu verweisen, etwa Mt 7,12: „Alles nun, was ihr wollt, dass euch die Leute tun sollen, das tut ihnen auch!“ Oder auf Lk 6,27f: „Liebt eure Feinde; tut wohl denen, die euch hassen; segnet, die euch verfluchen; bittet für die, die euch beleidigen“. Das heißt, dass ich den ersten Schritt zu Völkerversöhnung machen muss, ganz unabhängig davon, ob mein „Nächster“ (er ist also nicht mein „Feind“) das auch macht oder nicht. Ich muss unabhängig von den „Fremden“ handeln!

## 2. Herausforderungen:

Die zweite wichtige Aufgabe für Seelsorge an Ungarn in der Slowakei ist es, unsere Leute zu ermutigen, die anderen Nationen kennen und verstehen zu lernen. Wir müssen lernen zu fragen: Was bewegt die Slowaken? Welche Gefühle, Motivationen stehen hinter den Aussagen, die unsere Identität oft schmerzlich treffen? Zu dieser

Arbeit ermutigt uns die interkulturelle Seelsorge ja auch!

Unsere eigenen Seelsorgerinnen und Seelsorger müssen uns durch ihre christliche Seelsorge also den Weg zu einem richtigen Selbstbewusstsein zeigen und uns in dieser Hinsicht ermahnen. Das scheint mir besonders wichtig, weil man unter den Ungarn in der Slowakei häufig zwei Extreme finden kann, nämlich entweder ein Minderwertigkeitsgefühl oder ein Überlegenheitsgefühl.

Das erste ist ein typisches Ghettogefühl: Wir Ungarn sind anders, weniger Wert, dürfen nicht von einer größeren Karriere, von Erfolg, Popularität oder hohen Positionen träumen; wir haben keine Chancen, uns in dieser Gesellschaft durchzusetzen, vor allem wegen der Sprachschwierigkeiten. Ich bleibe also Ungar, möchte kein Minister sein, kein Arzt, sondern „nur“ Krankenpfleger, keine Sekretärin, sondern Putzfrau im Büro... Für manche Ungarn liegt die „Lösung“ dieses Problems dann darin, dass sie ihre kulturelle und oft auch die kirchliche Identität und die zugehörigen Traditionen aufgeben und sich assimilieren, dass sie ihre Kinder nicht auf ungarische Schulen schicken, damit sie in der Sprache der Mehrheitsgesellschaft mehr Sicherheit gewinnen und sich so besser in der Gesellschaft durchsetzen zu können.

Das andere Extrem ist das Überlegenheitsgefühl. Ungarn sagen dann etwa: Wir sind besser als die Slowaken, unsere Kultur ist älter und reicher als die slowakische Kultur, unsere Geschichte glorreicher; auch wenn die Slowaken jetzt über uns regieren, sind wir trotzdem mehr als sie!...

Beide Extreme verhindern die Annäherung, und so wird die Ghettoisierung in der Minderheit fortgesetzt. Ohne Dialog und Konfrontation wird die Identität deformiert und immer falscher. Nur durch einen Dialog, nur durch persönliche Kontakte kann man die Vorurteile besiegen. Die Seelsorger/innen müssen die Menschen also so führen und begleiten, dass sie sich selbst zu schätzen lernen, ohne dabei die anderen herabzusetzen.

In der Slowakei und eigentlich in ganz Mitteleuropa ist eine Meinung verbreitet, nach der ich größer werde, wenn ich jemanden finde, der kleiner ist als ich; oder wenn ich jemanden für kleiner halte als mich selbst, oder jemanden dadurch erniedrige. Christliche Seelsorge muss auch gegen solche Einstellungen kämpfen.

Kurz: Seelsorge muss die Fähigkeit und Bereitschaft zur gewaltlosen und gesunden Konfrontation fördern, die das Ziel hat, andere kennen zu lernen. Dies ist ja auch eine Grundthese inter-

kultureller Seelsorge: Wichtig ist die Einfühlung in die Situation eines anderen Menschen auf der Grundlage seiner Kultur, Weltanschauung und Erkenntnistheorie. In dieser Weise müssen Seelsorgerinnen und Seelsorger zur Empathie bzw. Interpathie hinführen. Das bedeutet natürlich nicht, Ungerechtigkeit zu tolerieren statt gegen sie zu protestieren, oder über sie zu schweigen!

### **Wo haben die Ungarn ihre „Heimat“?**

Was ihre kulturelle Orientierung anbetrifft, so ist diese Frage eindeutig zu beantworten: Sie orientieren sich nach Ungarn hin. Sie verfolgen ungarische Fernseh- und Radiosendungen. Sie leben zwar in der Slowakei, kulturell aber fühlen sie sich mehr in Ungarn zu Hause. Sie lesen ungarische Literatur. Am 31. Dezember singen sie die ungarischen Nationalhymne und feiern den 15. März und den 20. August, die ungarischen Feiertage. Sie haben ja den Staat, in dem sie jetzt leben, nicht selber gewählt. Das alles bedeutet nicht, dass sie etwa keine Steuern zahlten oder nicht auch hier als Soldaten dienten, oder dass sie ihre Pflichten gegenüber diesem Staate nicht erfüllten; es geht

vielmehr um eine innere Beziehung.

Sie haben hier, in der Slowakei, ihren Grundbesitz, und haben ihn hier schon immer gehabt und von ihren Ur-Vorfahren ererbt. Darum leben und bleiben sie hier, und es stellt sich nicht die Frage, ob es ihnen gefällt oder nicht, oder ob sie es möchten oder nicht. Ein Bürger, der auf der Schütt-Insel (eine Inselgruppe zwischen Donau, Kleiner Donau und Waag) geboren wurde und jetzt 90 Jahre alt wäre, wäre in der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie geboren, von 1920 bis 1938 Bürger der sog. Ersten tschechoslowakischen Republik gewesen, dann ein Jahr lang Bürger von Ungarn, von 1939 bis 1945 Bürger der Slowakischen Republik, danach der Tschechoslowakischen Sozialistischen Republik, dann der Tschechischen und Slowakischen Föderativen Republik und seit 1993 Bürger der Slowakischen Republik; aber er wäre immer im gleichen Ort zu Hause gewesen. Darum sagen die Ungarn, dass sie selber ihr Zuhause sind und dass sie trotz aller Änderungen ihre eigene Identität behalten möchten. Es gibt nach wie vor den Wunsch nach kultureller Autonomie, aber es gibt hier heute keinerlei Wunsch nach einer territorialen Autonomie.

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*Olga Lukács*

## **Die Ungarn in Siebenbürgen**

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Seit mehr als 1000 Jahren sind Ungarn als Siedler im Gebiet Siebenbürgens anwesend, auch schon einige Zeit bevor der christliche ungarische Staat unter Führung des Hl. Stephan gegründet wurde. Und obwohl Transsylvanien (die Region „jenseits des Waldes“) ursprünglich als Teil des ungarischen Staates gegründet wurde, verfügte es doch während mehrerer Jahrhunderte über eine eigene Form von Unabhängigkeit. Diese Tatsache wurde durch die spezielle geographische Lage befördert, aber auch dadurch, dass sich unter den Ungarn in Trans-

sylvanien nach und nach ein spezieller Geist entwickelte: Aus der jahrhundertlangen (wenn auch immer nur „relativen“) Unabhängigkeit entwickelte sich die Idee des „Transsylvanismus“, des „Siebenbürgertums“ als einer besonderen Form der Identität, und zwar vor allem bei den ungarischstämmigen Einwohnern Siebenbürgens. Was ich im Folgenden ausführe, ist mein sehr subjektiver Versuch, darzustellen, wie „wir Ungarn“ hier unsere Existenz wahrnehmen.

### **Siebenbürgen als geschichtliche Region**

Es gefällt uns „Siebenbürger Ungarn“, uns selbst als etwas Spezielles zu betrachten - als etwas anderes als die Ungarn aus Ungarn und auch als

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etwas anderes als die Rumänen, die im Gebiet Siebenbürgens leben. Dennoch glaube ich, dass uns „heutigen Ungarn hier“ das meiste, was wir mit anderen gemeinsam haben, gerade mit den hier lebenden Rumänen verbindet, besonders mit denen, die schon seit mehreren Generationen hier leben - auch wenn uns das nicht so im Bewusstsein ist und es im Verlaufe der Zeiten des Zusammenlebens mit den Rumänen hier auch immer wieder Perioden von Feindseligkeiten gab.

Wir glauben, dass die Siebenbürger Ungarn wesentlich zur Entwicklung dieses Gebietes beigetragen haben. Wir haben hier eine lange gemeinsame Geschichte mit den anderen Bevölkerungsgruppen zurückgelegt. Es gab Jahrhunderte mit wirklich positiven Entwicklungen und es gab auch Krisenperioden. Manchmal haben wir mitgewirkt am Verfall der Region, haben uns gegenseitig viel Leid zugefügt und aus diesen Geschehnissen oft nichts gelernt.

Siebenbürgen durchlief manche Jahrhunderte ganz ähnlich wie sie auch das übrige Europa durchlief. Manche Ideen und Verfahren sind von hier aus in die Welt gegangen. Wir können z.B. auf die religiöse Toleranz hinweisen, die es hier gab - in einer Zeit, in der sich das katholische und protestantische Europa in offenem Konflikt befand und sich gegenseitig zerstörte. Natürlich war auch das mittelalterliche Siebenbürgen oft grausam und blutig, kannte Konflikte und Aufstände, aber zugleich war es doch deutlich verschieden vom restlichen Europa, war materiell reich, reich an Kultur, an Religionen und an Künsten.

Wir hatten hier Fürsten als Anführer, deren Bedeutung und Einfluss manchmal politisch weit über das Gebiet Siebenbürgens hinausreichte, etwa der Fürst Stefan Bathory, der mit dem König Polens, Stefan Bocskai, den ersten Aufstand gegen die habsburgische Herrschaft führte. Oder Gabriel Bethlen (1613-1629), dem es durch kluge und ausgleichende Politik gelang, die relative Unabhängigkeit Siebenbürgens nach beiden Seiten hin (d.h. gegenüber dem türkischen Reich und gegenüber dem österreichischen Reich) zu schützen. Dadurch konnte er die wirtschaftliche, gesellschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklung der Region vorantreiben. Und dann noch Franz Rakoczi II., dem es gelang, eine Befreiungsbewegung anzuführen und dadurch die Aufmerksamkeit des französischen Königs Ludwig XV. zu erwecken - der ihm letztendlich allerdings dann doch keine konkrete Hilfe zukommen ließ. Daneben gab es auch Fürsten, deren politische Ideen für die Region zerstörerisch waren

oder die ohne echte Führungseigenschaften waren, wie etwa Gabriel Bathory.

Zusammen mit den Rumänen aus Siebenbürgen, aus Moldawien und aus dem übrigen rumänischen Land sowie mit anderen Völkern in dieser Region haben wir für Europa viele Opfer gebracht. Wir waren das Feld für kriegerische Zusammenstöße, als sich das türkische Reich ausdehnte und später das russische - und wir haben viele Risiken und Verluste auf uns genommen, für die uns von seiten Europas nie ein Dankeschön gesagt wurde (wobei mir bewusst ist, dass die Geschichte solch eine Terminologie nicht kennt). Das „Leopodianische Diplom“ setzte 1690 die Unabhängigkeit Siebenbürgens im Rahmen des Habsburgischen Reiches fest - insofern war die Geschichte manchmal doch auch freigiebig gegenüber Siebenbürgen. Ich denke hier nicht nur an diesen Akt des österreichischen Königs Leopold, sondern auch an das „Unheil von Mohacs“ (1526), als Ungarn zerstört bzw. in drei Teile aufgetrennt wurde: Nur die Region Siebenbürgen konnte damals eine Unabhängigkeit im eigentlichen Sinne behalten.

1848 erlebte Siebenbürgen intensiv die bürgerliche Revolution, musste dann aber auch teilhaben an all den Geschehnissen, die der Unterdrückung dieses Aufstandes folgten. Erst als 1867 die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie errichtet und Siebenbürgen einer ihrer Bestandteile geworden war, festigte sich das politische Leben wieder und eine stabile und deutlich positive Entwicklung begann, die erst durch den Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges beendet wurde.

Zugleich kann man Siebenbürgen in mancher Hinsicht aber auch als eine zurückgebliebene Region bezeichnen. Freiheitsaufstände wurden unterdrückt, Revolutionen scheiterten und manche geschichtlichen Entwicklungen erreichten Siebenbürgen erst mit Verspätung. Die industrielle Entwicklung, der Kapitalismus im eigentlichen Sinne und viele andere Modernisierungen fanden hier erst statt, als der Westen schon in die Phase der Postmoderne eingetreten war. In manchen Bereichen war hier die Geschichte also stehen geblieben, wenn man z.B. an die Zeit des Feudalismus denkt. In anderen Bereichen musste Siebenbürgen in relativ kurzer Zeit, manchmal in Jahrzehnten, geschichtliche Perioden zurücklegen, für deren Bewältigung andere westliche Länder mehrere Jahrhunderte zur Verfügung gehabt hatten. Von der zweiten Jahrhunderthälfte des letzten Jahrtausends gilt insgesamt eher der Eindruck, dass wir uns „außerhalb der geschichtlichen Zeit“ befanden.

Ein Ereignis in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts hatte weitreichenden Folgen für das Selbstverständnis aller Bevölkerungsgruppen in Siebenbürgen: Am Ende des 1. Weltkrieges kam mit dem Frieden von Versailles und etwas später dem Frieden von Trianon (1920) für die Rumänen etwas zur Erfüllung, nämlich die (Wieder-)Errichtung ihres Nationalstaates, was für die Ungarn eine nationale Tragödie war und bis heute blieb. Im Umgang mit diesem geschichtlichen Ereignis müssen die Ungarn lernen, es als ein bedeutsames nationales Ereignis für die Rumänen zu achten, wenn wir uns gegenseitig verstehen wollen und um wirklich zusammenleben zu können. Zugleich müssen die Rumänen lernen zu tolerieren, dass die Ungarn dasselbe geschichtliche Ereignis so negativ wahrnehmen, wie sie es tun.

Zusammenfassend muss man also sagen, dass all die Gruppen, die seit Generationen in Siebenbürgen leben - Ungarn, Rumänen, Deutsche - eine bestimmte Wahrnehmung von Siebenbürgen haben, eine Idee, eine Konzeption, auch Erinnerungen, und in jedem Fall dabei dann auch eigene, subjektive Interpretationen. Das gilt sogar für die Menschen, die irgendwelche anderen Verbindungen zu Siebenbürgen haben, sentimentale oder auch offizielle, egal ob es Ungarn aus unserem Nachbarland sind oder Rumänen von außerhalb Rumäniens.

### **Perspektiven für die siebenbürgisch-ungarische Identität**

Zugleich muss man feststellen, dass Siebenbürgen im Laufe der Geschichte die Idee und das Gefühl für seine Zentrallage in unwiderruflicher Weise verlor, wie es auch real keine zentrale Lage in Europa in kultureller, geistlicher und politischer Hinsicht mehr innehat. Aus diesem Verlust entspringt immer wieder neu eine Nostalgie, die bei den Ungarn im Begriff des „Transylvanismus“ festgehalten wird. Ich sehe es so, dass wir von Siebenbürgen aus bei der Entwicklung einer regionalen Identität den anderen Regionen Rumäniens, wie dem Banat, der Sekler-Region, Partium oder dem historischen Maramuresch Assistenz leisten können. Zugleich gehört es aber zum gegenwärtigen Realität von Siebenbürgen, dass es sowohl für Bukarest als auch für Budapest eine periphere Region geworden ist.

Wenn die bisherige Analyse richtig und wahr ist, sollte dies alle Bewohner Siebenbürgens dazu bewegen, sich gegenseitig zu unterstützen bzw. sich gemeinsam auf die eigenen Quellen, Möglichkeiten

und Qualitäten zu besinnen. Eines unserer entscheidenden historischen Dilemmata besteht meines Erachtens in der Frage, wie wir die Lehren aus der Geschichte im Blick auf unsere Selbstidentifizierung ziehen: Ob wir eher der nationalen Identität oder der regionalen Identität den Vorrang geben. Es ist aber so, dass sich Ungarn wie auch Rumänen aus Siebenbürgen aufgrund bestimmter Besonderheiten gegenüber den anderen Regionen ringsum erkennen lassen: Beide Bevölkerungsgruppen betrachteten sich als zivilisierter, westlicher, fleißiger, schaffender und stolzer. Dies sollte die *regionale* Identität hier in Siebenbürgen sowohl für die Ungarn als auch für die Rumänen stärken. Zugleich ist aber auch die Tatsache zu betonen (und auch den jeweiligen Landsleute von außerhalb Siebenbürgens zu sagen), dass beide Gruppen authentische Träger der nationalen Idee sind und dass sie sogar eine jeweils reinere, eigene literarische Sprache benutzen.

Für die Ungarn aus Rumänien gilt das ganz besonders, und diese sowohl regionale als auch nationale Identität ist ein ständiger Stein des Anstoßes gegenüber den Ungarn aus Ungarn. In Ungarn war unter dem kommunistischen Regime politisch eine Entnationalisierung gewollt, Ungarn aus Ungarn sahen da oft mit Misstrauen, wie die Siebenbürger Ungarn ihre Sprache, Religion und Kultur, also ihre nationale Identität bewahrten. Sie wurden und werden damit oft als naiv hingestellt oder verspottet, weil sie doch eigentlich Rumänen wären. Sich dem gegenüber zu behaupten, festigt im Gegenzug die regionale Identität der Siebenbürger Ungarn.

Solch eine Sicht von Ungarn aus Ungarn auf uns erleben wir als schmerzvoller, störender und frustrierender als das, was wir von Seiten der Rumänen aus Rumänien erleben. Was hier an Frust vorliegt, kam und kommt aus der rumänischen Assimilationspolitik, aus verschiedenen verletzenden Bezeichnungen von Rumänen uns gegenüber. Das wiederum verstärkt die nationale Identität der Siebenbürger Ungarn. Ich möchte diese Erfahrungen nicht abmindern, aber ich schätze und vermute, dass auch die Rumänen aus Siebenbürgen ähnliche Frust-Erlebnisse kennen, die natürlich andere Begründungen und Motivationen haben. Dies könnte ein Faktor für das Zusammenhalten zwischen den heutigen Einwohnern Siebenbürgens sein. Zumindest könnte es ein Grund für Solidarität untereinander sein, um eine wirkliche Entwicklung der Region abzusichern - in einem vereinigten Europa, einem Europa der Regionen und der Verschiedenheit.

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Reinhard Schott

## Die religiöse Sozialisation der Spätaussiedlerinnen und Spätaussiedler. Konsequenzen für Verkündigung und Seelsorge

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Etwa 2,5 Mio. Spätaussiedler/innen aus der ehemaligen Sowjetunion leben in der Bundesrepublik, die Mehrzahl von Ihnen ist in den Jahren 1989 bis 2004 eingereist.<sup>1</sup> Mit dem Inkrafttreten des Zuwanderungsgesetzes von 2005 sind die Zuzugszahlen drastisch zurückgegangen und werden im Jahr 2008 wohl unter 4.000 bleiben. Bis weit in die 1990er Jahre gaben die Spätaussiedlerinnen und Spätaussiedler fast alle eine konfessionelle Zugehörigkeit an, gut die Hälfte erklärten bei der Einreise bzw. im Aufnahmeverfahren, sie wollten zur Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland gehören. Zu den Motiven später mehr. Fakt ist aber, dass ca. 10% der Mitglieder der Evangelischen Landeskirchen in Deutschland Spätaussiedler/innen sind. Etwa 1/3 der Spätaussiedler/innen gehören der Katholischen Kirche an, zwischen 5% und 10% den Evangelischen Freikirchen und etwa 2% der russisch Orthodoxen Kirche. In den letzten Jahren ist festzustellen, dass die Zahl der Aussiedler, die keiner christlichen Kirche angehören oder keine Angaben machen, ansteigt.

### Die Herausforderung

#### 1. Die doppelt gebrochene Identität

Mit dem Überfall des Deutschen Reiches auf die UdSSR im Jahre 1941 beginnt das Trauma der Russlanddeutschen als ethnischer Minderheit im eigenen Land. Die geschlossenen Siedlungen der Deutschen an der Wolga und im gesamten europäischen Bereich der Sowjetunion werden aufgelöst, die Russlanddeutschen zu „Feinden“ erklärt und nach Sibirien und Nord-Kasachstan deportiert.<sup>2</sup> Es beginnt das Leben unter der Kommandantur, das Verlassen des zugewiesenen Wohnortes wird unter

Strafe gestellt. Einige werden wegen des Besuchs von Eltern oder Geschwistern in einem anderen Ort zu Arbeitslageraufenthalten von 25 Jahren verurteilt. Es gab viele Gründe, wegen derer Russlanddeutsche zu hohen Strafen verurteilt wurden, die Mehrzahl hat ihr Leben in den Zwangslagern gelassen. Für die meisten jungen Frauen und Männer war die Deportation noch nicht die Endstation, sondern es folgte die Einberufung in die „Trudarmee“ (Arbeitsarmee).

In einer zweiten Phase wurden die Deutschen aus dem Gebiet um Leningrad und dem Südkaukasus deportiert (besonders nach Sibirien und Mittelasien). Eine Anzahl Russlanddeutscher entging der Deportation auf Grund des schnellen Vormarsches der Truppen Hitlers. Als die deutsche Armee sich zurückzog, begaben sie sich mit auf die Flucht und wurden (als sog. „Volksdeutsche“) größtenteils in den Warthegau umgesiedelt. Nach der Eroberung des Warthegau und der deutschen Ostgebiete durch die Rote Armee erfolgte eine dritte Phase der Deportation: Die dorthin evakuierten Russlanddeutschen wurden wieder „repatriiert“ (ca. 200.000), ebenso Russlanddeutsche, die sich in den Zonen der Westalliierten befanden. Sie wurden fast alle in Gebiete von Kasachstan und Sibirien gebracht, die bisher kaum zu besiedeln waren. Eine unbekannte Zahl der zurückgeführten Russlanddeutschen wurde als Staatsfeinde zum Tode verurteilt, andere starben in den Arbeitslagern.

In einem Dekret vom 13. Dezember 1955 „über

1 Die Bezeichnung „Spätaussiedler/innen“ gilt offiziell für Volksdeutsche, die nach dem 01.01.1993 in die Bundesrepublik eingereist sind. In verweise den Begriff in diesem Vortrag auch für Aussiedler/innen, die seit den 1980er Jahren eingereist sind. Die Begriffe „Russlanddeutsche“ oder „Deutsche aus Russland“ sind im Kreis der Betroffenen zum Teil umstritten.

2 Zum gesamten geschichtlichen Hintergrund vgl. Eisfeld, Russlanddeutsche.

3 Reimer, Aussiedler, ..... S. 26.

die Aufhebung der Einschränkungen in der Rechtsstellung der deutschen Sondersiedler“, das allerdings erst 1964 öffentlich bekannt wurde, wurde ihre Rechtsstellung neu festgelegt. Sie durften nun einen neuen Aufenthaltsort wählen, jedoch nicht in ihre Heimatorte zurückkehren. Ihr Vermögen blieb konfisziert.

Ende der 1970er, Anfang der 1980er Jahre begann eine verstärkte Integration der Russlanddeutschen in der UdSSR. Ein untrügliches Zeichen dafür ist aus Sicht der Deutschen aus Russland das Schließen von bi-nationalen Ehen. Die gibt es zwar schon seit den fünfziger Jahren, aber damals auf Grund fehlender ethnischer Partner. Jetzt jedoch als bewusste Entscheidung der Grenzüberschreitung, oft gegen den Willen und Protest der Großeltern und Eltern.

Diese seit Jahrhunderten erstmalig beginnende Integration der Deutschen in den Vielvölkerstaat UdSSR wird abgebrochen mit dem Beginn der Perestroika und dem Zusammenbruch der Sowjetunion: Gorbatschow lockert die Ausreisemöglichkeiten für sowjetische Staatsbürger über die Grenzen des Warschauer Pakts, was die Ausreisewilligkeit verstärkt. Diese Lockerung wird im Westen seit Jahren eingefordert, die Zahl der in die Bundesrepublik einreisenden Deutschen aus Ländern des Warschauer Pakts gilt als Barometer der Entspannungspolitik. Mit dem Zusammenbruch der UdSSR und der Bildung der Nationalstaaten, die zu ethnischen und nationalen Konflikten vor allem in den mittelasiatischen Republiken führen, bricht die Integrationsbewegung ganz ab.

Für die deutsche Politik und Öffentlichkeit stellt sich die Situation wie folgt dar: Jetzt kommen alle, auf die man gewartet hat, doch man hat dabei nicht bedacht, dass deren Einreise in größeren Zahlen sich in absehbarer Zeit kaum realisieren lässt. Es beginnen erste Anstrengungen zur Unterstützung der deutschen Minderheit in der UdSSR - in der Hoffnung, die Auswanderung nach Deutschland einzudämmen. Rückblickend kann man feststellen, dass diese Bemühungen nicht den gewünschten Erfolg gebracht haben.

Mit dem Anstieg der Zuzugszahlen in den Jahren 1988 bis 1992 sah der Gesetzgeber die Notwendigkeit des Handelns: Gesetzliche Regelungen haben den Zuzug eingedämmt, in der Bevölkerung nahm die Akzeptanzbereitschaft ab. Nach meiner Beobachtung kam es hier zu einer Spiralentwicklung: Ablehnende Stimmung in der Bevölkerung sorgt für gesetzgeberische Begrenzung, diese führt zur Bestätigung in der Stimmung der Bevölkerung, die

wiedermum zu neuem gesetzgeberischen Handeln führt.

Der in der Bevölkerung seit 1988 gewaltig stattgefundenen Akzeptanzschwund und die gesetzlichen Verschärfungen haben bei den Betroffenen zu einer Verschärfung der Identitätskrise geführt. Ein nicht unerheblicher Teil aus dem Kreis der Spätaussiedlinnen und Spätaussiedler haben sich in eine innere Migration zurückgezogen: Wenn die Deutschen meinen, dass wir Russen sind, dann sind wir halt Russen - so oder ähnlich lauten Äußerungen aus dieser Gruppe.

Nicht nur die kulturelle Praxis, sondern auch die kulturelle Identität der Russlanddeutschen, ihr Selbstverständnis als Deutsche, wird durch die Migration in Frage gestellt: In Deutschland werden sie zu ‚Russen‘ (woegen sie sich in Russland immer gewehrt haben). Im Gegensatz zu anderen Zuwanderern, die sich fremd fühlen und sich als Fremde identifizieren können, verlieren Aussiedler damit einen Fixpunkt ihrer Identität.

## *2. Der religiöse Hintergrund*

Der religiöse Hintergrund der Spätaussiedler ist sehr unterschiedlich. Waren es bei den ersten Aussiedlern noch starke religiöse Momente, die auch die Ausreise bzw. Übersiedlung motivierten, so spielt dies bei den jetzt Kommenden häufig nicht mehr die ausschlaggebende Rolle. Dies mag zum einen eine Generationenfrage sein, zum anderen aber auch die Wirkung des jahrelang propagierten Atheismus in der ehemaligen Sowjetunion. Fest steht, dass ein Unterschied in der religiösen Sozialisation auch darin besteht, ob die Russlanddeutschen in einer Stadt oder im Dorf aufgewachsen sind. Im Dorf war die „religiöse Versorgung“ eher gewährleistet. Die Pflege der deutschen Sprache und Kultur bezog stark die Überlieferung des Glaubens, das Halten der Gottesdienste und Gebetsstunden, das Singen von Gottesdienstliedern mit ein. Dies konnte, besonders in Krisen- und Verbotszeiten, besser in der Siedlung bzw. im Dorf eingehalten werden.

An Kirchen und Freikirchen waren in den Kolonien die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche, die Reformierte Kirche, die Stundisten, die Pietisten, die Mennoniten und die Baptisten vertreten. Durstzeiten waren die Jahre des Verbotes der Gottesdienste, wie z. B. in der Zeit unter Stalin, die Entweihung der Kirchen, Verschleppung und Ermordung von Pfarrern (stalinistische Säuberung). Die Zeiten der Verschleppung bzw. Deportation in

die Trudarmee (bis 1955/56), das Religionsverbot und das starke atheistische Klima haben tiefen Spuren hinterlassen. Der christliche Glauben wurde aus der Öffentlichkeit verdrängt und ging bei vielen ganz verloren.

Wenige wurden dagegen im Glauben gestärkt und bereit, ihn unter vielen Opfern weiter zu tragen. Gesangbuchlieder, Bibelstellen wurden abgeschrieben und weitergegeben, da es bis in die 1980er Jahre keine Bibelverbreitung geben durfte. Pfarrer- und Priesternachwuchs gab es kaum, man half sich unter „Laien“ weiter. Glaubensinhalte wurden im Untergrund, im Geheimen weitergegeben. In die Nachfolge der verbannten und ermordeten Pastoren und Küster traten Laienbrüder der Brüdergemeinden. Nikita Chruschtschow leitete nach einer kleinen Ruhepause eine neue Verfolgung der Christen im Jahre 1958 ein. Als es unter Gorbatschow zu Lockerungen in der Religionspolitik kam, konnten ab da auch religiöse Literatur und Bibeln verschickt werden. Der Austausch unter den Kirchen konnte stattfinden.

Bei der Übersiedlung in die Bundesrepublik gaben fast alle eine Konfession an. Dies scheint aber eher ein Bekenntnis zu ihrem Deutschtum als zu ihrem Glauben gewesen zu sein. Diejenigen, die aus festen Glaubensgemeinschaften hierher gekommen sind, werden wohl hier ihren Weg auch weitergehen. Das Entstehen neuer Gemeinden zeigt dies. In der Regel findet das Gemeindegewachstum nicht aufgrund von Evangelisation oder Mission statt, sondern durch den Zuzug von Aussiedlern. Das zahlenmäßige Wachstum ist daher in der letzten Zeit rückläufig.

Die Abwehrhaltung gegenüber den Spätaussiedlerinnen und Spätaussiedlern macht vor den Türen der Kirchengemeinden nicht halt. „Ein Schlaglicht auf die Situation in unseren Kirchen und Gemeinden in Deutschland wirft die Äußerung eines Kirchenvorstehers, der seine Gemeinde beschreibt... Er sagt schlicht: Hier gibt es keine Gemeinde. Auf die Rückfrage, wer denn die Gottesdienste besucht, antwortet er: Kurgäste und Spätaussiedler.“<sup>4</sup> Spätaussiedler/innen sind in vielen Gottesdiensten angekommen, aber in der Gemeinde nicht aufgenommen, Integration hat nicht stattgefunden.

### 3. Der „Homo Sovieticus“

Der „Homo sovieticus“<sup>5</sup> war Überbleibsel der zerfallenen Sowjetunion. Je weniger die religiöse Prägung im Leben des Sowjetmenschen Spuren

hinterlassen hat, umso stärker wurde die ideologische Prägung der kommunistisch-sozialistischen Ideologie. In einem Interview von 1995 erklärt der russische Schriftsteller V. Astafiew: „In Freiheit zu leben und für sie selbst verantwortlich zu sein überfordert viele von uns, wie sich herausgestellt hat. Unser kommunistisches Paradies, unser kommunistisches System hat natürlich alles getan, um das Volk zu zersetzen.“<sup>6</sup> Das Ziel war, dass der Mensch alles für den Dienst an der neuen Gesellschaft daransetzen sollte, alles andere war zweitrangig oder musste gar aufgegeben werden. Der russische Schriftsteller D. Granin erklärte in der Süddeutschen Zeitung 22./23.05.1993: „Die Sowjetunion ist zerfallen, aber der Sowjetmensch ist uns erhalten geblieben. Und darauf beruht die ganze Kompliziertheit der Perestrojka.“

Was man geschaffen hat, war ein riesiges Kollektiv des Misstrauens und der Angst. „Spitzel waren Kinder, waren Eltern; Spitzel waren Nachbarn, Mitbewohner, Hausmeister... In jeder Familie, in jeder Wohnung, in jedem Haus, in jeder Institution gab es Spitzel.“<sup>7</sup> Misstrauen gehört oft zur Grundstruktur vieler Aussiedler.

## Herausforderungen für Verkündigung und Seelsorge

### 1. Eigenarten der religiösen Prägung

Obwohl die Zahl der brüdergemeindlich geprägten Spätaussiedler/innen wohl kaum 10% aller Spätaussiedler/innen ausmacht, spielen sie in der kirchlichen Öffentlichkeit eine große Rolle. Alle christlichen Kirchen und Freikirchen in Deutschland stehen vor der Herausforderung der Integration. Dazu kommt, dass das Gemeindeverständnis der verschiedenen Gruppen stark von der pietistischen Tradition geprägt ist und einen Hang zur Selbstautonomie der jeweiligen Gemeinde besteht. In Deutschland ist solch eine Selbstautonomie der Gemeinde in den Landeskirchen kaum vorhanden, mehr oder weniger stark aber bei den Freikirchen ausgeprägt. Die folgenden Hinweise sollen helfen, die Denkweise und Struktur der Spätaussied-

4 Dieter Grimmsmann, Studienbrief D 22 - Diakonie „Brücken bauen in die Gemeinde“ im Brennpunkt Gemeinde, hg. v. AMD beim Diakonischen Werk der EKD.

5 Den Begriff „Homo sovieticus“ wurde wahrscheinlich von G. Sinowjew, Leiter der Kommunistischen Internationale, geprägt. Vgl. Paul Roth in: G2W 2/1996.

6 „Argumente i fakty“, 4/95, russische Zeitschrift.

7 J Raskin in „Enciklopedija chuliganstvujutschego ortodoksa“ St. Petersburg 1995.

ler/innen-Christen zu verstehen. Dabei ist zu bedenken: Vieles was uns fremd erscheint, war für Sie eine Lebens- und Überlebenshilfe.

- Jahrzehntelang mussten die Prediger und Pastoren ohne theologische Ausbildung Gemeinden leiten und deren Seelsorger sein. Hirten im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes, und nicht wenige von ihnen haben ihr Leben für die Gemeinde aufs Spiel gesetzt. Die theologische Arbeit bestand im Wesentlichen in der Weitergabe von Inhalten und Formen christlichen Glaubens und Lebens.

- Der Absolutheitsanspruch des Kommunismus als einziger, ausschließlicher Wahrheit führt auch bei Christen zu einer merkwürdigen, oft unbewussten Übertragung dieser Denkweise auf Auslegung und Verständnis theologischer und biblischer Aussagen. Ein „Entweder-oder-Denken“ bestimmt bei vielen die Glaubensüberzeugung und deren Vollzug im Leben. Eine persönliche Gewissensbindung nach 1. Korinther 8 ist weithin fremd.

- Es besteht oft Angst vor einer kritischen Rückbesinnung und Überprüfung des eigenen Standpunktes, der eigenen Ansichten und der eigenen theologischen Sicht.

- „Heimat“ wird von vielen unter einem theologisch-eschatologischen Blickwinkel gesehen: Der Sammlung aller Völker auf dem Gebiet ihres Nationalstaates vor der Wiederkunft Jesu Christi. Die prophetischen Stellen des Alten Testaments über die Sammlung des Volkes Israel wird erweitert auf die Sammlung aller Völker am Ende der Zeit.<sup>4</sup>

- Es besteht die Gefahr, dass der mitgebrachte Frömmigkeitsstil, die Form des Gottesdienstes und das Liedgut, zum Erkennungszeichen wird oder gar zum *status confessionis*.

- Die „Theologie der Tränen“ aus der russisch-orthodoxen Kirche hat im Laufe der Zeit oft unbewusst einen starken Einfluss auf das theologische Denken der evangelischen Christen hinterlassen. Keine Bekehrung ohne Tränen.

- Die Entdeckung einer weltoffenen Christenheit im Westen löste berechnete und unberechnete Ängste aus. Die Bildung eigener, vollkommen autonomer Gemeinden wird oft als der einzige Weg gesehen, der Gefahr der „Verweltlichung“ zu entgehen.

- Aufgrund unüberwindbarer Generationskonflikte mit hier geborenen oder groß gewordenen Mitgliedern der Gemeinde finden in letzter Zeit vermehrt Spaltungen unter Gemeinden und Gruppen statt.

## 2. Voraussetzungen zur Integration der Gemeinden und Gruppen im kirchlichen Kontext der BRD

Vor diesem Hintergrund stellt sich die Frage der Integration, wobei der latent vorhandenen Vorstellung der Assimilation immer neu eine Absage zu erteilen ist. Der verborgene Wunsch der Assimilation ist oft auf beiden Seiten vorhanden. Ein Russlanddeutscher, der seit Jahren sowohl dem Brüderrat der Brüdergemeinde als auch dem Presbyterium der Kirchengemeinde angehört, brachte es auf den Punkt: „Die Mehrzahl der Pfarrer und Presbyter in der Kirchengemeinde wollen, dass wir, die Brüdergemeinde, uns in ihnen assimilieren. Wir als Brüdergemeinde wollen, dass die Kirchengemeinde sich bei uns assimiliert. Und beide wollen sich nicht assimilieren. Deswegen gibt es immer wieder Konflikte.“ Hier öffnet sich also ein weites Feld des interkulturellen Lernens - ein Feld, das schon seit Beginn der christlichen Gemeinde immer wieder neu ein Übungsfeld war und ist.

Zur Integration gehören Akzeptanz und Geborgenheit. Soziologisch gesehen sind das die zwei Merkmale, die zur Gemeinde Jesu wesentlich dazugehören: Christinnen und Christen leben davon, dass sie von Gott in Jesus Christus akzeptiert sind, von Gott geliebt sind. Wer die Erfahrung gemacht hat, dass sein Leben im Wesentlichen von der Liebe des anderen getragen und geprägt ist, wird durch Gott befreit und ermächtigt, den anderen zu lieben, ihn anzunehmen, wie er ist. Interkulturelles Lernen vollzieht sich im Wesentlichen in der Bereitschaft zum Wahrnehmen der anderen in ihrer Verschiedenheit und ohne vorschnelle Wertung und Abgrenzung - verbunden mit der Bereitschaft, auch das eigene Tun und Sein befragen zu lassen. Zur Integration gehört die Bereitschaft, sich selbst in Frage stellen zu lassen, und an dieser Bereitschaft fehlt es meistens dann, wenn der gemeinsame Raum der Geborgenheit fehlt.

Integration ist ein langer und oft schwieriger Prozess, in dem Rückschläge nicht ausbleiben, Wunden entstehen und Wunden geheilt werden müssen. Überforderung von beiden Seiten muss ausbleiben. Integration braucht Zeit und braucht Freiräume, in denen jeder für sich sein kann wie er ist, ohne dabei das gemeinsame Ziel aus dem Blick

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<sup>4</sup> Ein Baptisten Prediger in Mittelasien sagte: „Gottes Zeichen für uns stehen auf Ausreise. Es ist Gott der uns aus dem Land unserer Sklaverei, unserem Ägypten herausführt.“

zu verlieren. Integration gelingt dort, wo wir viel vom anderen erfahren und viel von uns selbst zu erkennen geben. Hier gilt es, die vorgefassten Meinungen auf beiden Seiten aufzugeben. Im Bezug auf die Spätaussiedler schreibt Grimmsmann: „Wer Brücken in die Gemeinde bauen will, muss bereit sein, stetig und zäh die Bearbeitung von Vorurteilen einzufordern.“<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Theologische Aspekte

Wer Integrationsarbeit als Christ und als Kirche betreiben will, muss sich über das Ziel dieser Arbeit klar werden. Ich möchte mich für ein Oberziel entscheiden, unterhalb dessen es viele kleine Ziele und Schritte geben muss. Eine Zieldefinition für eine christliche Gemeinde steht bei Paulus: „Nehmet einander an, wie Christus euch angenommen hat zu Gottes Lob“ (Röm 15,7). Das Ziel einer christlich-diakonischen Integrationsarbeit einer Gemeinde mit Spätaussiedlern ist also schlicht und einfach: Gottes Lob!

Lob Gottes ist ein zentrales Thema der Bibel. Das Lob Gottes ist nicht in mein Belieben gestellt, es gehört zu meinem Leben und zu meiner Beziehung zu Gott. „In Gottes Lob erfüllt sich der Sinn der Welt“.<sup>6</sup> Der älteste Christliche Hymnus im NT (Philipper 2,5-11) schließt mit dem Lob Gottes und deutet das Lob als das Ziel der Schöpfung, das Ziel der Gemeinde Jesu Christi. Wo von diesem Ziel her geredet und gehandelt wird, da werden Kräfte für die Integration von beiden Seiten freigesetzt. Wenn das Lob Gottes als gemeinsames Ziel definiert werden kann, dann gibt es viele Möglichkeiten, trotz kultureller Unterschiede, trotz verschiedener theologischer Positionen auf dem langen und steinigen Weg der Integration voranzukommen.

Auch ekklesiologisch gibt es wichtige Aspekte für unser Thema stehen: Die christliche Gemeinde ist kein religiöser Verein, für die Zugehörigkeit zur Gemeinde Jesu ist nicht der Entschluss des Einzelnen entscheidend. Vor jeder menschlichen Entscheidung, Glied der Gemeinde Jesu zu sein, steht Gottes Entscheidung für diesen Menschen und zu diesem Mensch hin. Gott baut seine Gemeinde, er sammelt zu seinem Volk, fügt in seinen Leib, adoptiert in seine Familie hinein. Gemeinde Jesu Christi überschreitet alle nationalen, ethnischen

und kulturellen Grenzen, am Ende auch alle konfessionelle Grenzen. Für jedes Glied in der Gemeinde Jesu vor Ort gilt: Nicht durch Zufall stehe ich da, Gott hat mich gemacht. Gott will, dass zur Gemeinde Jesu Christi in Deutschland Spätaussiedler/innen dazugehören und umgekehrt.

Wenn das Ziel klar ist und die gegebenen Voraussetzungen geklärt sind, dann gilt es sich auf den Weg zu machen: „Nehmet einander an“. Und das beginnt damit, dass wir Integrationsarbeit nicht für die Spätaussiedler/innen organisieren und machen, sondern mit und unter Beteiligung der Betroffenen. Die kleinen konkreten Ziele unter dem großen Ziel und die einzelne Schritte können nicht einseitig von der aufnehmenden Gesellschaft, in unserem Fall von der Gemeinde, festgelegt werden. Integration bedeutet auch Veränderung in der aufnehmenden Gruppe. Es müssen angstfreie Begegnungsstrukturen geschaffen werden. Es muss „Begegnung auf Augenhöhe“ stattfinden, damit wir voneinander lernen und profitieren können.

Austausch über die unterschiedlichen Prägungen und kulturellen Besonderheiten von beiden Seiten ist sehr wichtig. Es müssen Verabredungen für gemeinsame Aktionen und Gottesdienste getroffen werden und es muss Freiräume geben für die einzelnen Gruppen. Spätaussiedler-Gottesdienste gehören dazu. Russische Elemente in den regulären Gottesdiensten können auch ihren Platz haben. Die Mitwirkung der in der UdSSR „eingesegneten“ Schwestern und Brüder in der Verkündigung und im Gottesdienst, die Mitwirkung in Gruppen bis zum Konfirmandenunterricht, kann Integration voranbringen.

Christian Eyslein bemerkt: „Es macht sich nicht selten auch dort, wo erfolgreich gearbeitet werden konnte, nach einiger Zeit Resignation breit, weil Aussiedlerintegration viel länger dauert als zunächst erhofft und im Bewusstsein der Einheimischen Aussiedler weiterhin auf eine Randgruppenexistenz festgeschrieben werden, nicht selten auch in der Kirche“<sup>7</sup>.

### 4. Eine seelsorgerliche Aufgabe

Ich sehe zum einen eine Herausforderung, Ansprechpartner zu sein für seelsorgerliche Anliegen der Eltern, der Gemeindeleiter und der Jugendlichen aus den Gemeinden und Gruppen der brüdergemeindlichen Tradition, und zum anderen

<sup>5</sup> Dieter Grimmsmann, a.a.O.

<sup>6</sup> Artur Weiser, Die Psalmen (ATD), zu Ps 150.

<sup>7</sup> Christian Eyselen, .... xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxx.

die missionarische Herausforderung der christlich nicht sozialisierten Spätaussiedler/innen. Seelsorge setzt Vertrauen voraus. Ich muss beim Spätaussiedler/in angekommen sein, es muss spürbar sein: Ich will seine Form der Glaubensäußerungen und seine Inhalte des Glaubens nicht verändern, sondern ich bejahe diese, auch wenn ich sie für mich persönlich nicht realisiere.

Erfahrungsgemäß bewegt sich ein großer Teil der Fragestellungen um den Komplex Erziehung und Partnerschaft. Aber auch Fragen der Gemeindeleitung können auf der Tagesordnung stehen. Viele Fragestellungen ergeben sich aus der Situation heraus, in der Spätaussiedler/innen heute leben. Von brüdergemeindlichen Predigern werden vielerorts Antworten gegeben auf Fragen, die keiner stellt und die in unserem Kontext keinen bewegen. Es gibt dann zwei weit verbreitete Formen der Reaktion: Die eine ist die Spaltung der Gemeinde, weil man in der Gemeinde um Antworten auf die Fragen von heute ringen will. Die andere Reaktion, und das betrifft in der Regel Jugendliche und junge Erwachsene, ist der Bruch mit der Tradition. Viele werfen dabei auch Glauben und Gott über Bord. Der Bruch vollzieht sich oft so radikal, dass viele von ihnen in einer „russischen“ Subkultur landen und gefährdet sind, in eine kriminelle Szene oder in die Drogenszene abzurutschen. Auf Grund meiner Präsenz in der Fachklinik Pfälzerwald, einer Sucht- und Drogenklinik für Männer aus dem russisch sprechenden Migrationsbereich, kenne ich diese Problematik sehr anschaulich. Es gibt fast in jeder Therapiegruppe welche, die aus Spätaussiedlergemeinden oder Gruppen kommen. Alle Denominationen der Gemeinden sind vertreten, von lutherisch bis pfingstlerisch. Hier gilt es einen langen Atem zu haben, oft eine Brücke zu den Eltern, zur Gemeinde zu bauen. In der Regel wird es kaum die vorherige Gemeinde sein können, und dennoch sollte man eine kulturell nahestehende Gemeinde suchen, sonst besteht die Gefahr, dass bei den Betroffenen neue Gewissenskonflikte entstehen können.

##### 5. Eine missionarische Aufgabe

Daneben steht die missionarische Herausforderung der christlich nicht sozialisierten Spätaussiedler/innen. Hier gibt es die Begegnungsmöglichkeit an den Schnittstellen des Lebens:

a) *Es gibt eine besondere Kultur der Beerdigungen* bei den Spätaussiedlern, die in der Regel auch den christlich kaum oder gar nicht sozialisierten Spät-

aussiedlern bekannt ist. Es wird viel gesungen, meist von einer Anzahl von Frauen. Gottesdienste aus Anlass einer Beerdigung waren in der Regel die einzigen öffentlichen Gottesdienste, die durch die Ordnungsorgane der Sowjetmacht nicht gestört wurden, und zwar aus dem Respekt vor dem Verstorbenen. Der Wunsch nach einer christlichen Beerdigung war weit über den Rahmen der christlichen Gemeinde hinaus vorhanden. Eine gründliche Absprache im Vorfeld der Beerdigung ist wichtig. Es ist zu klären, ob beim Gottesdienst mit Besuchern zu rechnen ist, deren deutsche Sprachkenntnisse nicht ausreichen, um dem Gesagten zu folgen. Sollte das der Fall sein, ist zu klären, ob es angezeigt ist, dass wichtige Elemente des Gottesdienstes ins Russische übersetzt werden. In der Regel lässt sich im Bekanntenkreis der Familie jemand finden, der dazu in der Lage ist.

Im Übrigen entsteht in der Regel eine ganz andere offene Atmosphäre, wenn auch nur ein kleines Element in russischer Sprache im Gottesdienst vorkommt. Wenn möglich, gehen Sie nach der Beerdigung mit der Familie zum anschließenden Essen. Dieses fällt in der Regel großzügig aus. Hier findet für viele Spätaussiedler/innen zum ersten Mal Tischgemeinschaft mit Nicht-Aussiedlern statt. Gemeinsames Essen ist immer förderlich für die Entwicklung von Beziehungen, auch von Integration. Dieser Besuch öffnet Ihnen die Türen für die weitere Trauerbegleitung. In der Regel handhabe ich es so, dass ich auch russisch-orthodoxe Mitchristen beerdige, wenn der Wunsch dazu aus der Familie kommt und der Verstorbene es nicht ausdrücklich anders gewünscht hat.

b) *Gottesdienste aus Anlass der Trauung* von Spätaussiedlern sind in diesem Kreis sehr beliebt. Auch hier gilt es, mit den Brautleuten im Vorfeld den Gottesdienst bis in die Einzelheiten abzusprechen. Viele von Ihnen wollen diesen Gottesdienst, aber haben keine Ahnung, wie so ein Gottesdienst abläuft. Andere waren bei einem Traugottesdienst als Gäste dabei, wünschen es für sich aber „feierlicher“, was immer das heißen mag.

Im Gottesdienst selber gilt es, sich ein wenig der Tradition des russisch-orthodoxen Gottesdienstes zu stellen: Während des gesamten Gottesdienstes wird es unter der Gottesdienstgemeinde ein Kommen und ein Gehen geben. Dieses Verhalten abzustellen wird Ihnen kaum gelingen, darum verwenden Sie darauf besser keine Zeit und Kraft, sondern konzentrieren sich auf die Kerngemeinde dieses Gottesdienstes, das Brautpaar und die nahen Angehörigen und nahen Freunde.

c) *Eine weitere Schnittstelle ist die Taufe.* Viele Spätaussiedler/innen gehören zur evangelischen Kirchen, sind aber nicht getauft. Oft erfahren Sie davon, weil eine Trauung oder Taufe des Kindes gewünscht ist, oder die Übernahme eines Patentamtes bevorsteht. In der Regel, so die Vorstellung bei vielen Spätaussiedlern, sollte die Taufe umgehend stattfinden. Leider folgen eine Reihe von Pfarrerinnen und Pfarrern diesem Zeitdruck. Dabei vergeben sie eine große Chance: Hier könnte etwas wachsen und könnte Integration stattfinden, würde man sich Zeit nehmen für ein Erwachsenes-Katechumenat, für einen Erwachsenen-Taufunterricht. Dazu sind in den letzten Jahren eine ganze Reihe von Materialien entwickelt worden.<sup>8</sup>

Oft wird der Wunsch zur Taufe auch von der Großmutter geäußert: Sie möchte, dass ihre Kinder und Enkel getauft werden. Hier ist ein besonderes Fingerspitzengefühl gefragt, um beiden gerecht zu werden.

d) *Eine besondere Chance ist die Konfirmanden-elterntarbeit.* Viele Eltern der Konfirmanden kennen weder Konfirmation noch Konfirmandenunterricht. Elternabend geben die Möglichkeit, Inhalte des christlichen Glaubens zu vermitteln. Eltern erfahren etwas davon, was ihren Kindern im Konfirmandenunterricht vermittelt wird.

Wir erleben es immer wieder, dass Spätaussiedler/innen, die bereits einige Jahre in Deutschland sind, jetzt offen sind für Fragen des Glaubens, Fragen nach dem Lebenssinn, Fragen nach Orientierung. Angebote von Kursen zum Kirchenjahr werden gerne auch von gemischten Gruppen angenommen. Bei all diesen Bemühungen gilt es zwei Dinge zu beachten: In der Regel tun sich Spätaussiedler/innen schwer, in dialogischen Methoden Inhalte zu erarbeiten. Die meisten Spätaussiedler/innen setzen voraus, dass der Kursleiter vorgibt, wie die richtige Antwort lautet.

## 10 Thesen zur Bedeutung der Muttersprache<sup>9</sup>

1. Lebensdeutung wurzelt in den frühkindlich gemachten Erfahrungen, also auch in der Muttersprache. Glaube und Gefühle können vorrangig hier adäquat ausgedrückt werden.

2. Die Muttersprache ist für die Integration unerlässlich, da sie den Menschen in einer unsicheren

Situation, in der sie ohnehin schon vieles hinter sich lassen mussten, wenigstens etwas Halt und Orientierung geben kann.

3. Es ist wichtig, dass Gebete in der Gemeinde in einer einfachen, verständlichen Sprache gesprochen werden. Einfach meint hierbei nicht anspruchslos, sondern elementar!

4. In der Seelsorge ist es hilfreich, aber nicht unumgänglich, wenn es Seelsorger gibt, die mit den Menschen in ihrer Muttersprache reden können. So können Barrieren im Gespräch vermieden und die existentielle Betroffenheit authentisch zum Ausdruck gebracht werden.

5. Die seelsorgerliche Qualifikation von Ehrenamtlichen aus den Reihen der Spätaussiedler/innen könnte die Arbeit entscheidend bereichern. Hierbei ist allerdings gute Begleitung und Supervision wichtig!

6. Gottesdienste werden in der Muttersprache besser und tiefer nachempfunden, da hier existentielle Dinge zur Sprache kommen. In Zukunft müssen wir uns vermehrt um die Integration von Spätaussiedler/innen und deren Glaubensstraditionen in unsere liturgischen Vollzüge bemühen.

7. Gemeindemitglieder fremder Sprache oder Herkunft haben ein Recht auf Seelsorge und darauf, ihren Glauben in der ihnen vertrauten Art zu leben. Eine deutsche Kirchengemeinde erscheint diesen Menschen oft sehr fremd und manchmal zu liberal, die Kluft zwischen traditioneller Volksreligiosität des Herkunftslandes, charismatischen Frömmigkeitsstilen und aufgeklärter, stark individualisierter deutscher Glaubenspraxis ist groß.

8. Eine muttersprachliche Gemeinde ist „überlebenswichtige Zwischenwelt“ zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft, zwischen Vertrautem und Fremdem, zwischen kulturellem Selbstbewusstsein und Assimilationsdruck. Die Erfahrung zeigt, dass Menschen, die in ihre Herkunftskultur gut integriert sind, sich auch leichter in andere Kulturen integrieren können.

9. Die Gruppen und Vereine dienen Spätaussiedler/innen als Rückzugsort, aber auch als Ausgangspunkt der Integration. Ein beständiger Kontakt und Austausch zwischen diesen Organisationen und den deutschen Ortsgemeinden ist unbedingt notwendig.

10. In der Begegnung mit Spätaussiedlern ist es wichtig, Zeichen des Respekts zum Ausdruck zu bringen, z.B. durch die Aufnahme ihrer Sprache oder von Elementen ihrer Herkunftskultur. Denn gegenseitiger Respekt ist die Voraussetzung für einen offenen Umgang miteinander.

<sup>8</sup> Materialliste zu beziehen über [www.ekd.de/aussiedler](http://www.ekd.de/aussiedler)

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. Bettina Beyerle, in: *Beten in der Muttersprache. Eine Dokumentation*, zu beziehen beim Ausländer- und Aussiedlerbeauftragten der Ev. Kirche der Pfalz.

# **MAASAI MISSION IN TANZANIA – AS A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 WHO ARE THE MAASAI – WANDERING SHEPHERDS?**

The word “Maasai” is an English expression from the Maasai word “Il Maasai”, which means “the people who speak Maa language”. The Maa speaking people seem to have common ethnic origin, because they are either Nilotics or Nilo-Hamitics. Other tribes besides the Maasai, which form the Maa speaking people, are the Njemps and Samburu of Kenya, the Arusha and Baraguyu of Tanzania, and other groups with only small numbers of people both in Kenya and Tanzania. Today, the word Maasai is commonly used to refer to those who are solely pastoralists and practice semi-nomadism.

In spite of the dilemma surrounding the ethnic origin of Maa speaking people, there are theories asserting that the Maasai tribe has its origin at some time in the Middle East. This theory was highly supported by the late Prime Minister of Tanzania, Edward Moringe Sokoine, who was a Maasai Ilaiguenak (the speaker of his age group).

The Maasai are proud people who try to maintain their cultural identity almost more than all other tribes in Tanzania. They are bold, courageous, and shy at the same time. With tremendous knowledge of traditional herbal medicine and survival techniques in difficult environments they regard other agricultural tribes as poor people and slaves of their own, and they call them “Olmeg” (or “Lumegi” in the language of Bantu tribes in Tanzania) which means Barbarians. On the other hand, other tribes treat the Maasai as “uncivilized” and “primitive” people who live in the bush. Although they often meet each other at the market places and when traveling, they always remain at a remarkable distance.

Despite their warlike habits, the Maasai are generous people towards their guest. They like to make friends from other tribes. To them friendship is an immensely important matter. Friendship is one of the several new methods to promote missionary work among the Maasai. On the other hand, since they maintained warlike habits and robbed cattle from their neighbors, they were feared by all tribes, even Arab traders were afraid of them. It is also believed that the warlike habits of the Maasai forced other tribes to live on mountain ranges. For example, in former times the Chagga and Pare used to dig large holes underground where they took refuge when the Maasai approached.

Studying the Maasai religion one will discover that it is closely related to the Jewish religion as displayed in the Old Testament:

- The Maasai believe in the existence of one God, Enkai, as also the Jews do in the Old Testament. Enkai is believed to be female.
- God revealed Her name Enkai to the Maasai man Musana just as God revealed His name Yahweh to Moses.
- The Maasai just like Jews do not practice ancestor veneration as practiced by many African tribes.
- Maasai as well as Jews believe that circumcision was an order from God though for the Maasai God ordered boys and girls to be circumcised.

- The Maasai religion has Ten Commandments with some different emphasis compared to the Jewish religion's Ten Commandments (see appendix).
- The Maasai and Jews have somewhat similar myths of creation.
- The garden of Eden and its beauty is mentioned in the Maasai tradition as well as in the Jewish tradition as the residence of the first human beings.
- Both Maasai and Jews have developed a cult whereby God is worshipped and approached through sacrifices which have atoning, thanksgiving, petitioning and devotional functions.
- In both Maasai and Jewish religion God instituted a successional office of priesthood. For the Maasai it began with Kidongoi, the first 'Laibon', and for the Jews with Aaron.
- The Maasai concept of sin is almost the same as that of the Old Testament.

It is in the light of these parallel elements in both Maasai and Jewish religion that Fr. Odilo Huppi went as far as calling the Maasai tribe the Jews of East Africa.

## **1.2 STRONG COMPONENTS IN MAASAI CULTURE**

### **1.2.1 CHILDHOOD IN MAASAI LAND**

Early childhood is a happy time for both sexes, assuming that it is not time of drought and that a normal amount of food is available. Children are the treasure of each family and guarded and cared for by all the inhabitants of a village. Every child grown up without being killed by malaria, diarrhea, or measles, is a gift of the deity. The children have considerable freedom as long as they do not endanger their lives.

Childhood lasts much longer for girls than for boys. Girls and boys at the age of five must already herd a small number of sheep and goats. They are supposed to watch them outside the village gates. This is a kind of pre-school education for them. Missing this pre-school education the child would be considered to remain stupid. Spanking is used to discipline each child who does not like to go herding and do animal husbandry. This is seen important especially for girls since throughout their lives girls and women are responsible for the care of the small animals. The girls assist their mothers with household chores like milking the cows in the morning, cleaning the hut, doing bead work, milking again in the evening, and cooking, not to forget the collecting of firewood and water and the watching and tending of younger siblings. A grandmother can ask to be given her granddaughter for help. The grandmother may spoil her a little bit, so the child will adjust herself readily to the new village and normally finds a peer group there. At the age of seven a girl feels almost like an adult in Maasai land.

The mother demands strict obedience from her daughter because a future husband will do the same. Yet most of the time the household work is done in a leisurely and joyful way, with singing and joking. The mother knows that her daughter won't remain in her house for long. As soon as the child is between 12 and 14 years old, she chooses her Moran friend and protector, the Osanja, (pl. Isanja, the lover). He will drink milk in her mother's house and take her to feasts and dances, wherever young people may meet. The girls are allowed to associate freely with their companions. They are not bound to stay with their protectors. The Osanja, however, is responsible before her parents to see that she is treated decently by everybody she is associating with. In many cases the Osanja is the girl's first lover. When the young people rest in the houses after a long dance they are introduced to all kinds of necking and petting, but girls should not get pregnant. As soon as the girl shows a sign of puberty she is sent home to her parents in order to be initiated and circumcised. All these activities subject the girl to the danger of contracting HIV/AIDS. Normally initiation and circumcision for girls and boys takes place at the age of 14-17 years.

Usually the youngest boys and girls are eagerly awaiting their great day of initiation and try to train their self control by all kinds of brave behavior a long time before initiation.

### **1.2.2 MAASAI AND CATTLE**

Maasai considered themselves as God's chosen people for all the cattle in the world. Thus they regard cattle as special gift from God. Therefore Maasai believe that all cattle in the world belong to them in divine right. Their claims are affirmed in their myths of creation. It is on the basis of such beliefs that cattle riding by Maasai Moran is not considered as sin but a duty to recover what was given to them by God.

An intimate bond exists between the Maasai and their cattle. They know their cattle by voice, color, eye, and call them by names.

Cattle provide the Maasai with meat, dung for fuel and plaster for their huts, hides for bed covering and garment, urine for cleansing hands, tanning leather, milk butterfat for food and their rituals, and blood as a milk complement in drought seasons.

Hence cattle play a central role in the Maasai culture. They are a sign of wealth, respect and blessing from God. A cattleless person is pitied regardless of whatever source of wealth he/she may possess.

### **1.2.3 AGE GROUP SYSTEM**

The Maasai community is well organized and built according to age groups. By circumcision the Maasai man gets the right to become a Maasai and an active member of a certain group. Each age group gets its own name which is to mention even before the own name when a person wants to introduce himself. The Maasai are deeply convinced that life is not possible outside the age group. Thus members of a certain age group are closely bound together by the spirit of comradeship and brotherhood, sharing and supporting each other in whichever possible way. Their wives are obliged to attend to all the needs of a man of the age group of her husband. Consequently a Maasai man feels at home anywhere in Tanzania or Kenya provided he arrives at the home of his age group.

The age group system is the main social institution which determines politics, religion, behavior, and role differences in daily life. Women have less age groups than men.

### **1.2.4 MARRIAGE**

The Maasai man can marry as many wives as his ability to pay dowry allows. His ability to marry depends on the number of cows he possesses. Sometimes the dowry reaches up to forty cows. I have personally witnessed a Maasai man who married forty wives. Traditionally the girls could be married to sixty to eighty years old men. They are expected to fill the husband's homestead with children from their lovers. Having a young wife and children is considered to be the best proof of still being alive and sexually active.

Maasai women married to the same man do not feel jealous to each other but treat and regard one another as sisters. In spite of this, it is widely held that a husband allows his age mate to have sexual relation with his wives. It is also claimed that a few starving wives yield themselves to guests.

Women duties range from bearing and caring for children, milking the cows, building their house, and fulfill the duties of house work. Women in the Maasai community are treated like objects rather

than human beings. They are always subject to male domination and are severely punished when they made a mistake.

### **1.2.5 THE ROLE OF ELDERS**

Maasai elders fall into two age groups. Those of the age between sixty and early seventies are considered to have a wealthy memory of many affairs and historical facts to hand over to the younger people during educational meetings. They are kind of a living law book. Although they are not the decision makers of the Maasai community, they prepare the decisions of the reigning group and the legal materials which have to be considered. In the cases of transgressions the elders put penalties on the culprits according to Maasai law and consider ways of reconciliation as soon as quarrels or fights occur. This is the group of elders expected to approve and give direction when new changes are to take place in the community.

Elders with the age between seventy five and eighty five years are the ritual experts and priests of the community. They are considered to be near to the deity *Enkai* because She blessed them with old age. Hence they are very much sought after for blessing the younger generation. Women have a full share in ritual events. No ceremony can be held without the elders to preside over it.

### **1.2.6 SINGING AND DANCING**

The Maasai deeply love singing and dancing. These two activities are always associated. In the morning, when the moon is shining, groups of young men (Moran) and girls come together to sing and dance. When the herds already are on the grazing land and when the Maasai completed their daily routine, then the women and girls can be found singing and dancing. Even when the women are busy knitting their ornaments in the shade of acacia trees their singing can be heard.

The singing and dancing of the Moran is a most interesting performance. Two Morans jump high with their spears or sticks in their hands while others continue to sing, producing humming sounds.

### **1.2.7 CIRCUMCISION**

Circumcision among the Maasai incorporates a different tradition and concept than among other African tribes. Their religion teaches that *Enkai* ordered circumcision for boys and girls.

Prior to circumcision a thorough traditional education is given to Maasai boys and girls as a way of preparing them to enter into a new age of adulthood. Thus the teaching prepares them to meet successfully the responsibilities and challenges of an adult in the community. Hence it could be said that the ritual of circumcision which is celebrated by eating, drinking, singing, and dancing is a graduation after qualifying in the traditional school.

The Maasai practice circumcision as a rite of initiating girls and boys into adulthood. Circumcision marks the transition into adult life, thus uncircumcised men or women are regarded as children in the Maasai community. Female circumcision is done by the excision of the clitoris and cutting of the upper surrounding part of the labia minora. For girls circumcision is the sign of being a mature Maasai woman. For the boys it is the sign of being accepted as a Maasai.

The female excision will take place in the early morning. The genitals of the initiands are numbed by a bath in a cold river or by bathing them in an extract of herbs which was prepared the day before.

The girls are not supposed to wriggle or cry during the painful operation but they are allowed to tremble and swoon. Should a girl lose control over her self and start to scream, the preparations for

the circumcision feast are in vain. Nobody will eat the food which has been prepared. Therefore there would be no singing and dancing. Such a coward behavior would prove to everybody that the girl will not be able to bear the pains of child birth, and she would be despised by all. Many girls who lost control over their nerves during excision became brave mothers during childbirth because the social distraction they suffered during excision taught them total control over themselves afterwards.

The circumcised girls are ready for marriage after the healing of their wounds, while the circumcised boys are ready to defend the farm and community and protect their herds of cows from any danger at any cost.

The Maasai regard the silent endurance of the circumcision and excision pain as a proof that the young people are capable of enduring the hardship of adult life too. A delivery is long and hard due to long distances from hospitals.

By excision women do not become equal to men but they become equivalent. They are entitled to participate actively in rituals of prayers and blessings.

## **2 EFFECTS OF CHANGES IN THE MAASAI COMMUNITY AS A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY**

### **2.1 HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC**

It has been pointed out before that Maasai are splendid herbalists. They make different medicines which cure many diseases from different types of tree barks, roots, and leaves.

Despite the fact that they own profound knowledge of medicine important in their situation and context they have being subjected to an essential change since HIV/AIDS spread like a wildfire in their community. HIV/AIDS is a pandemic to which their immense knowledge of herbal medicine has no command. Providing preventive and coping skills against HIV/AIDS to the Maasai community is a great challenge to the pastoral care ministry. The challenges are rooted in the way Maasai life and community is structured.

In the Maasai community HIV/ AIDS affects men, women and children alike. But it affects them differently because of gender issues.

Women and girls are more vulnerable to HIV/ AIDS and bear the greater impact of the epidemic, such as the responsibility of caring for the sick, inadequate resources, and victimization.

Lack of information, the polygamy system, and lack of the right to economic power, the right to negotiate, and even to choose marriage partners subject Maasai women and girls to greater risks of being infected with HIV/AIDS. In addition to this the practice of circumcision brings an additional great risk of contracting HIV/ AIDS to Maasai girls.

Maasai boys are also at high risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS during the circumcision procedures especially when done with unsterilized instruments. Furthermore the cultural freedom of freelance sexual affairs with circumcised girls to which circumcised Maasai Moran men are entitled makes them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Married Maasai men are also at high risk of being infected with HIV/AIDS by marrying many wives. The culturally accepted norm of allowing their age mate to

have sexual intercourse with their many wives enhances the speed of being affected by the deadly virus.

It is so sad that preventive measures against HIV/ AIDS, like the use of condoms, abstinence, or one marriage partner are either not applicable in the Maasai community due to their timeless way of life and lack of appropriate knowledge and information.

Recently we conducted an outreach seminar to a Maasai community living 250 kilometres from our working station in Moshi Town, whereby a multitude of Maasai people attended the seminars. We noted with great surprise the fact that none of them has even witnessed an HIV/ AIDS patient.

Furthermore most of the participants were ignorant of the ways through which the deadly HIV/AIDS epidemic is spread, let alone knowing the preventive measures. Consequently ignorance exposes the Maasai community to great risks of being wiped out by the HIV/ AIDS pandemic.

It is again very sad that many religious institutions still preach morality, abstinence, and fidelity, and do not consider alternative methods for prevention of HIV/AIDS. They do so also without taking into account the social, cultural, and economical situations which make the Maasai community vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. To a few of them HIV/ AIDS is still seen as a divine judgment to the adamant sinners.

## **2.2 POLYGAMY**

The term Polygamy in the Maasai context is used to describe simultaneous polygamy and not consecutive Polygamy. Despite the fact that time has changed greatly, still Maasai handle this form of marriage like one of their sensitive customs.

Contrary to men of other tribes Maasai men could not accept the long standing church demand to divorce their wives and remain with one as a condition to be accepted in baptism.

Even the moderate stand of the church of being accepted with their wives in Baptism and not allowed to add others had not been smoothly accommodated in the Maasai community. Consequently the practice of plural marriages in the Maasai community imposes a great challenge to the Pastoral Care Ministry today.

I do remember to have refused one day to admit into the sacrament of Holy Communion a Maasai man by the name of Petro who was church elder, for having added a fourth wife after baptism. One day he came to me and asked a theological question which put me into a dilemma for several years. He wanted to know if Jesus will ever forgive him if he repented without chasing away his fourth wife. He further told me that the girl he married as his fourth wife was betrothed to him in her childhood, and as a requirement he had paid all the dowries even before he became a Christian. Thus according to him not taking the girl for marriage is like throwing her into the bush, an evil act he does not dare to do. This was my second painful experience in my Pastoral Ministry to the Maasai community.

The question to be answered is whether or not we should preach the Gospel and the Law at the same time. In so doing will the Gospel be given a chance to take roots in the Maasai culture? Is there a specific form of marriage commanded in the Bible? Do we have the right to reject those who Jesus accepted?

In the former times all Maasai women were married. However in the meantime there are a few unmarried Maasai young women as a result of the churches' emphasis on monogamy as an accepted and Biblical form of marriage. What shall we do with these unmarried, uneducated, unemployed, poor Maasai women who do not inherit anything from their family? Will they not fall into prostitution as a way of earning daily bread and thus become vulnerable to HIV/AIDS?

### **3 STEPS INTO THE FUTURE**

#### **3.1 CHANGE OF ATTITUDE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

For too long social institutions including the churches have considered the Maasai people as a group which has to be told how to behave and change their customs according to the common understanding of biblical and social teaching of a certain time. But all preaching and teaching could not really change the way of life of these proud and independent pastoralists. Some Maasai say that their name comes from Ma – asai, which means something like “not anything else”, saying that they are not willing to change their culture even if promised huge gifts.

Today we have to be aware that we can do Pastoral Care and Counseling to the Maasai only if we acknowledge and honor them as they are. This approach would need a humble spirit which opens ears and eyes first, in order to learn and to understand the situation, the problems, but also the joys and advantages of Maasai life.

Coming back to the tremendous importance which friendship has for the Maasai, Pastoral Care and Counseling has to build up friendship with the Maasai people. In that way Maasai could see that persons ministering to them do not relate to them as distant advisors but approach them as caring, concerned fellow citizens and Christians.

Instead of still depending on the parishioners or clients to come to the offices for counseling we have to develop a “Go – Structure” for our ministry, going out with our teachings into the Maasai community, eating their food, sleeping in their huts, sitting with them, listening to what they and their ways of living tell us.

#### **3.2 EDUCATION AND LIFE SKILLS**

The Maasai need education and sensitization concerning the many dangers which threaten their lives and their culture.

They need to learn how to cope with outside people who take away their land for own profit.

They need to learn about the ways of contracting HIV/AIDS and the possibilities of prevention and treatment.

They need chances to rethink false beliefs which hinder them to do away with dangerous customs like Female Genital Mutilation.

They need reassurance of customs which help them to survive in a faster and faster changing world like the responsibility of grown ups for the education of the young.

### **3.3 ACTIONS**

#### **3.3.1 BUILDING SCHOOLS**

The Tanzanian government has put a lot of effort into building primary and secondary schools in the villages of the Maasai community. This programme needs to be supported and strengthened.

#### **3.3.2 KINDERGARTEN**

Maasai children are very intelligent and eager to learn. They need kindergarten education in order to be able to cope with the many challenges waiting for them in primary and secondary school, and eventually in the cooperation with children from other tribes.

Our Department of Clinical Pastoral Education has started to help building a kindergarten in a quite remote area of KIA Parish in the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania.

#### **3.3.3 DOOR OF HOPE**

Maasai girls are given into marriage in very early age without receiving adequate education. Since 2002 I have started to build a house for Maasai girls, the "Door of Hope", right outside of Moshi, in order to give some of them a chance to attend schools in town.

Some days ago I was able to take the first girl for education in Moshi. Right now she lives with my family until the Door of Hope is further completed.

#### **3.3.4 MAASAI RITUALS IN A CHRISTIAN WAY**

Maasai Christians in Kilimanjaro and Meru region have started to use Christian rituals for establishing the age groups of boys. A historical celebration took place some weeks ago in Ngabobo parish with hundreds of young boys and their parents and advisors.

#### **3.3.5 OUTREACH EDUCATION AND HIV/AIDS SENSITATION**

In June the Clinical Pastoral Education Programme in cooperation with KCMC (Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre) undertook a four day outreach in a remote Maasai area for HIV/AIDS education. Maasai nurses and a Maasai doctor spoke about the pandemic and how to avoid getting infected. In the evenings we showed videos explaining how HIV/ AIDS destroys the lives of individuals and families. Voluntary testing was provided. It is planned, to go on with these programmes and bring trainings for trainers in the community.

#### **3.3.6 SAWAKI**

We founded a NGO for bringing HIV/AIDS education in remote areas including the Maasai land, together with education about environmental protection and small scale business.

## APPENDIX

### TEN COMMANDMENTS OF THE MAASAI

The Maasai, in contrast to other African religions, have Ten Commandments. As the author was working with the Maasai, he could not believe that these were really commandments which were described to him. At that time the author understood the commandments as code of ethnical behavior which organizes their society culturally, morally, and politically. However Merker was informed of more commandments that were told to the author. Merker's book convinced the author that these codes were indeed commandments.

These commandments were given to the old men of the Maasai by an angel of God on the mountain of God, *Oldonyo Lengai*. God decided to supply the Maasai with these commandments because at a certain time a fiery snake appeared which tried to change the people's mind about him. Following are the commandments as they were narrated to the author and to Merker.

- 1) There is only one God. You called him *E'majan* or *E'magilan*; from now on you shall call him *Enkai*. You shall not make any picture of him. If you will obey his commandments, everything will be good with you; but if you will not obey you will be punished with famine and epidemic.
- 2) If you come into conflict with a Barbarian you shall only beat him and not shoot him; You shall not use knives in conflicts, for it is forbidden to kill human beings.
- 3) You shall not steal. Everyone must be satisfied with what he has and must not take the possession of other Maasai.
- 4) You shall live in harmony with one another. Only the old men are allowed to drink honey beer, because when the others drink they may be drunk and begin to quarrel and beat one another.
- 5) You shall not commit adultery. The Moran shall not touch a married woman or make a young girl pregnant.
- 6) You shall not kill female animals, bulls, rams, or donkeys. You are allowed to kill only castrated animals for your food.
- 7) A man shall marry only one wife. Only when the first woman dies or gets divorced the man can marry another wife.
- 8) You shall help one another. If one of you loses his possessions, then you shall help him in order that he may not starve.
- 9) Only one of you shall rule others, and all the others shall obey him. The council of old men should settle conflicts.
- 10) You shall commemorate the eighth day of the ninth month of every year by a sacrifice of *os segi tree* for the Glory of God. Then God will hold back starvation and disease from you. You shall also bring a black heifer and four pots of honey beer to the Mountain of God on the seventh day of the seventh month every year. If God will take the heifer, that is a sign of good wishes to you. But if he will not take the heifer, that means he is angry with you.

The second and seventh commandments in this list were later abolished. The Maasai were later allowed to marry more than one wife; and were allowed to kill barbarians. Although working among the Maasai for a period of six years, the author never heard of the Ten Commandments. According to the writer's experience, the fourth and fifth commandments are also no longer in force as commandments.

## THE IDENTITY OF WOMEN IN INDONESIA

Asnath N. Natar

Indonesia is a pluralistic society with thousands of islands, ethnics, cultures and languages. Due to its pluralities, Indonesia is called a multicultural society. This is visible in its national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (lit. "Many, yet one" means Unity in Diversity). A multicultural society is characterized by different life-forms and value of orientations. In other words Indonesia is a "*demos*" with many "*ethnos*" or a country with many nations.

Arising problems for Indonesia due to its multicultural diversity is religious minorities, ethnic minorities, women, handicapped persons, homosexuals and further value of orientations who are looking for their acceptance of identity in a pluralistic society. Within this multicultural society the majority usually has a self-understanding of being a homogeneous unit which is original and thus has more rights than other cultures. So compulsion occurs from one group to another group.

The percentage of women in Indonesia is more than 50% of the population; however in reality they are often exposed to discrimination and injustice. Their identity of being women with different experiences and values is not appreciated. They do not have any possibility to define the values of their group and the autonomy or rather to form their own life in the society. Relating to the introduction above, I would like to present the following identity of women in Indonesia who experience on destruction through politics, religion and culture.

### What is identity?

"Identity" comes from the Latin word *identitas* which was adapted by French to *identité*. This word is influenced by Latin word *esse*. *Esse* means identity or being. Being for the Indonesian women is *Empu* (master/mistress) for or on herself. *Perempuan* (women) originates from Sanskrit *Empu* and means "the one who is admired". The word "*perempuan*" linguistical implies a higher value than the common word "*Wanita*" (women). *Wanita* means "the one who can be arranged" and consider as an object. Women are the beautiful creation of God and have a unique character. Thereby they

become equal partners with the men.

In his analysis, Habermas examines the design of the identity of humans/people as a global nature. Habermas describes that the effort of humans/people to form out their own identity is very influenced by the ideology (e.g. religion). At the same opinion, Gadamer describes the life reality and the environment of the people as a strong source influence for the design of the identity.

In the era of globalization, the encounter between cultures is a complex issue. Homi Bhabha refers to the concept of hybridity and interstice (between the worlds). Hybridity comes from the Latin "hybrida", which in the mixture or association of two or more components refers. The hybridity concept arose in the encounter between different races, nations and religions in the globalization force. This concept founded the multicultural and pluralistic awareness, because there is awareness that has no original culture anymore. Hybridity is an unpreventable effect of globalization, which leave a trace of one culture in another cultures. In other words, it cause a mixing between cultures.<sup>1</sup>

There are two different fundamental attitudes to the pluralism. On the one hand fear from old standards to a hostile attitude towards globalisation and the related pluralism take in the scepticism and nationalism expresses. On the other hand, this process can encounter without consideration to the previous identity to be met, leading to a conflict between conservatives and liberals. Through dialogue there can be no force of one group to another groups and the differences can be accepted. Indonesia with the concept of *Bhineka tunggal Ika* refers to the differency of people, Religion and culture, but yet united, which implicate the identity of the Indonesian women.

Destruction of the identity of the Indonesian women

### **A. period 1965-1998**

Since in the past the Indonesian women were put in the patriarchal and feudal culture under the men and have experienced a lot of discriminations and injustices. Nevertheless not all women experienced the same situation and culture, because the gender identity as

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<sup>1</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, " Signs taken for somewhere else: Questions of ambivalent and authority under a tree outside Delhi, May 1817 " in *Race, Writing and Difference: Special Issue of a The Journal*, Henry Louis Gates (ed.), Critical Inquiry, The Location of Culture, 1985, p. 163-184.

a liquid variable is changed in a different context and time, and not as a statically attribute in every person. Minahasa with its egalitarian culture offers the same position between the man and woman. The population in Minang (West Sumatra), Key Islands (Molluken), and Kodi (Sumba Island) offer the high position for women than for men.

Indonesian women in the colonial era were also known as courageous, who took part in the war against the colonization arms, for example Cut Nyak Dien, Cut Mutiah and Martha Kristina Tiahahu. There were also two radical women's groups namely *Istri Sedar* and *Gerwani*. They supported the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and had relations to the first president, Soekarno. Gerwani wanted the education opportunity and the same position between women and men. It did not compromise with the polygamy as well as divorce. This made a great difference compared to other women's organizations. It was also the only women's organization which had the courage to criticize the policy of the Dutch colonial government publicly and systematically and to turn the attention towards the fight against the capitalism. Furthermore Gerwani urged that the situation of the proletarian women must be improved.<sup>2</sup> During the independent day, they fought for better income possibility for the female worker.

GERWANI was dissolved in 1965 because they were accused (as the scapegoat) of taking part in the military coup d'état at that time. General Soeharto (he became the second former president after that) and the armed forces used them at that moment as an agent for coup d'état against the first president (Soekarno). He said that GERWANI has performed sexual dances and celebration on 30th September 1965 (September 30, 1965), before they killed six generals in Lubang Buaya, Surabaya. They were even accused that they have carved the penis and face of the generals with the razor-blade. This lie was revealed after the regime of Soeharto in the year 1998. The lie-history of Soeharto has destroyed not only the Indonesian feminist movement but also has made bad opinion of them and called them a wild sexual machine.<sup>3</sup> The government called GERWANI as a

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<sup>2</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Kuntulanak Wangi: Organisasi-organisasi Perempuan Indonesia Sesudah 1950*, Jakarta, Kalyanamitra, 1999, p. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> Saskia Wieringa has revealed this lie in her thesis. See Saskia E. Wieringa, *The Politization of Gender Relationship in Indonesia. Indonesian Women's Movement and Gerwani until The New order State*, Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 1995. The crisis on 30 September 1965 was more than a great reason for the reinforcements of the role the armed forces. The economic crisis was understood as a moral crisis (sexuality of the GERWANI) at the moment. The communism, which from communism party done, wasn't regarded as an ideology but the source of the moral needs decadent, which need the total purge action and rescuer. At the beginning of the reformation movement in Indonesia in the year 1998 the government also took advantage of the sexuality as a terror for the women, which many women from China were raped. There is law this one against pornography and porno action, now more punishes the body of the women.

prostitute organisation. The negative picture of the women through GERWANI was presented as very immoral, uncivilized and inhuman. In the reality the government was afraid of this organization because they were conservative and fought for the improvement of the the women's situation and social politics. The government was afraid if GERWANI criticized the power of the government.<sup>4</sup>

As a substitute the government founded a new organization for women which, however, guarded and checked strongly regarding to the aims of the government. The structure of this organization was hierarchical. The government united all woman organizations of the civil-servants under the name "Dharma Wanita" (the obligation of the women) and those of the armed forces under the name "Dharma Pertiwi" (the obligation of the mother country) on August 5, 1974. These organizations had the aim of supporting women for the fight and the success of her husbands as civil-servants.<sup>5</sup> This is surprising because there wasn't any organization for the husband of civil-servants. In addition, the government founded "the training to the family prosperity" (PKK) for the women in the villages also in the year 1977 which didn't belong to "Dharma Wanita" and "Dharma Pertiwi". This is a training program for the improvement in the prosperity of the families. These organizations either in the villages or in the city run the same programs of the government. Trought these three organizations the government controlled the women and strengthened their subordination.

The activities of PKK concern the family affairs, health, the clothes for the family, the child education and the family harmony. The women are also responsible for the safety of the family, for the composure and the order of the family life. PKK wasn't only used to remind women of their adequate position but also as a tool, so that nobody opposed the ruling regime.<sup>6</sup> So the women didn't fight for the rights of the women. Talks

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<sup>4</sup> Many members of GERWANI were killed in prison and have learned torture, e.g. rape and are killed with not complete body and genital. They try to hide her identity and experienced traumata. Within these years all members and sympathizers of GERWANI and Communist party were caught and killed. There was mass murder in all towns in Indonesia. This lasted from 1965 to 1998. For 32 years the latent danger of Communist was propagated, which the government obliges the population to look every year at the film about the movement of September 30th, 1965. If there was an organization which was with the strategy of the government against, the government named this as a Communist. Because of this, the people are afraid to talk about politics. One way of the government to control the behavior of political prisoners is, the government give special characteristics on their identity card, namely ET: Former Tapol (former political prisoner). Their family might not be and become officials actively in politics. In the reference to this order, the government has carried out a special examination (Litsus) to candidate of the Beamtes.

<sup>5</sup> Sukanti Suryochondro, "Timbulnya Dan Perkembangan Gerakan Wanita di Indonesia" in *Kajian Wanita Dalam Pembangunan*, T.O. Ihromi (ed.), Jakarta, Yayasan Obor, 1995, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Saskia Wieringa, Op. Cit p. 25. The ideology of PKK is the development the "Panca Dharma Wanita" (the five obligations of the women), namely .: the woman as the faithful companion of the man, as the education

on the oppression of the women indicated at once that they criticized the policy of the government. This was taboo and could be accused as subversive.

Some people considered this as a step backward for the feminist movement because it reduced the independence of the women who got instructions of supervisors (mostly were men). It was said that this supervisor further reflects the dominance of the men. Furthermore the members of the executive board of "woman obligation" (Dharma Wanita) had to correspond to the position of her husbands. If the man was chief of Department, then his wife automatically had to be the leader of the "woman obligation".<sup>7</sup> Their Intellectuality and ability weren't important. Everything depended on the power of the men. The picture of the women which was progressive and brave has changed after that with the new picture, namely polite, soft, carry high hair knots, have high statuses but they are stupidly. They are like Robot. In periodical meeting of the organization usually they make only gossiping or deal out gift. Women don't give any fights for the poor one. The consequence is that the women through their activities, like cooking and taking care of the children, are subordinated again and silenced. The government tried to standardize the identity of all women.

The government made also the efforts of the identity's standardization (monolithically) of the Indonesian women through culture. The government use the Javanese culture as the majority and dominant culture as a stand way, namely patient, soft, obedient, subordinates and good mother. Only Kebaya (the traditional clothes of Java) was promoted and became the national for the women at the moment. This is visibly clear in Kartini celebration,<sup>8</sup> all women are asked to put Kebaya on. Everything was done in the Java context, that all women were considered the same, although each woman has her own context, e.g. as Batakese women, Sunda, Padang, Minang, Bali and Minahasa women. Of course they have their own concept for their femininity and can't be forced to be similar. The identity of the women is defined also as the completion of the men. A woman is only a friend who stays behind the curtain (*Konco wingking*). Only the

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mother for the children and the educator for the young generation as a successor of the nation, as the responsible person for the budget, as a female worker for an additional income of the family and as a useful corporation member. All these obligations shall be carried out into this one with a the nature's way adequate to the woman, namely friendly, not speak loudly and specially interest not preferring egoistic, this means not the interest of their own to the interest of the man and the parents, but behave as an obedient woman.

<sup>7</sup> The man got some hindrances in his Kariere if his wife didn't take part in the activities of PKK and other organizations of the official women diligently.

<sup>8</sup> Kartini is a national heroine. However, it has to be been sorry that the celebration is more as a cook and fashion competition.

men may appear in a public area. The women are, always equated with 3 M namely *Masak* (cooking), *Macak* (make-up), *Manak* (bear children). Because of this the women get skill only in three Ur: *dapur* (kitchen), *sumur* (well) and *kasur* (bed) and have no chance for education.

Ann Foreman in her book "*Feminity as Alienation : Women and the Family in Marxist a Psychoanalysis*", says that the isolation of the women is alarming because the experience of life of the women is viewed only as the completion of other people (she is part of your father, man and children). They give their life always for other people or is a part of the other one. Because of this they have lost their identity.<sup>9</sup>

## **B. period reformation (after 1998)**

The Indonesian feminist movement initiated by the feminist movement in the west. It developed in the eighties and at the beginning of the nineties of the 20th century. By the reformation movement which began in the year 1998 a new era started in the Indonesian government. The reformation offers room for any cultural identity which was neglected in the name of the national unit and agreement in the new order government. However, there weren't any important changes for the women. The women earn more and more problems because of the identity value of the ethnic group which are structured very patriarchally. The identity of the women is not appreciated like the identity of other groups in the society. Even furthermore they are oppressed. The history of the reformation also has claimed victims under the women, which 168 women became victims of a mass rape.

Indonesia has put down in constitution the existence right of some religions and cultures. Related to the women this constitution guarantees the dignity and the rights of the women. Women have the same civil rights as men, however this isn't appreciated or some are perceived in the practice.

The government limits the rights of the women strongly and discriminates against the body of the women in Anti pornography and porno action law outline (RUU APP). It is difficult to understand that men who see and take advantage of the pornography and porno action aren't punished. It is also forbidden to women by this law

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<sup>9</sup> Ann Foreman, *Faminity as Alienation : Women and the Family in Marxist a Psychoanalysis*, London, Pluto Press, 1997, S. 5.

to leave the house after 07.00 p.m o'clock without a male friends. So they must stay at home (region ordinance of *Tangerang* region about the prohibition of the prostitution). Women also must wear clothes, which cover from neck to toes. Muslim women are obliged to wear a veil to protect them of sexual harassment. The consequences is, they can not work on public places in the evening, e.g. as a nurse, as a policewoman, as waitress in the discotheque or in the hotel. Her dress choice is also influenced strongly. Women in Aceh are whipped if they don't wear veil. A woman was also whipped for the participation in gambling and betting in Aceh. The owner of the gambling and betting Business and the other male gambler were however left free.

The law of the Prostitution concentrates only on women who are engaged in Prostitution. The Men who use the Prostitution or sell women aren't punished, however. These laws contradict with the International law CEDAW (overcoming all forms of the discrimination against women) which was ratified by Indonesia in the law no. 7/1984. The bodies of the women are controlled by the government and religion. They use the women only as a tool of the politics. They use also the women as a tool to the morality fight which this comes from patriarchal interpretation of the religion text. The bodies of the women in the text was used to confirm the religion symbol. This gets worse and worse because the government doesn't have any attention for the health of the reproduction of the women. The government use the bodies of women only as an instrument to reduce the number of births through the *KB program* (family planning). They are forced to use the contraceptives which often without asking the women who have the body, whether they want it or not. The men themselves are not prepared or little prepared to do vasectomy. Indonesia is a pluralistic and multicultural country but in the reality it discriminates against the women. The women become the silenced group.

The concept and the action which ignore the voices of the women or use her only as an object are the fact of violation of the human fundamental right. The women can not say their aspiration and Interest, actualize theirsself as citizen or take part in the formulation, ratification and application of the law outline and the region law. There isn't any vote of the women in the law outline and region law. The Women was written as object in the law and get no right for suffrage, the right to have a voice, and the right to get some informations. They are changed by law as the victim. Women in Indonesia at the moment experience the destruction of their identity because of the economy autonomy, politics and culture. Gayatri Spivak in her essay *Can The subaltern Speak?*

Name this as the unimportant, marginal or negative group, which looked at subordinately.<sup>10</sup> She points further the concept of about "The Silenced Group".<sup>11</sup>

Indonesia has different geography, culture, race and a social relation. The efforts to define all women as the same is again questioned urgently. This Universalismus has neglected the particularism and difference in every person. Identity which is actually liquid binarily is stopped up because there is the compulsion of an identity to the other identity. One shall accept the difference as a difference without falling in per se difference.

On this problem it is necessary to do rejection of the identification monolithically of the Indonesian women. Plurality is a social capital to develop this country although it isn't declined that this also contains threat if this isn't managed wisely. So plurality is actually understood as a "spirit" of the country who take care of the Indonesian citizen. In the multicultural society it is importantly the other more admiring. So this isn't only how we live together in a place. This is different with the plurality concept which appreciates and is conscious only of the reality of the Partikularität and the difference. The basic thing of the multiculturalism is the support for a change in our viewpoint and how we experience "the others". The multiculturalism complains about "melting pot" or "Salad bowl" dominant ideology, because it wants all cultures to melt in a dominant culture.<sup>12</sup> This means that all aspects of the culture, either the ethnic group or the language of the minority group had to be left and will to be one with the majority culture.

I think some attempts to respect the difference could be carried out if there ist a processes of the communication and the social interaction which become the bridge for various identity forms. So that a fair communication can be reach, which there is openness and understanding for each other. There is chance to take part in the public life and they get treatment particularly for the minority group, like the women, because the system which is developed by the majority group is interested to blur the different identity in the society.

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<sup>10</sup> Gayatri Spivak, "Can The Subaltern Speak "? in Cary Nelson And Lawrence Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and The interpretation of Culture*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois press 1988 p. 82-83, 104.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Gadis Arivia, *Filsafat Berperspektif Feminis*, Jakarta, Jurnal Perempuan, 2003, S. 132-133.



## My life story

I am Dinesh Kumar Chand, born in a small town called Kotpad in the Eastern part of India, in the state called Orissa. It is just situated between the middle of Chennai (Madras) and Kolkata.

It is a country of multi-religions, multi-cultures and multi-languages.

It is the country where the society is divided into castes:

There are four main castes which I like to describe in short:

Brahmins - the priests and teachers,

Kshatriyas - the kings and warriors

Vaishyas – traders

Shudras – agriculturists.

Outside of this caste-systems with its thousands of sub-castes there are the Dalits, the Untouchables and the Adivasi, the indigenous people.

They are the ones having the lowest status and being despised by the society.

My family comes from the Dalit background, around 100 years ago my grand-grand father accepted Christianity brought by the missionaries. The missionaries coming from the Lutheran Church in the Northern part of Germany reached in our region in 1882.

Since the time of my grand-grand father my family recognises itself as a Christian family.

My father was a teacher and my mother is a teacher.

I do not know much about my father's history because he migrated for his job to the place where my mother belongs to. My mother says that my father never took her to his native place where he came from. She does not know yet what is the reason behind it but by that time half of their money they used to support my father's family because the brothers of my father were not in a good position, some already died and the children were orphans.

We know my father's family only from their visits to us.

I know my mother's family history because of my mother and grand-father's tellings.

So before I start with my own life-story I like to start with my family's story as our stories and lives are somehow interconnected.

My mother belongs to the place where I was born. Her grand-father was an adopted child of the missionaries, so they carry the title of mission-grahan that means the mission accepted child.

My mother's grand-father and my grand-mother used to work for the missionaries. My mother's grand-father was the driver and my grand-mother was a cook for the missionaries. So her family has been closely connected with missionaries.

My grand-father was a tailor and his hobby was music, especially he used to play in a band-barty. He used to play the Dalit drum and trumpet going to marriage-parties or some functions and this was also his part-time income-source.

Once they were for the first time invited to play at a Hindu-marriage.

The band-party was very happy for that invitation because it was a sign that they were well known outside of the borders of the Mission Compound.

Happily they went there and performed everything very well and they received the fixed amount of money.

Few days later one Sunday their names were called out in the church.

They had to explain why they attended the Hindu-marriage because it was counted as their disobedience.

As a consequence disciplinary action was taken: They had to stay under *Patta Sasti*, which was a place of shame. It was one church punishment where people had to stay in the back corner of the church, covered by a wood-circle. They had to be the first ones in the church and the last ones to go after church-service so that everyone could see them and realize the person's fault in order not to

repeat again to violate the church-discipline. Under this punishment they had to sit one year.

My grand-father told that he felt humiliated because his aim was not to convert into Hinduism, but he was only happy to have a contact in music outside of the walls of the Mission Compound.

The Patta-Sasti story of my grandfather is well known in my family. On the one hand it had been accepted and given a meaning as a necessary action by the missionaries to keep up the discipline not for the sake of my grand-father but for the congregation as a whole.

And the other hand it was not spoken about this Patta-Sasti in connection with anger or feelings of hurting but simply as a necessary disciplinary action which covers the real feelings.

But one thing was the consequence: My grand-father could not meet the missionaries wholeheartedly and freely. From then onwards there were feelings to give more respect and to meet with a certain inner distance because of fear.

Unfortunately my grand-mother died when my mother was at the age of 5.

My grand father got re-married and the family accepted the new wife as a mother.

My mother brought up in the surrounding of the mission compound.

As in the Indian society castes often stayed in one area together also the Christians lived in one area together, in the Mission Compound which was surrounded by a wall. The missionaries also lived with them in the Mission Compound, in the big mission bungalows so that they were seen and regarded as the good kings, ruler, protector and the people themselves felt as the citizens of this glorious kingdom. This time is being remembered often as the glorious, heavenly times.

My mother did her school education in the mission school. When she passed in her matriculation examination she was offered job as a teacher in the mission school. At the same time my father was working in the government school and they fell in love with each other. So they did love marriage in a court. But love marriage was forbidden at that time by the missionaries for which my mother was driven out from her job in the mission school. My father was working as a teacher in a government school and he applied for my mother because as a male dominated society the Hindus or other religions women were not working in any job, so it was her opportunity to get a job in the government school.

Now I like to turn my own life-story:

#### **Myself:**

I have one brother and one sister. I am the middle one. Due to my parents' work I was mainly brought up by my step-grand-mother to whom I do still feel very close and dear.

As my father and mother were working in the government school they joined all of us in the government school and not in the mission school. There I came into contact for the first time with other religions, mainly with Hindus.

Because of our low castes' background we were in double way discriminated: as an outcaste Dalit, the Untouchable and as believer in a foreign religion, as a Christian.

I personally was many times confronted with painful situations when my classmates did not want to take or eat any thing from my hand or things which I had touched.

#### In High-school:

When I joined the High School more than 100 students were there in my class divided into sections. They started calling me DC, I was responding to them and was happy but I did not know the significance behind this abbreviation. The classmates were teasing me telling "DC" is coming. I was thinking that they used DC as a nickname taking the initials of my name D for Dinesh and C for Chand. But it was not so, when I got to know about it from my one Christian friend. The meaning of DC was Dhombo Christian. DC expresses the double discrimination: Christian for the religion and Dhombo stands for the untouchable, downtrodden outcaste to which many Christian belong to.

I, as well as the other Christian students, faced discriminating situations by students as well as by

our teachers and professors.

For instance, if we wrote the exam in a good way we did not get the good mark in comparison to the Hindu classmates or in sports, musics or essay-writing competetions we hardly received prizes. As Christian students we were also not invited to the coaching-classes as the Hindu-students had been invited by our teachers.

From childhood we were grown up, knowing that we belong to a minority and carrying a feeling of being of lowest status.

Since child-hood everytime I used to hear my classmates telling whenever some teacher or school inspector asked them after passing the examination, what they want to become in future some said doctor, engineer, teacher, etc. But I remained always silent, I was thinking I want to be a good human!

It had been extreem for me to tolerate such kind of differences by the teachers, I did not dare to make anyone of the teacher my ideal neither in school nor in the college.

In our society and also in the school violance takes a great role.

If we made something wrong we were punished by the teachers by a stick.

It was for all students but the Christian students' fault was recognized as higher. If we did a mistake in homeworks we were beaten instead of correcting our mistake just oppsite side of the hand.

Because of this we used to cry and cry....

I am a Vegetarian since my Youth-age. The reason behind it is that I love the animals, birds and fishes. But it turned also to be one type of advantage. Christians use to eat beaf or cow but the Hindus recognize the cow as a mother and god. So they greatly hate the Christians and Muslims because they eat beaf. My Hindu mates tried to tease me with this but as a vegetarian I could boldly tell them: " You as a Brahmin claim to be a Vegetarian and you eat meat. How is it possible?"

This point helped me a lot to make friendship with Hindus. Sometimes I used to go to their homes but I had to stand outside or in the veranda of my friend as I was not allowed to enter their house because I am Dalit. Right after my leaving the mother of the friends used to come with a bucket of water and clean the place where I stood and sometimes they sprinkled cow-dung because it is used for purification. But when my friends told that I do not eat beaf and that I am a pure vegetarian I was allowed to enter into the house except the kitchen and the worship-room.

In the Indian society the surname plays a great role to identify someone's caste and background. My father suffered from his Surname because his surname was Bagh. This title shows the Dalit status but the meaning is Tiger. So all of his collegues had been teasing him, telling "Tiger, tiger, bagho, bagho". He felt that why his children would face the same problem so he changed our title to CHAND that means moon.

Because of this title or surname many could not identify me at first hand as a Christian or low caste and wanted to make friendship. When they got to know the reality they were shocked but they found out that friendship could be possible with anyone. With some even I became very close friend and still we keep the friendship. They even came for Christmas and ate with us without any hesitation.

My father died already when I was 12 years old. When I was a child already he was affected by Diabetes for several years and finally he died from the kidney-failure.

That time was dominated by the worry about my father and visiting different doctors. I stayed with him together in the hospital for a longer period and cared him also.

My mother had to take loan for my father's treatment and she had to handle all the financial situation by herself although she had never done this before in her life.

When my father died it was a big shock for all of our family-members. From then onwards my mother had to carry the burden of the family herself and even she started working one week after my father's death. I pay great respect and thanks to her.

Whenever I enter any hospital I feel difficult to tolerate the smell because it reminds me of the hard

and sorrowful time of my father's sickness and death.

### **In the Church:**

I was active in several fields of the church since my childhood. The religious life plays also a great role in my family and in the society. We were longing the whole days of the week for the Sunday and looking forward to the Sunday-service and Sunday-school.

In my youth-age I was voluntarily engaged in the Sunday-school, Youth-groups and interreligious students' dialogue.

In my family we had before dinner every evening family-devotions. This regularity helped me a lot to strengthen my faith and my identity as a Christian inspite of all the humiliations in the school.

In the field of the church I saw another kind of humiliation and self-subjugation.

My church, the JELC is an independent church and the relation between the church in Germany, the Northelbian Church and the Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church in Orissa, is officially recognised as a partnership-relation.

But I have been taught by my society and brought up observing and seeing the German guests who were coming from time to time as something higher.

The Germans are often being addressed as the Sahibs, which is respective way of adressing a white person which means the owner or boss.

The people also addressed them as “mother and father” which expresses a close relationship with each other as well it expresses respect and adoration.

The missionaries guided the Indian people religiously and helped them also economically, fulfilling as much as possible the peoples' desires and needs.

The visiting Germans are the ones' in the parents' role to care and help, that was everyone's opinion. Since childhood I had been hearing the church announcements. It was told how much financial help had been allocated and what type of project is being sanctioned.

The respect and honour to the former German missionaries is shown in the life of the church.

There is a set of rules and regulations which were introduced many decades ago by the missionaries and which are still valid until now.

These rules were followed all the time without questioning them and if there are any doubts then there is the opinion that the missionaries have introduced it, so it cannot be changed.

It is given priority in singing the European/ German songs in the Indian translation instead of the Indian compositions.

The Indian compositions are often even not allowed to be sung in the main church-services, because they seem to be “less holy”.

This has also a root-cause in the missionaries' former denial to sing the Indian traditional songs and to deny everything that is connected with the Indian culture and religion.

As an Indian Christian of nowadays I am struggling with my **identity**:

Am I an Indian Christian having my own culture, talents and capacities?

Or am I an Indian Christian denying my background and living my religion in an adopted European way and being dependent?

In my youth time I learned by myself how to play a bit guitar as I was very interested in music.

Together with my friends we used to compose and sing Indian songs. Sometimes we even played a song in the church, but it was not welcomed by the people because we did not want to play the church-books-hymns, but our Indian songs.

During that time I took also part in the Student Christian Movement of India and there we were discussing often all these matters.

After completion of my graduation in Bachelors of Arts in 1995, I joined in a Bridge-course as a teacher. I had to give the teaching for drop-out students, means who had left school from 3rd or 4<sup>th</sup>

standard and make a bridge between them and school after teaching them. At the same time I was active also in church activities like Sunday School where I was also teaching the children voluntarily. I received my personal inner call, then I thought maybe I should do something more for our church, so I was determined to go for the theological study. I gave my entrance examination and I was selected to study theology in the Orissa Christian Theological College in Gopalpur-on-Sea, directly near the bay of Bengal.

### **Getting to know my wife and another way of relationship**

At the end of my study of theology a young woman from Germany took part in one exchange-programme and joined the theological college for three months.

At that time I could not have imagined that she would become my wife.

She told that she was there for studies, so she lived and stayed with us as a student.

Living as students together made it easy to meet in an eye-to-eye-level.

We were curious to discover each other's cultures, religious practices, musics.

This mutual curiosity helped not to think in the schemes of prejudices, fixed roles and presumptions, but we met, talked and discussed valuing each others' cultures and thinking.

A new dimension of relationship developed that is called "friendship".

It was for the first time in my life that I met a person from Germany on the same level, understanding that although we are from different backgrounds we have both dreams, hopes, visions, fears, feelings.

The encounter was something completely different from what I had experienced from other German guests, coming officially with welcome-ceremonies, being regarded as teachers or donors.

The encounter with this young woman gave a feeling that there are no human made borders or feelings of inferiority and superiority.

When she came to visit India after one year again, we decided to marry.

Out of this decision for our personal life there appeared lots of problems which were beyond our imagination.

There had not been any matrimonial relationships since the contact between the Indians from my region and the German missionaries coming.

So I had to hear lots of reproaches from my setting that it is something impossible to get marry to someone from the church which brought the mission as we have an Indian proverb: Namakharami: That means forgetting someone's grace and cheating him by for example taking the owner's daughter as a wife.

Furthermore I was warned that if I get marry then the relationship of the two churches' might break and the process of getting church-partners might stop.

My wife also had to hear some more general fears and doubts:

She would be regarded as a rich person and be demanded to give money,

for the sake of money an Indian likes to marry her or that she is ignored about what will expect her in India.

In spite of all the comments and doubts we could not realize them, because my wife and myself, we did not see each other in different roles of high and low, rich and poor, black and white, giver and receiver. We just realized that although we are from different cultures and backgrounds we have lots of things in common and want to stay together in our life.

It was for the first time in my life that I did not think which role in relation with a German I have to occupy as I had been taught by my society.

It was simply living a new way of relation.

After my marriage we lived together in India in the parish where I was working as a reverend in the hilly area for one and a half years.

As there is a lack of health-awareness and health-education in this area my wife decided to become a nurse and to do the required training, so we decided to come for three years to Germany. I was also searching what type of further studies could be suitable in my situation while I came to know about the story-telling in conflict dialogue-training of Prof. Dan Bar-On.

I felt that, this training offers exactly that what I was searching for and it completely matches in my context because it touches the need to come out from the misunderstandings, prejudices and fixed roles in the partnership of my church and the partner-church in Germany. I was fascinated how the training underlines the importance of listening for a better understanding between two partners which are in conflict because there had not been any forum so far in our partnership of the churches for listening deeply to each other and to try to find out the root-causes for the numerous misunderstandings.

My wife and I had often discussions how all the misunderstandings and problems in communication and relation could be possible because we feel that living in an equal relation is so easy, but living in a relation over decades through many generations carries lots of problems especially when there come different expectations from the several sides.

It was always my dream that a change of my church and a change in the relation with the partner-church could be possible one day, especially, since marriage I am in touch with the two sides directly asking myself whether there is a chance to overcome the communication-gap and dependency.

But I felt that this is a dream, so it would stay always a dream.

Because of my project partner I had the chance to be greatly involved in the journey of partnership and it is a great privilege for me to work and discuss with him in the project to go towards a new horizon.

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## **THE SHAPING OF A NEW IDENTITY OF CHRISTIANITY: FROM TUTELAGE TO IMMERSION**

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### **Abstract**

The main objective of this essay is to examine the social location of religion in the contemporary world. The discussion pays particular attention to Christianity. The first part of the analysis revisits historical and theological-pastoral studies that reveal the relationship between Christian Churches, cultures and political power through history. The second part introduces another study focusing on contemporary trends to deal with the encounter between Christianity and cultures. Major changes in the religious field, resulting from cultural mutations, are identified in the third section. Finally, the text submits to the reader some elements to be considerate in the search for continuing process of actualization of pastoral action in the midst of societies.

Christianity and culture, particularly the political mediations, have been an important aspect of Christian reflection. The literature that examines this issue is vast and diversified. The different interpretations regarding connections between Christianity, cultures, and politics have contributed to animosity, as well as splits within ecclesiastical bodies and congregations.

The major stands vis-à-vis that issue may be summarized around two fronts: reduction to spiritualization or reduction of the mission of the Church to current history. Such polarizations created various psychological conditions which have been, in my understanding, an

obstacle that has prevented Christianity from offering an important pastoral-theological contribution to the political realm.

In order to have a better understanding of what Marcel Gauchet calls the “new citizenship of religions” (*apud* Guillebaud, 2003, p. 334) a historical survey appears to be helpful. The key questions are: What have been the predominant responses of Christianity to its cultural environment through history? How do these responses model current ways of relating to contemporary cultural formations? What are the major social, religious, and cultural changes that pose new questions and challenges to current pastoral action and pastoral care?

## **I- A typology of the relation between the Church and the world**

The analytic work of the well know Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez (1986) will be revisited here. This analysis highlights elements that have special implications for the field of Practical Theology and pastoral care. Gutierrez identified four types, corresponding to historical stages that describe the relations between Christianity and cultures: Christendom, new-Christendom, faith maturity, and prophetic.

### **1. The Christendom stage**

This phase refers to the historical condition lived by the Church which lasted approximately one thousand years: from the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine (312) to the beginning of the Modern Age (c. 1400). According to Gutierrez (p. 14) that long Church historical experience laid down the roots of current interpretations as well as misinterpretations regarding the interactions of the Church with cultures and politics. The notion of Christendom describes a “determined form of relation between the Church and civil society mediated by the State”; the Church ensures its presence and expansion of its power mainly by means of the State (Richard, 1982, p. 9).

“Christian unanimity” is its essential characteristic. It is taken for granted that both individuals and cultures are Christians. As such, a tacit alliance occurred between the religious realm and politics, or between earthly and transcendental levels, given that the fundamental idea was that “all is ours”. It was assumed the the full humanity of human beings only may be reached within the Church. This Christendom mentality lasted until the centuries following the Middle Age.<sup>1</sup>

### **1.1. Major ecclesial characteristics**

Four major characteristics are identified in this historical term:

(A) Conversion means to belong to the Church. Baptized individuals are “Christians” even though they are not in practical life; the non-baptized is not considered Christian. Recruitment is the tactic used to increase the numbers of believers regardless of their commitment to the Gospel. Christian responsibility means to repeat the Creed and follow specific moralistic rules;

(B) The criteria of validity of Christian life is participation in the sacraments. To be a faithful practitioner means to practice the sacraments. This understanding entails a dichotomy between existence and sacraments;

(C) State and civil powers are seen as Church allies that serve to preserve Christian unanimity. Individuals belong to the Church via enforcement by social pressure. Economic, political, social, and cultural powers are instruments to maintain Christian unanimity following

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<sup>1</sup> The influence of the Christendom era in South and Central America has its roots in the historical fact that the continent was evangelized by Portugal and Spain. Those countries did not go through the Christendom crisis that affected the rest of the European continent. Spain and Portugal were still in Middle Age time when conquered the continent (Gutierrez, p. 15-16).

interpretations presented by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Also, the State is a servant of the Church to prevent dissemination of non-Christian ideas;

(D) This historical period places the parish as the *par excellence* model of Christian presence in society. The parish is the location of the administration of sacraments and the guarantee of maintaining Christian unanimity in a geographical territory (Gutierrez, p. 16-19).

### **1.2. Critical remarks**

*First*, the system of thought behind this type of Christianity does not take into consideration the new conditions of most societies. New cultural scenarios show evidence of a strong awareness of social asymmetry, particularly in South and Central Americas. In addition, the role of the State has been one of identification with dominant powers to the detriment of the majority of the population. Christendom rarely takes into account emerging new ways of thinking which value human autonomy, subjectivity, and the process of secularization.

*Second*, the idea that “outside the Church there is no salvation” is emphasized. As Karl Rahner (2004, p. 82-83) wrote, the Church was seen as the little boat where humankind would be saved; however, God’s grace can be present and working within a “measureless extension of the world and its history without any tangible social expression in the Church”.

*Third*, the theology of the Christendom term was a Church response to its experience during that historical stage, according to Gutierrez (p. 33). That theology, based in Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas, used classical philosophical categories to indoctrinate individuals. In the Modern Age that theology takes a defensive form against major historical facts such as the Reformation, the growth of

Humanism, the Sciences, and the expansion of the knowledge of the limits of the world (Gutierrez, p. 20-21).

## **2 – The new Christendom phase**

For Gutierrez this phase is structured in the decade of the thirties of the last century. However, it has antecedents at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Gutierrez, p. 26-49).

Its major characteristics at the “operational” level are the establishment of “earthen Christian institutions” such as “Christian political parties”. Moreover, institutions aimed at the formation of workers and peasants are founded; the rationale behind these institutions was that the masses need institutions that can “help them to live” besides being a way of personalization. Another strategy is to strengthen schools and universities established during the Christendom stage. There is a new valuation of the “outside” culture: Christianity should incarnate in culture in order to show that it is committed to the daily life of people. This phase of Christianity is a reaction against the Christendom period which was viewed as excessively religious and alienated from existential issues and from fighting against injustices (p. 26).

This phase helps to form links between Christian life and citizenship, despite that it was limited to the elite. The main theoretical influence was the French philosopher Jacques Maritain and his concept of “integral humanist thought”. In spite of the fact that the pastoral action/care of this phase had its own human goals, it was articulated with the old mentality of the previous phase. Therefore, there is a mixture of ambivalent conceptions.

Even though the strategies of the new Christendom phase intended to empower the masses, this goal has not been accomplished. According to Gutierrez’ analyses this strategy did not work because the Church

believed that it was “necessary to adjust human beings socially in order to live fully” the Christian faith. In South America, the sectors more identified with this kind of mentality is the intellectual, technical, and political elite interested in the social transformation of the continent. Despite these contradictions, this phase shows to non-Christians a more attractive face of the Church: the Church is doing something tangible, helpful, effective (p. 24, 25).

### **Pastoral-theological considerations**

*First*, the new-Christendom phase, according to Gutierrez, is the first “healthy reaction vis-à-vis the values of the modern world”. Though the Christendom phase was a reaction to the culture it was defensive and a form of response; the Church “did not understand the meaning of the historical process of the Modern Age”. In the new-Christendom phase Christianity assimilates some of the values of the modern world and validates the creative subjectivity of human beings (p.40).

*Second*, soteriology is revised. The postulate “outside the Church there is no salvation” is questioned under the impact of new discoveries and the Reformation. Traditional soteriology is questioned as the issue of the “destiny” of the peoples who lived before Christ is raised. The doctrinal change comes with the elaboration of the concept of *votum ecclesiae*: the doctrine of the desire for the Church; a non-baptized woman and man can be saved by the desire to belong to the Church.

From a revisited soteriology comes a new ecclesiology. Even though the Church is regarded as radiating the message of salvation, the Church recovers the biblical image of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12.12-31). The juridical understanding of the Church, under the influence of Belarmino (1542-1621), is replaced by the biblical image. Charity is now regarded as an important dimension of Christian life (p. 43).

*Third*, the influence of the philosophy of Thomas of Aquinas is clear, especially in the use of such categories as “natural” and “supernatural”. The “natural” has its own value before the “supernatural”: the “supernatural” both “supposes and improves the natural; that is, Grace supposes the autonomous as well as the consistent existence of free man [*sic!*]; however, at the same time [Grace] bestows man [*sic!*] his fullness, making him deeply human because [Grace] places him into relation to God” (p. 44).

As a consequence of the autonomy of the natural world the “worldly order has its autonomy”; this idea comes from Maritain. The historical context was the valuation in the Modern Age of the autonomy of the State (c. XV and XVI centuries) (p. 44).

*Fourth*, Christian actions in the worldly order works differently from the Christendom model: it is no longer direct intervention but action above the worldly powers. The goal was that the worldly order guarantees the religious life. The priest now acts in the Church and in the world. His intervention in historical matters can be legitimated. The theological justification of this approach can be formulated in the following manner: in the pastoral action under the phase of new Christendom the “Church does not have a direct mission over the worldly order, which is autonomous”; however the Church and its priests might interfere with the worldly order under the “principle of substitution” if the civil powers do not find problem solving solutions (p. 47).

### **3. The time of mature faith**

This stage is, again, a reaction to the previous phase. A major concern here has to do with politics: identification to political parties might contribute to Christian divisions. The designed pedagogy of the Church is to establish elite minority groups, seen as people of mature faith. This shape of Christianity stresses personal and adult faith with greater

ability to make free choices, a freedom that the most of the population (particularly in South and Central Americas) does not have. So Gutierrez wrote: “this pastoral option sacrifices extension, quantity to get a deeper Christian formation”. Christians should not work as Christian groups, but to work with non-Christian groups. Christian action in the society is a matter of personal options instead of guided by the Church hierarchy (p.28-52).

Some critical remarks are pointed out by Gutierrez. First, this evolutionary stage of Christianity places greater emphasis on the elites to the detriment of the masses. Second, the emphasis on the personal and free faith jars from the depersonalization of the abandoned population in South and Central Americas who lack the educational and social conditions to act politically on behalf of themselves (p. 29).

However, at the same time, there is more assimilation of the modern conception in anthropology: the human autonomy before religious beliefs. A theological corollary is that the natural intelligence of human beings makes them able “to find a God who is concerned with them” (p. 51, 52).

#### **4. The return to the prophetic**

This model of approach of Christianity to society at large aims to stress the Church’s mission to the benefit of those who are outside the Church. The prophetic function of the proclamation of the Word aims to bring into human history the “consequences of salvation”. In order to do this it is necessary to know the human conditions within the historical context. The goal is “to live the social demands of the Gospel out of a radical and coherent form”. In addition to deepening the political and social commitment of Christians this type of Christianity stands for a Church which does not validate the hegemonic *status quo* because it is identified with a support for injustices (p. 30-73).

The standings adopted under this way of interpreting the task of the Church in the cultures have been a factor of misunderstandings, hostilities and fragmentations among church members and institutional bodies. However, their adherents understand that the search for new as well as alternative modes of pastoral presence of the Church in the peripheral societies is urgent and priority. Its praxis is in process: it is performed and might change forward and backward. Even though, its theology is well designed. Gutierrez describes some risks that are inherent to this type of approach: the natural ambiguities of human and social processes; the tendency to minimize basic elements of Christian faith; the risk of losing the Christian identity and the novelty of Christian message (p. 30-31).

The prophetic type deepens and expands the mature of faith type as we can see from the below summary: it is concerned with the “religious status” of the non-Christian from an existential, anthropocentric, perspective: human life has precedence over religious option; this perspective entails a Christological conception of salvation, i.e. in Christ all people are called to salvation; solidarity, or love, is pre-requisite for salvation; the mission of the Church is to bear the saving presence of the Grace of God to humankind; the prophetic mission is the formulation of a judgment. The Word of God allows the Church to reveal the mystery of history and judge it. The judgment “accomplishes the union between human conditions and the Word of God”. By the judgment the Word of God becomes flesh in history, besides making of history the time and space of Christian action; there is a move from ecclesial-centered understanding of the task of the Church to Christological focus (p. 70-73).

## **II- Christianity in the contemporary world**

As a preliminary remark it should be said that somehow the marks pointed out in Gutierrez' typology are still working in current conditions. They might be at the background of actual religious attitudes or they emerge as *momentum* with less or more intensiveness.

There are several major publications dealing with the encounter between Christian faith and contemporary societies (cf. Fornet-Betancourt, 2007; Vattimo, 2004; Vergote, 2002, and many others) According to the limits and purpose of this essay, I submit to the reader a few paragraphs that attempt to capture the essentials as far as the social location of Christianity in current cultures is concerned.

In accordance with the Brazilian Jesuit João Batista Libanio (2002) there are five categories that indicate major institutions and religious attitudes before nowadays cultures:

-*The traditional sincretic moment*. It allows for the juxtaposition of different principles coming from both the religious and the *extra ecclesia* side. Religion has a function of totality quite similar to the Christendom type. Society as a whole is regarded as belonging to the Church (p. 115-116);

-*the ecclesiastic modernity*. It has to do with correcting popular religious practices as determined by the Trento Council. The emphasis is on rational judgment of religion postulates and critique of religion magical elements (p. 119);

-*Post-Christian modernity*. Privatization of religion is a hallmark here. Religion loses its influence and control over society. Religion resides in homes and temples. The well known characteristics are: rise in value of subjectivity and personal options at the level of moral decisions instead of obedience to ecclesiastical authorities. "The individual becomes his/her own parameter." Christianity obscures in the shadows of mere

individual needs neglecting the political, systemic, and public field of human life (p. 122-125);

*-Deprivatization.* Christianity is challenged to follow the steps of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible by becoming involved in public life on behalf of that large portion of the abandoned population in the world. In addition, there are public issues to be addressed by the Church. For example: violence, wars, world environment, genre discriminations, market and finances regulations, and others;

*-Reprivatization.* Privatization of faith is back. This is another contemporary trend of religious faith. Christianity is entrapped under the pitfalls of the so-called liberal economy. Competition among different Christian groups weakens its potential to be a factor of building communities of resistance against all kinds of dehumanization. Christianity loses its critical charisma and weakens its vocation to be a channel of mobilization towards meeting legitimate human aspirations, such as egalitarian, cordial, respectful, human and social relations (p. 139-142).

The above mentioned categories represent widely some ways Christianity has interacted with the surrounding dominant cultures. They might be more visible in certain Christian communities than in others. Also, they might be observed among different groups in the same ecclesiastical structure.

In spite of the existing differences among Christians and their institutions with regard to the relations between Christianity and cultures, the presupposition of this essay is that Christianity has been historically aligned with the established power in order to guarantee its own influence and control over society. Particularly during the Christendom stage Christianity was in charge of holding together the social, political, and individual life. The contention of this paper is that

it is going on a shift with regard to the relation between Christianity and culture: From power-centered, meaning the State and economic power mainly, to culture/individual-centered. Contemporary cultures are reshaping the ways people and Churches express their experiences and beliefs.

### **III- Major changes in the religious field**

Seminal studies have found that the current cultural atmosphere is reshaping religious life. Cimino and Lattin' (1998) study describes some signs of this trend:

*-consumerism is shaping religious practices.* "Getting and spending!" There are religious niches. An enormous amount of "religious products" are invading Church settings, TV programs, internet and others communication means;

*-personal spiritual experience is replacing religious doctrine.* Could be an outcome of the "rise in value" of the individual? Mystic experiences have been overvalued. They have become the only criteria for determining the meaning of spirituality. As Bittencourt writes (2003), feelings, intuitions, diffused and mystic beliefs can provide spiritual wellbeing.

*-mega-churches and small groups are providing new homes for spiritual seekers.* Mega-churches put "the needs of potential 'customers' before the needs of the institutional Church" (Cimino and Lattin, p. 58). The small groups provide an intimate climate that favors trustful relationships and self-disclosure;

*-Secular spirituality is changing the way people work, play, and express sexuality.* The "search for 'soul'" is not confined anymore to the religious spaces. As Cimino and Lattin (p. 29) say, relying on Peter van Ness,

a secular spirituality is found in politics, as activists place a spiritual value on building a sense of community and social justice; in the natural environment, where nature is viewed as sacred in and of itself; in sexuality where erotic energies are seen as connecting humans to each other and the cosmos; in sports, which fulfill one's 'self-actualization' through training; and the arts, where creativity is seen as a spiritual value.

*-science, medicine, and media acknowledge religion as an influential factor in people's lives.* Following a long term of mutual hostility (see Russell, 1997), sciences and religion found a pathway of peace. The connections between religion and health have been rediscovered. Besides, from experiences people feel that "prozac and similar drugs do not deal with the 'dark night of the soul'" (p. 47);

*-religion is playing a greater role in public life.* The different movements for citizenship have attracted many Christians and people from other religions. Not only academic theology has justified the political dimension of Christian faith. Also, ordinary people in congregations are becoming aware of the temporal meaning of Christianity.

Another field research (Guerriero, 2005) has identified similar tendencies:

-Religion affiliation is becoming more and more a matter of personal choice instead of inherited from family ties or parental choice;

-A certain diffuse religiosity is contributing to a slow down of the former rigid frontiers among religions;

-The autonomy of the individual as far as doctrines, moral standards, and laws are concerned;

-There is a suspicion that traditional teachings of the churches do not spell out the whole truth. Many people believe that Church leaders conceal the truth. Besides, it prevails among people a feeling that it is

possible to gain a different knowledge by oneself regardless of what church leaders say;

-Truth is not seen as absolute. There is not only one truth. Institutions lack the authority to establish “the truth”.

These characteristics surely have an impact in the work of pastoral care givers. A phenomenological approach to pastoral care requires an attentive observation of the actual ways people see themselves, their world, the others and their religious faith. There are new demands from parishioners to be dealt with by pastoral care agents besides the traditional expectations (preaching, visiting the sick and the lonely, offering sacraments, counseling, teaching...) people have from pastors.

#### **IV – Pastoral care: seeking to be faithful to its dynamic tradition and simultaneously innovative.**

From the traditions of pastoral care roots we learn that pastoral care givers have a commitment to care of individuals, families, communities of faith, society at large, the environment and strive for fair and balanced social interactions. Pastoral care connotes an understanding that people carry on everlasting aspirations (such as to be cared for, to be respected, to have a decent job, to enjoy life, to find a meaningful life...), in addition to existing conjuncture needs. Pastoral care brings together the past, the present, and the future since the future is building up from the present.

I want submit to the readers an outlined agenda, from my own “social location”. My hope is that they can be helpful as we who become engaged in pastoral care work searching to be faithful to both the foundations of pastoral action and to the instances of thought and worldview of our contemporary sisters and brothers. The following list

is, to my understanding, to be considerate in current pastoral care activities:

1. Individuals, families and many groups seem to be living in a “society without parents”. The expression connotes without roots. There are many signs of destruction of human bonds. The widespread distrust of politicians; the rise of corruption; the despair of migrants; the inability showed by parents to cope with disturbing behavior of adolescents; wars and the impact of TV images of violence; lack of self-confidence to cope with common fragilities of human existence. These human conditions and many more, indicate that the traditional work of pastoral care of individuals and their social *milieu* is needed;

2. Existential issues are considered more important than teaching doctrines. It does not mean that people need some principles to guide ones’ decisions and to allow for life orientation. However, daily life and down-to-earth issues become prominent. Besides, the inherited doctrines have been expanded from a variety of sources and from personal life situations;

3. The so-called new moral liberty of the individual needs to be scrutinized on the basis of its alleged rationality. The “new moral” might be a reaction against double or false moral. The widespread disappointment due to the split between the “official” moral and actual life is one of the reasons for seeking another base for morality. Furthermore, people question the foundations of morality established by institutions;

4. The growing participation of church-members in small communities signals that the longing for settling down bonds that promotes solidarity and personalization. As a matter of fact small communities or groups have been part of the history of Christianity. These communities provide

for an intimacy and atmosphere of trust which cannot be weaved in large churches;

5. The recent trend towards dialogue and integration between sciences and religious faith will continue growing and expanding the areas of cooperation. It is well known the contributions of psychological, sociological, anthropological sciences to the whole field of pastoral care and counseling. In addition, sciences help the believers to set up a well-reasoned understanding of the differences between what we *believe* and what we *know* (see Rahner, 1971);

6. Pastoral care of the public dominium of the life web, that is, at political, environment, economic, finances, as well as others, levels is a continuum of pastoral care of individuals. Individuals are not healed if society is sick. To care for the public is to advocate for fullness of life. Pastoral care committed to strive for fullness of life develops methods and actions that lead to approval of legislations and public polity which work for the benefit of abundant life. This type of pastoral care is not aligned with the State, but uses its spiritual orientation to confront the unfair use of power.

In conclusion, the history of Christianity has showed us that there are inevitable tensions between Christian faith and culture. These tensions emerge from the noticed gap between the hopes carried out in the message of the Scriptures and actual life of contemporary societies. But, at the same time Christian agents need to be attentive of what they can learn from cultures. Cultures are human constructs. They display human aspirations and show an attempt that human life makes sense. So, reading the signs of our time is an ongoing adventure and task.

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## ***Humanity and Identity***

### **“Tsotsi” and the cry for humanity: Negotiating the meaning of film for intercultural pastoral work**

**Prof. Jan-Albert van den Berg<sup>1</sup>**

**The Rev Julius Pudule<sup>2</sup>**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

*“Tsotsi” literally means “thug” or “gangster” in the street language of South Africa’s townships and ghettos. Set amidst the sprawling Johannesburg township of Soweto - where survival is the primary objective - Tsotsi traces six days in the life of a ruthless young gang leader who ends up caring for a baby accidentally kidnapped during a car-jacking (Wikipedia 2008:electronic source).*

Acknowledging the fact that “...in Africa we do things together through stories...” (Manaka 2001:5), it was a given that, with the emphasis on the meaning of narrative accent that has grown throughout the world, we would have chosen for the medium of film as “...fictional narrative...” (Lynch 2007:122) to share some insights from Africa concerning humanity and identity.

Louw (2008:399) is correct in stating that film has developed into an important technological and visual expression by which to give meaning. Within this context, religious traditions are challenged in answering the question regarding the origin of images in our image-driven era, such as power (Detweiler 2007:30).

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The answer to this question is found, amongst others, in the close relationship between religion and art and is also implicitly addressed in the sense that both religion and art "...reach for the frontier of the imaginable; both entail an intensification of familiar things; both are risk-filled undertakings" (Hughes 2003:274).

In film, as one of "...culture's major storytelling and myth-producing medium[s]" (Johnston 2007:16), important paradigmatic developments are portrayed. Cilliers (2007:10), in conjunction with the French philosopher Debray, described the progression of the paradigms through which culture has been communicated throughout history by referred to them as eras or spheres of communication, namely the logo-sphere (oral tradition), grapho-sphere (printed media), and the video-sphere (transmission of images via electronic means).

In agreeing with Ortiz (2007:85) that films from other countries could be considered not only in content and form but also in audience reception as prime vehicles for cultural and religious exploration, we have chosen to use the proposed ABDCE-research paradigm (Müller 2001:64-70; Müller, Van Deventer & Human (2001:80) in negotiating the meaning of film for the important theme of Humanity and Identity in intercultural pastoral work. Accordingly to this paradigm, and concurrent to the narratives portrayed in film, movements of Action, Background, Development, Climax, and Ending could constitute a narrative research paradigm and epistemology. We will use these categories to give a few remarks of introduction before watching the movie *Tsotsi* together.

## **2 ACTION**

On 28 December 1895, the audiovisual culture was born when 35 people witnessed the first movie being shown in Paris, France (Van der Merwe 2002:154). This historical event escalated when, in 1979, George Atkinson opened the first movie rental store, making the ongoing viewing and reviewing of movies a possibility (Johnston 2007:15). With the help of technological and

marketing advances this medium has grown remarkably and every human has become a viewer.

“Action!” usually indicates the movement when the recording cameras start rolling on the movie-set. To our mind, a good empirical scrutiny of people and the action in which they are involved portray an honest and serious effort to describe the ‘now’ of the action (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:80). We would propose that important links exist between the cinematic phenomenon and developments within the pastoral care field, especially understanding that, in film, we are “... moving beyond a ‘literary paradigm’” (Johnston 2007:19).

During the twentieth century, pastoral care indicated specific evolutionary developments. Moving from a kerygmatic, therapeutic phase to a new, hermeneutic phase, since the seventies, with the emphasis on a rich description entertaining various perspectives with the emphasis on “... plausible forms of interdisciplinary dialogue” (Demasure & Müller 2006:418). space is found to facilitate the discussion between film and pastoral care. Moving towards understanding intercultural pastoral care as a process of social-constructionism in which it is all about the interaction with people and their actions, film hermeneutically mediates our interaction with the action so that we can become part of the action... (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:80). Therefore, one can rightfully assume that “[t]he theology that emerges from this kind of engagement is not so much a theology of answers as a theology of engagement” (Taylor 2007:67). From this perspective, one can become part of a theology of engagement and the opening up of new horizons of understanding:

*Tsotsi is a gritty and moving portrait of an angry young man living in a state of extreme urban deprivation...The film is a psychological thriller in which the protagonist is compelled to confront his own brutal nature and face the consequences of his actions (Wikipedia 2007:electronic source).*

### 3 BACKGROUND

We would like to understand the word “Background” against the metaphor of a movie-set décor. The action, previously described, is played out against this background, which is alive with associations and connotations of the past and therefore often means revisiting these previous situations” (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:83). The Background to the South African movie *Tsotsi*, which we are going to watch together, could evoke in the audience associations associated with the legacy of apartheid, the growing pains of a teenager South-African democratic disposition, as well as the recent xenophobic attacks reported in the world media. More specifically, the following notes on *Tsotsi*’s background:

*His mother dying from complications from HIV disease, the young David ran away from an abusive father and lived with other homeless children in a series of large concrete construction pipes. At the start of the film, David, now known to all as Tsotsi, is involved in a murder committed by Butcher during a mugging (Wikipedia 2007:electronic source).*

Taking the images portrayed in front of us seriously, we therefore agree with Ortiz (2007:85) that, due to the fact that cinema has become a universal mode of entertainment, the film has become a lens for viewers through which they can glimpse different ways of living and religious values, yet recognize a common humanity. Schneiders (2005:26) refer to this ‘common humanity’ as “...the recognition that spirituality is an anthropological constant, a constitutive dimension of the humanum”. In agreement with Louw (2008:398) that spirituality is embedded within many written and visual texts (also in the film *Tsotsi*) in secular society, we would wonder what this might mean in terms of our ability to change the stories we tell about ourselves, others, and the Other (Ortiz 2007:85).

#### 4 DEVELOPMENT

*Tsotsi runs wildly, desperate to escape the pain of unwelcome images rising in his mind. By the time he stops running he has crossed from the shantytown into the more affluent suburbs of the city. He collapses under a tree. It is raining hard. A woman in a driveway is struggling to open her motorised gate with a faulty electronic remote. Tsotsi draws his gun. It's an easy opportunity for an impromptu car jacking. As he races away in the woman's silver BMW, he hears the cry of a child. There's a 3 month old baby in the back of the car. Tsotsi loses control of the vehicle and crashes to a stop on the verge of a deserted road. The car is a write-off. Tsotsi staggers from the vehicle. The baby is screaming. Tsotsi walks away. Then he turns back. The baby calms slightly when Tsotsi looks at it. This unsettles him. He hesitates. An unfamiliar feeling stirs within him: an impulse other than his pure instinct for personal survival. Suddenly, he gathers up the infant, shoves it into a large shopping bag and heads for the shantytown on foot (Wikipedia 2007:electronic source).*

Embedded within the metaphor of film is the development of "... the drama, the actions, the tensions..." (Lamot 1995: 62). In the development of the formation of pastoral theory, different paradigmatic movements can be identified (Müller 1996:7-17; Louw 2005:7-9; Ganzevoort & Visser 2007:95-99). Firstly, there is a movement from a one-sided preaching model to a participatory pastorate in which the pastor is instrumental in the guiding of people to the discovery of God's involvement in their lives. The fact that the context is being taken into account and that there is a shift away from the one-sided professional approach to the mutual caring of believers are represented in this. There is another movement from a therapeutic to a hermeneutic orientated pastorate with emphasis on and acknowledging "... the endeavour to read, understand and interpret texts within contexts. Hermeneutics underlined anew the importance of our human quest for meaning... (and) the importance of compassion: the dimension of pathos in theology" (Louw 2003:54).

Taking into consideration that it is not only about storytelling, but also about story development, we are constantly looking and waiting for new, better stories to develop (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:92). It is during this time of looking and awaiting that the person watching the movie is editing the visuals on screen with the images from her or his own experience leading to the construction of an own film (Ganzevoort 2006:125). This alone has some powerful implications to be negotiated within a pastoral therapeutic process.

Facilitating this process in film is amongst other the use of music, which brings so-called codes to the audience watching. With emotional codes, the audience are told how the characters are feeling or how they must feel; with the dramatic codes, the music usually support and strengthen the narrative effect; with cultural codes, music is being used to tell us where we are (Taylor 2007: 65-66).

Living in an image-driven world, we are bombarded with images from Hollywood. It is also worthwhile and important, especially watching a foreign film from Africa with its ability to open the world to audiences, to recognize that subtitles

...allow us to hear other people's voice intact and give us a full access to their subjectivity. Subtitles acknowledge that our language... is only one of many languages in the world (Ortiz 2007:75).

## **5 CLIMAX**

*Tsotsi does not reveal to anyone that he has the child. He hides it from his gang. At first he thinks he can care for it alone. Keep it in his shack. Feed it on condensed milk. But he soon realizes that he cannot cope. The baby screams constantly and his attempts to feed it fail miserably. At the community water tap, Tsotsi selects a young woman with a baby of her own and secretly follows her back to her home. Forcing his way in behind her, he makes the terrified woman breastfeed "his" baby at gunpoint. The young mother, Miriam, is only a few years older than*

*Tsotsi. She has recently lost her husband to violent crime and lives alone with her baby, making ends meet as a seamstress. At first Miriam is very frightened by Tsotsi. But gradually she takes on the role of both mother to the baby and mentor to the desensitized young gangster. As their relationship tentatively progresses, Tsotsi is compelled to confront his own violent nature and to reveal his past* (Wikipedia 2007:electronic source).

With Climax, the summit of a process is envisaged where "...everything comes together in the climax, after which things are different for the main characters, different in some real way" (Lamot 1995:62). In formulating a theory of introduction for the meaning of film for intercultural pastoral care, it is taken for granted that pastoral care presupposes the human being and that insights from theological, philosophical, and human sciences' anthropological views determine not only the pastoral encounter, but also the therapeutic outcome (Lester 1995:4; Louw 1999:17; Ganzevoort & Visser 2007:37). Using the above as possible coordinates for mapping the meaning of film for intercultural pastoral care, discovering the possible meaning for humanity and identity, one discovers with Johnston (2007:16) that:

...movies function as a primary source of power and meaning for people throughout the world. Along with the church, the synagogue, the mosque, and the temple, they often provide people stories through which they can understand their lives... But people within the church and outside it also recognize that movies providing primary stories around which we shape our lives... Presenting aspects of their daily lives both intimate and profound (real and imagined), movies exercise our moral and religious imagination.

## 6 ENDING

*Tsotsi sets off to return the baby. He reaches John's house, tells John over the intercom that he will leave the child outside the gate. Meanwhile, an officer stationed at the house alerts Captain Smit, who rushes to the scene, arriving just as Tsotsi is about to walk away (Wikipedia 2007:electronic source).*

In our practice we would like to develop a form of practical wisdom, which values the stories of people and communities. We therefore agree with Müller, Van Deventer & Human (2001:76-96) that "...[i]nstead of working with hypotheses of what should be, we would rather like to firstly understand the habitus, which refers to a kind of practical knowledge within which human social action... constructs culture..." It is then, within the video-sphere, that we are especially looking for the hand of God as shown on the public podium of culture (Ganzevoort 2006:123). Discovering this Presence, one might come to understand that "[t]he hope offered by popular films differs from that of Christianity, but it is a hope nonetheless, and its religious character should be recognized" (Lyden 2007:217).

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## The movie “*Tsotsi*”: Portraying humanity and identity in a South African context

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*“Tsotsi is a story of poverty, hopelessness, and struggle transformed into faith and a profound moral re-awakening leading to a better future – Tsotsi is another appropriate representation of the Age of Hope” - President Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa (News24.com 2006:electronic source).*

### 1 Introduction

The statement by the State President about the movie “Tsotsi” reflects the reality about South Africa, a country that is undergoing a radical transformation since the demise of the apartheid era. Within this broad transformative context, there is a search for new identity and new models of identification for a diverse array of people. The South African society is faced with an identity crisis as people are struggling to define who they are, and this quest for identity is accompanied by deep confusion and profound alienation in the midst of poverty (Guma & Milton 1997:66). However, in the midst of this hopelessness, the movie “Tsotsi” carries a hopeful message of redemption and human decency while also painting a sad picture of the far reaching effects of the HIV and/or the AIDS epidemic in the country. Therefore, this paper will focus on exploring the background that informed the development of the movie within the South African context and the

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pastoral paradigm portrayed by film in assisting people to give meaning to their humanity.

## **2 The development of the movie “Tsotsi”**

The movie was developed out of the novel “Tsotsi” by Athol Fugard (1980) – a brutal tale set in Sophiatown, a black township in Johannesburg that was razed in the 1950s to make way for the homes of whites. The director of this film, Gavin Wood, used this novel in contemporary South Africa, revealing an even more powerful and political portrait of heartbreaking painful realities of poverty and the scourge of HIV and/or AIDS, which results in brutal crime in the modern South Africa.

### **2.1 The term “Tsotsi”**

The term “Tsotsi” literally means “thug” or “gangster” in the street language of the South African townships and ghettos. The term represents a potent reality that was at the core of the ugly soul of apartheid. It referred to a style of narrow-bottomed trousers that became popular among the urban African youth in the early 1940s (Glaser 2000:50). It came from the Sesotho “ho tsotsa” meaning “to sharpen”, which refers to the shape of the trouser (Glaser 2000:50). Therefore, to be in fashion, township boys had to wear “Tsotsi”s” and these became a crucial symbol of urban sophistication. The term then became used to refer to a specific sub-cultural style amongst the youth and gradually widened to incorporate urban juvenile delinquents (Glaser 2000:20). It harks back to that time when many South-African township streets were plagued by such ruthless killers who would kill for pennies or pleasure.

### **2.2 The gang subculture**

A gang is born out of the spontaneous effort of boys to create a society for themselves, where none adequate to their needs exist (Decker & Winkle 1996:5). As soon as the dominant discourse is sufficiently convincing to be shared by many, it has a normative impact on the personal identity of individuals that belong to the same dialogical community. The way the young people in a gang understand their lives is influenced by the broader story of the gang culture (Morgan 2000:9). According to Jonker (2004:20), each of us not only has, but also lives a biography, reflexively organized in terms of flows of social and psychological information about possible ways of life. A reflexive process therefore refers to the uniquely human capacity to become an object to one's self and to be both subject and object (Callero 2003:119). This makes it explicit that segments of the young generation in South Africa, who was driven by the need to survive (which gave meaning to their life), do not necessarily appreciate the value of human life.

However, close-minded people like gang members believe that change is impossible. Therefore, the story/movie reflects the reality of the challenges that many young people face in society; that after the advent of the new socio-economic dispensation, they still find themselves in a state of absolute poverty. At the same time, it portrays that the road to redemption is paved with potholes. What influences the situation today is the fact that we have just emerged from a situation of the moral decay of the apartheid state in which the state used religious values to justify horrendous acts of the violation of human rights (Guma & Milton 1996:66). One of the deep impacts of moral decay of the apartheid state was the promotion of the spirit of self-hatred, self denigration, and a deep sense of cultural alienation which expressed itself during the intensity of the struggle.

### **2.3 The impact of HIV and/or AIDS on the urban family**

Prior to industrialisation and urbanisation, young people were socialised effectively in rural areas and taught to respect the elders. With a wide range of support network in the extended family, they accepted the social laws and moral values and thus became constructive and integrated members of society (Glaser 2000:22). However, with changes in social and demographic characteristic in South Africa through urbanisation and migrant labour, this family support network disintegrated (Decker & Winkle 1996:2). The apartheid policies of separate development contributed to erode this family value system. Therefore, the scourge of HIV and/or AIDS, which left many young people orphaned and without parental control, family network, and proper socialisation, left the country with many young people roaming the streets and being vulnerable to criminal activities (Glaser 2000:22).

These children had no continuity and consistency (identity) in their upbringing (Louw 2005:21) and, therefore, are in quest for meaning and direction. Considering that the development of identity does not take place in a vacuum, this left our societies with a big challenge. It is a given that there is a need for systems to support family life and intimacy in order for a person to develop into a mature and responsible human being. “Tsotsi” – like many of the children in our societies who find themselves without family to care for them as a result of HIV and/or AIDS; without education to enlighten them about the consequences of their action; without role models to emulate – found himself surrounded by a gallery of other gangsters – soulless predators who eagerly look for excuses to do harm.

## **2.4 Poverty in South Africa**

Apartheid with its socio-economic policies disadvantaged the black population in South Africa and its effects are still felt today. Apartheid with its policies was a crime against humanity (Botman & Peterson 1996:160). Unfortunately, new estimates of poverty show that the proportion of people living in poverty in South

Africa has not changed significantly since the dawn of the new dispensation (Schwabe 2004:1). Those living in poverty have sunk deeper into poverty. This is explained by the ghettos (shanty towns and steel barrels) in which most Black people live. Ghetto is the politically correct term for slums. These dwellings range from tar-paper shacks to dilapidated buildings in which the young residents of this country are brought up.

### **3 Pastoral Paradigms**

#### **3.1 Healing of memories**

*“One night during an alcohol fuelled evening at a local shebeen “Tsotsi” is put under pressure by a drunken Boston to reveal something of his past; or at the very least his name. But “Tsotsi” reveals nothing. The question evoked painful, long repressed memories that “Tsotsi” would prefer to keep buried. Still Boston keeps asking which ended up with “Tsotsi” lashing out Boston with his fists” (Wikipedia 2007:electronic source).*

“Tsotsi”, like many young people who were orphaned by HIV and/or AIDS and who have been abandoned by their families because of poverty, has a deeper meaning than his name and age (Fugard 1980:19). Retrieving or visiting the past is painful, but to trivialize and ignore memory is to trivialize and ignore human identity and to trivialize and ignore human identity is to trivialize and ignore human dignity (Botman & Peterson 1996:160). However, understanding the given that every room of our lives is about memory (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:83), the story invites people to re-visit their rooms and places of the past, helping them to place their actions against their background, against where they come from. Narratives of memory, in which real events are recalled, stand to guarantee an occasion for some serious moments of reflection (Nuttal & Coetzee 1999:20). It is a movement from repression to expression.

*“Tsotsi” carjacked a women in one of the suburb, showing a menacing criminal that seems completely hopeless until an unexpected incident threatens to humanize him. The vulnerability of the child catalyses a shower of fragments of memory from the past which pierced the cold hermetically sealed darkness in which he reside, sending him into psychological turmoil. The past creeps into the present, and his back story is filled in - his socio-pathic tendencies are partially eroded. The flood of emotions of sympathy and the ability to connect with other people, start to diminish his fatalistic nihilism” (Wikipedia 2007:electronic source).*

The baby mirrors “Tsotsi’s” neediness and helplessness, which triggered his moral turnaround. It triggered the little boy inside “Tsotsi” himself, who did not have parents to care for him. His granite exterior begins to crack, and the memories of his childhood seeps into remembering the domestic trauma from which he ran as a baby and the unforgiving homeless existence to which he fled. The movie indicates that a human being cannot survive without narratives (Guma & Milton 1996:161). Old memories need to be disengaged from the acts of violence to lead to the possibility of a unique outcome/moment to be born from it. Morgan (2000:52) defines the unique outcome as anything that does not fit with the dominant story. In the development of this alternative story in the film “Tsotsi”, the philosophy of Ubuntu, which is embraced by the African cultural system, becomes explicit. It is within this philosophy of the “Wholly Other” that African people become aware of who they are as part of the wholeness of life (Guma & Milton 1996:9).

### **3.2 Healing and Reconciliation**

Human beings survive through their memories, which are wrapped in stories, and the healing comes from these narratives (Botman & Peterson 1996:161). The movie “Tsotsi” is therefore a narrative that helps people to visit their past in order

to retrieve those old memories associated with violence that is painful to evoke. This movie is a healing journey, a journey of remembering our childhood, our past, and of slowly realizing the impact of the decisions we have made in life. A healing journey, as portrayed by the movie, is not an overnight change but takes time. Healing bring transformation as shown by the transformation of “Tsotsi” through the acts of giving and receiving unconditional love. Like “Tsotsi”, who confronted the demons that his violent society has sewn in him, our young people can repair their cycle of parenting. The film reminds us, amongst others, that without proper nurturing and caring of parents, children often fall short. It offers a powerful appeal for each viewer to appreciate the value of human life from infant to hardened criminal.

The end of the movie is one of sadness, resignation, and glimpses of hope. The movie portrays that reconciliation is a worthier goal than notoriety. Reconciliation is associated with liberating the human being from the conflicting political and social forces that determine his/her life (Vorster 1986:1). It is a redemptive event in which a human being is freed from the deadly effects of his or her sins. Like the Jews and the Gentile in the Bible who were reconciled by the death of Christ, “Tsotsi” was redeemed from his hostile behaviour by the child (Eph. 2:16, 2:14-18, 2 Cor. 5:20). Therefore, in order to deal with our past pastorally, we need to make our memories redemptive.

A personal inventory is crucial to understanding the new direction of our spiritual growth. Exemplary of this, the beautiful story in John 4 of the woman at the well, who was able to reconcile with her past, portrays some of these perspectives. Telling our stories allows us to assess the major events of our lives. Knowing these steps of our journey, helps us to evaluate our present situation in a honest way. The Truth and Reconciliation Process in South Africa was one of the process in which our people told their stories and in the process evaluated where they were. It was a pastoral action with the motive to restore people’s humanity since it allowed many people to understand each other as black and white; and it

also provided for alternative stories and new avenues for healing (Botman & Peterson 1996:156).

#### **4 Conclusion**

The movie “Tsotsi” cries out with passionate regard for human life in this emotionally raw, compelling story of hope, redemption, respect, and search for humanity when all life is utterly inhumane. It is a national catharsis which assists the nation to “put lights on” and admits the extent to which it has violated the humanity of its people. It also helps people to explore their identity, trying to become self-aware instead of hiding behind some mask of anger.

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## **The Land of Unlikeness – Explorations into Reconciliation**

2005 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Dresden – a terrible story of death and destruction. 2005 was also the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of Corrymeela. What is the connection? The answer is a person. Ray Davey, the founder of Corrymeela was a prisoner of war just outside the city. He records this in his diary for the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1945 when he returned to the city for the first time after the bombing.

*Today I went down into Dresden and saw all for myself. All the buildings I had come to know so well are now at best shells and mostly rubble. I felt strangely uncomfortable walking around the sorrows of this once beautiful city. In some of the streets it was like climbing on the Giant's Causeway. Places that had been the hub of human activity and action are now still and few people pass by. I don't think one could find a habitable building in some ten square miles in the central area. I "climbed" round to the remains of the Dom Kirche, a month ago probably the most beautiful church in the city. Now it is but a mass of ugly masonry, with the statue of Martin Luther, legless, lying face down in the street, blown 10-15 yards from its pedestal.*

It was out of this experience of seeing the depths of what human beings can do to each other that Ray Davey's vision of reconciliation was born and he has devoted his life to it. He founded a Christian community and a place of meeting and encounter, not just for people from Northern Ireland, but from all over the world. This vision was tested in the crucible of Northern Ireland from 1969 on and was made concrete in Corrymeela's go-between work between Protestant and Catholic, Unionist and Nationalist. But it is a vision with a universal relevance and it is at the heart of Christian faith; speaking of remade humanity, of renewed and redeemed relationships and identities, of restored community, of suffering vulnerability, of self-emptying love that makes space for others. All of this in the context of a fragmented world – our world – where hatred, enmity, violence and antagonised differences are common.

Reconciliation faces the reality of pain and death and destruction and makes visible, new life. It breaks down walls of antagonised division and offers a new world. That is what Easter is about.

### **The Point of Intersection**

Christ is at the point of intersection between humanity and God and at this point of intersection there is a supreme act of self-giving love. I want to explore this idea of reconciliation work as being at a point of intersection and I will do it first through the story of another community of reconciliation in Northern Ireland – the Cornerstone Community.

When the Cornerstone Community came into being twenty years ago, the choice of place to live was deliberate. The house is at the intersection of two communities in West Belfast, two communities then at war. Violence was rampant, people lived with grief, pain, fear and mistrust. A wall was being built to keep us apart. Cornerstone hoped to show there was another way of living. For the place of intersection is also the meeting point, and the function of a cornerstone is to unite the two intersecting parts, making both one (cf Eph 2:20-22).

Twenty years on, we are still at the point of intersection. The physical wall is higher, but many encounters have taken place at the meeting point. We celebrate the fact that the Community house has been a place of welcome where people have met across many divides. We celebrate the way our own lives have been enriched by encounters with visitors from across the world, each one a gift. We celebrate the generosity of the many volunteers who have come to us over the years, bringing their gifts of energy, enthusiasm, caring, practical faith. We celebrate republican ex-prisoners meeting with groups of English church people and tackling difficult questions together, and we celebrate people from different political persuasions using the house as a place to thrash out new political possibilities as part of the peace process. Above all, we celebrate our belief that Jesus Christ is himself the cornerstone.

Cornerstone's point of intersection was at a point of physical intersection between two opposing communities in West Belfast. Corrymeela's was the need for change in Northern Ireland in the 1960s, with a background of Ray Davey's experiences in the Second World War. But a point of intersection could be anything or anywhere where there are tension points. Where are the hurting places? Where are the silences? It could be around gays, battered women, race relations, anything. So find your point of intersection.

And finding your point of intersection involves attentiveness to what is going on. It is not a form of cleverness. Maybe it is a form of seeing out of the corner of the eye, the lucidity to see the shadow of the victim. It is a form of creativity. We desperately need this sort of 'knowledge'.

In the post September 11 world, if we are to break the deadly cycle of escalating violence – of strike and counter-strike, of atrocity and enraged reaction – we must start by paying attention to what everybody is saying, even our enemies and there are real enemies here, and be sincerely ready to let it change us; to get beyond rhetoric, decode the imagery, and hear the subtext of rage, grief, fear, pain, hatred and despair.

### **A Place of Uncomfortableness**

Reconciliation work is not some soft, comfortable option, as I hope I have made clear. A recent report into the concept in Northern Ireland suggests one reason why. Let me quote

*Reconciliation... is seen as a deep and sometimes threatening process. Respondents chose not to use the term in their daily work because they feared it would scare some people off. In some cases this might have been associated with the perceived religious overtones, but in others it was because reconciliation was understood as somewhere 'coming together' and thus some process of social and political transformation.*

And, of course, the respondents in this research are profoundly right. Reconciliation is not about something comfortable, warm and fuzzy; it is about social and political transformation. We might add spiritual transformation. And this, of course, is totally biblical. Jesus was profoundly threatening to his society and he was forced out of it onto a cross. A picture of gentle Jesus meek and mild is simply wrong, the gospels are riven by conflict and violence from beginning to end, and show our incapacity to live with truth, shalom and right relations. So this sort of work can bring us and the people we work with, into a place of profound uncomfortableness. There is a sense in which reconciliation work is leading people out of their comfort zones into discomfort with the hope that we come to a fuller humanity – both for ourselves and for others. So one of the challenges is: How do we get people into the room? We have to think about how we engage with people about different issues. Often we have to build up relationships of trust before we can explore divisive issues.

### **Specific Learnings**

Now I want to move to some more specific Corrymeela learnings which I hope will be useful to your situation.

### **The Importance of Vision**

Corrymeela began with a vision of Ray Davey, of Christian community and reconciliation which took the form of a centre and a community in 1965. One of Ray's key themes was the idea of the 'Open Village' which he expressed at the opening on 30 October 1965.

*We hope that Corrymeela will come to be known as 'the Open Village', open to all people of good will who are willing to meet each other, to learn from each other and work together for the good of all.*

*Open also for all sorts of new ventures and experiments in fellowship, study and worship.*

*Open to all sorts of people; from industry, the professions, agriculture and commerce.*

This vision expressed a commitment to encounter, interaction and positive relationships between all sorts and conditions of people. The vision was global as well as local. It was not just about community relations in Northern

Ireland. It was about a totality of relationships. The vision put an emphasis on openness and hospitality. Hospitality and reconciliation are linked. In the words of Henri Nouwen “Hospitality is about offering people space where change can take place”. And we have tried to live out that vision.

### **The Importance of Place**

Place is important. Corrymeela is in an incredibly beautiful place. The backdrop of the new Coventry Cathedral is the old cathedral destroyed by bombing in 1940. The new emerges out of the brokenness of the old and every week day at noon the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation is said. The Iona Community’s work for justice and peace has a physical context in the rebuilding of an Abbey. There is a resonance of place. There is a healing power of place, there is a healing power of beauty. Places can speak profoundly of transcendence.

### **Reconciliation is a Practice not a Theory**

Ray Davey was a person who enabled young people to take significant responsibility and provided a context for incredible learning (learning by doing). Ray and other important individuals in Corrymeela’s history provided key models and conversation partners for learning about reconciliation. They taught the practice of reconciliation. It is not enough to ‘know’ (ideologically, theologically, intellectually) about reconciliation. We need places where people can experience trust and reconciliation. We need people who can ‘model’ reconciliation; we need people of character who embody the peacemaking virtues. Thus encounter and relationships are central. It is only in encounter and relationships that words like trust, reconciliation and forgiveness become real.

The early experience in the work camps, which helped to reconstruct the site at Ballycastle, (and later in the family weeks which brought families from the most troubled areas of Belfast and elsewhere, often on a cross-community basis) was about reconciliation as doing things together. It also created a strong context of community building and learning. And the Corrymeela Community, through being a group of diverse people committed to and involved in reconciliation, created a context for learning – both structured and unstructured – about reconciliation. This has continued all through our history. It has had implications directly for the work of Corrymeela but Corrymeela members, staff and long-term volunteers have carried their learning throughout Northern Irish society and beyond. Many Corrymeela members (nearly 400 in 40 years), former long-term volunteers (upwards of 300 since the early 70s) and staff are active in a whole variety of reconciliation and community relations activities, and some have created their own training agencies in community relations and conflict transformation issues.

## **A Range of Different Programme Models**

Initially we had hoped that by bringing people together in an environment where they could live, talk, work and play together, that the experience could help break down the barriers of ignorance that separated them. It was not that this was unsuccessful but we soon realised that more was required – we needed to develop and support new ways of meeting. At the beginning we had also used the time-honoured conference model. This revolved round the speaker or speakers who had come to impart specialist knowledge and skills. It was basically a teaching model. We began to realise that while this was useful and had its place other models were required.

We moved to models that began with the participants, where they were and their life experiences. Greater emphasis was put on people sharing their experiences and developing relationships between participants. We used games and activities that could lead to honest conversations and robust meetings. We have sought to develop resources and modes of practice around understanding politics, history, identity and other sectarian issues.

We widely used a seed group model where a diverse group of people (particularly young adults) worked together over a number of weekends. Each weekend had a particular theme, for example family relationships, the meaning of faith, sexuality and relationships, the Troubles, diversity. This model has a strong emphasis on personal development.

## **Safe Space**

We developed the understanding that it was not just the bringing people together that was important but also that the context within which the contact happened was crucial. The way we set up our initial group processes and allowed the programme to evolve was key to achieving the outcomes that the groups hoped for. We referred to this as the 'creating of safe space'. It was providing such a space where difficult stories and experiences could be raised and shared that took our programmes into a new level of encounter.

The phrase 'safe space' is an easy phrase to use and is both simple and quite complex at the same time. It includes something as simple as a smile for and the recognition of, the stranger arriving at the Centre. It involves giving a direct welcome and ensuring that the unit in which they are staying is warm, welcoming and friendly. It involves setting a contract with the group based on our hopes, fears, expectations and limitations. Above all, it allows, through evolution of the sense of safe space, for people's stories and questions about one another to emerge. In a safe space people can be vulnerable and vulnerability also creates safe space. Safe spaces are also places where the difficult and uncomfortable emotions can be 'held'. Safe spaces are not just neutral spaces – spaces have character and are distinctive.

## **The Telling of Stories**

We have learnt the importance of people telling their stories. We are 'storied' people, we understand ourselves and what has happened to us and our communities in and through stories. We can decide how we want to tell our story – it is always possible to tell it another way. You cannot tell a story without someone listening to you and you have to tailor the story to reach the other person. What happens when you tell your story in the presence of someone from the 'opposing' community? How do you tell a story that starts a conversation? What happens to you when you listen to their story? Does your story alter? Do you alter? It is always possible to tell it another way and that the 'other' finds a different place in it. It is always possible to hear the other person's story in a different way. And stories can be added to. And there can be a different ending. Story telling and memory can ultimately be a means of reconciliation as we struggle to hear and speak truthfully to each other.

## **Creative and Adventure Learning**

To support the process of sharing stories whilst also trying to create a sense of community, we had always used different activities. We had a well-established set of recreation resources, arts and crafts and we, occasionally, used drama, beach walks and forest walks to provide variety. However, for the most part, these activities were used to fill the 'spaces' when we weren't 'working'. The 'real' work, in the late seventies and early eighties, was in the meeting, the discussion and in the talk.

By the early nineties, we began to understand the limitations of talk or discussion. Often, when we evaluated the group's experience we would regularly find that the group would name the creative learning and recreational activities as having been the most important part of it. Many of the young people and some of the adult groups had little or no experience in and/or comfort with engaging with each other through words. What was done in group settings and how it was done, was much more important than what was said or how clever the use of words might have been.

In light of this experience, we began to think more creatively about these activities. Large elements of what had previously been termed 'recreation', were transformed in both content and use to become what we now know as 'adventure learning'. We developed an exciting and diverse range of activities that could be used on or off site. These activities are used to help build groups in terms of the communication, risk taking, problem solving, gender differences and physical support of one another. These activities have become increasingly adapted and designed to create experiences which allow group members to enter new relationships with one another at many different levels.

Our Creative Learning work (art, drama, puppetry, etc) developed in essentially the same way. Our recreational use of arts and crafts had always

been well appreciated but the new thinking allowed us to translate and transform many of these activities into discrete activities, which could equally be used to help build and enhance both group processes and the individual experience.

Involvement in the arts engages the whole person, 'speaking from the heart' and using his or her creativity and emotions. It can reach our hopes, dreams, aspirations, fears and pain. This can lead to learning and insights that can pave the way for personal and relational change.

### **The Importance of Celebration**

Because this is often hard work and emotionally draining work we have learnt the importance of celebrating together. One of the biblical images of reconciliation is the messianic banquet. There are times to celebrate our being together, in all our diversity. We bring our gifts to the party.

### **Not Doing Things to People**

Reconciliation work is about not doing things to other people – making them more tolerant, open, etc. This is a mutual exploration or at least an exploration that I too have gone on. We cannot expect other people to cross boundaries and go on journeys of exploration that involve the 'other' if we have not done so in some way too. One of the big problems that occurs time after time in reconciliation work is that we discover that it is the workers (the custodians of young people or school children) who are often a major barrier to useful work. They cannot cope themselves with issues of diversity or whatever, so how can we expect the groups they work with to do so?

### **The Learning from the People we have met Along the Way**

We have been profoundly influenced by people we have met along the way over the last 40 years. I have only time to mention two – particularly chosen because they illuminate issues to do with reconciliation. The first was a Dutch man, Roel Kaptein. Roel started with a person's questions; these questions could be personal, religious, social or political. He illuminated these questions by the use of pictorial models and by the use of theory derived from the French thinker René Girard. Thus many people learnt about the importance of imitation, rivalry and scapegoating. They were able to see reconciliation in new ways: as undermining exclusionary behaviour and expulsive mechanisms; of (re-)incorporating the vulnerable and scapegoats; and challenging the things which alienate and separate us. Many people were able to see the gospel in a new way.

They also learnt about the importance of sticking with their/our questions. 'Head' and 'heart' knowledge was also brought together. Reconciliation was

about us, not other people out there. It was not a 'theory' or abstract knowledge.

The second is the work of Frank Wright.

Frank Wright, who was a Corrymeela member and a political scientist, brilliantly analysed societies where two groups with different national allegiances and identities shared the same territory. He called these societies ethnic frontier societies and Northern Ireland is obviously one such. Ethnic frontier societies are contested spaces characterised by histories of antagonism and lack of trust. In such societies

- There is a lack of ease in the presence of those who are different from 'us'. In a context where suspicions about the intentions of the 'others' abound, a lack of real knowledge about the others breeds speculation, and speculation breeds fear. These fears merely demonise the other, reinforcing separate identities and stereotypes.
- Separate and exclusive identities are insisted upon but there is often insecurity about identity – the 'other' in the same space challenges and problematizes our identity. People proclaim their identity stridently but there is often insecurity underneath.
- There is a deep insecurity about the outcomes of talking about division in a society where relationships between people from different traditions and structures in which people feel safe together are so fragile;
- There is a 'cultural common sense' that supports separation, avoidance and politeness rather than taking risks together about working through issues that touch on core divisions.

Reconciliation work involves the creation of 'space' for open meetings across divisions. It concerns the growth of trust and relationships in order that the difficult and sensitive issues associated with an ethnic frontier society around politics, human rights, equality, education, cultural identity, the economy, social development and law & order can be worked through rather than around. It involves meeting each other across divisions in different ways so as to undermine previous separate certainties. Such possibilities of meeting can often be fragile and hostage to the wider atmosphere of inter-communal fear and violence that may be threatening or occurring. The people who are involved are usually 'exceptions'.

In Corrymeela we were always clear that a stable political settlement was vital for cross-community trust building; without a stable political settlement the work was always at risk. We were also aware that without a certain amount of trust you couldn't have a stable political settlement. Therefore, from our earliest days we ran political conferences and members were involved in political parties.

One of the first conferences was at Easter 1966 and it had the then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland Terence O'Neill speaking. Outside was a certain cleric protesting about sell-out to the enemies of Ulster. This figure was the Rev Ian Paisley – the embodiment of Ulster says No. Some of you may have

seen a picture at the end of March 2007 of Ian Paisley sitting down with the Leader of Sinn Fein, the epitome of all he opposed and announcing an agreement which led to the sharing of power between Unionists and Republicans on May 8. Ian Paisley became First Minister. The outsider became insider. The man who always said no said yes. Ray Davey in the 1960s recognised that something had to change in Northern Ireland. He knew that there that to be new imaginations, new conversations, new meetings and new journeyings. Paisley resisted new imaginations, new conversations, new meetings and new journeyings – and it's now over. There is a sense that Ray Davey was a prophet, and we can see reconciliation work – which may start at the margin and look small and irrelevant – as prophetic activity. That brings us back to the importance of vision, and we may only know about the authenticity of that vision decades later.

We also had conversations with paramilitaries at a time when few wanted to talk to them, encouraging them to become constructively involved in politics and community building. We have learnt that it is important not to write people off as incorrigible 'baddies', no matter what they have done – and this is not to trivialise evil or say wrong does not matter.

### **To sum up**

Thus in our history learning has had some of these themes

- The importance of vision
- The importance of meeting and encounter
- The importance of community building (and residential build community)
- Creating a 'safe space'
- The importance of stories
- Making connections between faith and life
- Starting with people's questions
- Using models to help our understanding
- Using creative and adventure learning to get us 'beyond' words and thinking to open up other dimensions of our personalities

### **In Conclusion**

In the Northern Ireland painter Colin Middleton's *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* (1948) Jacob's raised right hand is big and strong – symbolising the struggle with God. But there is also a delicate, fragile butterfly, signifying the angel/God figure. The butterfly symbolises resurrection and transformation. And transformation does not come without struggle, conflict and pain. In Middleton's picture Jacob's face is anguished and sad. And there are two 'sides' to his coat, one in bright positive colours and the other in dark colours, representing suffering.

Ray Davey, past the destruction of Dresden, saw Easter fitting into “the realness of things, its tragedy, despair and sorrow” but “also climbing up the other side into life and victory over death”. These words pull us into the reality of God’s reconciling activity and call us, like Ray Davey, to mend brokenness where we find it. And remember the butterfly.

David Stevens

## **20th International Seminar on Intercultural pastoral Care and Counselling**

### **Identity in Times of Changes Challenges for Pastoral Care, Churches and Religion**

Evanjelická Bohoslovecká Fakulta  
Bratislava 31.08 – 06.09.08

### **The projects of “Healing of Memories” and the issue of ethnic, cultural and religious identity**

Dieter Brandes, Commissioner of Conference of European Churches  
Director of Ecumenical Centre Sibiu des „Reconciliation in South East Europe“

1. The process Healing of Memories
  - 1.1. Background aspects of Healing of Memories in Romania (HoMRO)
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3. Ways of Reconciliation of Memories
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## **1. The process Healing of Memories (HoM)**

### **1.1. Background aspects of Healing of Memories in Romania**

Healing of Memories (HoM)in Romania is an interdisciplinary exploration and consultation of the ecclesiastical, cultural, political and ethnic bases and interdependences in a religious-cultural border area between East- and West- and South East- European cultures and religion.

HoMRO is a common project of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe – Leuenberg church Fellowship (CPCE)<sup>1</sup> in Cooperation with the orthodox and protestant Member Churches of CEC und CPCE in Romania, the Roman Catholic Archbishopsrics of Romania and the Greek Catholic Metropolia of Romania. Since 2006 the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania and the Muftiatul Cultului Musulman din Romania take part.

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<sup>1</sup> It was arranged that the part A is appropriate in the leadership of the CPCE and for part B (starting from January 2008) in the leadership of the CEC.



Representatives of minorities like Roma, Slovakian, Ruthenian, Armenian, Lipovan, Tartars, Turks and other regional Minorities take part in regions where they are present.

With HoM in Middle and East Europe the goal will be realized to overcome the injuries and misunderstandings between cultures and religion originated over centuries with emphasis in the "border areas" of European culture and religion history.

## 1.2. Special Aspects of HoM in Romania

As a multiethnic country and **bridging land** between western and eastern European cultures, Romania can become a symbol of tolerance and mutual acceptance and respect between human of different cultures, languages and religions in the whole Europe for the future. The Charta Oecumenica as a document of engagement of European Churches expresses the joy about the 'richness of our different cultures and traditions' as 'we are (gradually) regaining a more lively impression of the breadth and variety of this continent'.

However, Romania is also a **borderland** between the historical cultural spaces of the historical East-Roman and West-Roman religious, national and cultural history and of South-Eastern European Christian, Jewish and Islamic historical background - creating many religious, cultural

and national tension fields. Overcoming the “deep-rooted hidden injuries” resulting thereof can open up progressively new forms of creative living together for the whole of Europe.

### **1.3. Goals of the project Healing of Memories <sup>2</sup>**

The main goals of process Healing of Memories are written in the Charta Oecumenica <sup>3</sup>

#### **a) On the way to a Koinonia of Christians**

- Charta Oecumenica 3:

“In the spirit of the Gospel, we must reappraise together the history of the Christian churches, which has been marked by many beneficial experiences but also by schisms, hostilities and even armed conflicts.”

and

“It is important to acknowledge the spiritual riches of the different Christian traditions, to learn from one another and so to receive these gifts.”

- Charta Oecumenica 6:

“We commit ourselves in the event of controversies, particularly when divisions threaten in questions of faith and ethics, to seek dialogue and discuss the issues together in the light of the Gospel”

#### **b) Christians responsibility for reconciliation between religion, cultures and nations**

- Charta Oecumenica 10:

The way towards reconciliation between Christians and Jewish can not be a normal dialog after the Holocaust and the centuries old pre -holocausts, pogroms and expulsions are widely embossed by immense sufferings. For that reason we have to “seek and intensify the dialog with our Jewish sisters and brothers at all levels”. (Charta Oecumenica 10)

After the agreement of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania two Jewish Historical Institutes take part in the process: Dr. Moshe Carmilly Institute from Cluj -Napoca and the Center of Jewish Studies in Bucharest.

- Charta Oecumenica 11 :

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<sup>2</sup> cf. Dieter Brandes and Johnston McMaster : Healing of Memories/Healing Through Remmbering Remembering”, Rev. Dieter Brandes and Prof. Dr. Johnston McMaster page 3-12

<sup>3</sup> CHARTA OECUMENICA, Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe, Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) <http://www.cec-kek.org/content/charta.shtml>

For centuries Muslims have been living in Europe. Over a long period of time the southern part of Europe has been moulded considerably by the Muslim culture and understanding of the respect of other “Abrahamic religions”.

In January 2006 the “Muftiatul Cultului Musulman din Romania” agreed to take part in the process and now Moslem communities of Turkish, Tatar and Albanian cultures are involved in the process in Valahia and Dobrogea – remaining “the case, there are still strong reservations and prejudices on both sides. These are rooted in painful experiences throughout history and in the recent past.” (Charta Oecumenica 11)

- Charta Oecumenica 8:

Throughout the changeful history of cultures, nations and religions in southeast Europe, clear signs of “neighbourhood of cultures” have been kept in the different “historical” Romanian regions over the centuries-long but partly very painful histories too.

Also particularly the Christian Societies in Europe has been noticed of their guilt regard to the holocaust and the pogroms against Roma, Armenians, Saami etc.

Charta Oecumenica 8: “In view of numerous conflicts, the churches are called upon to serve together the cause of reconciliation among peoples and cultures. We know that peace among the churches is an important prerequisite for this.”

Since 2005 several representation of minorities take part in different regions at the project like Roma, Huzules, Polish, Slovakian, German, Tatar, Albanian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Greek minorities.

#### **1.4. The Christian Ministry of Reconciliation <sup>4</sup>**

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Christian Europe was embossed in wars never before known.

Unfortunately, the Christian community must recognise that the "history of the Christian churches" is embossed "through many good experiences, but also through divisions, hostility and even warlike confrontations".<sup>5</sup>

Michael Lapsley, director of the Institute Healing of Memories in Cape Town, formulates "Where it counts, we have much in common... we, who strive to be disciples of Jesus, have a history, in which wonderful, but also accomplice with maliciousness and badness are miscellaneous and bounded together."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For other examples of reconciliations among the churches cf. Dieter Brandes: Healing of Memories – eine Aufgabe christlicher Kirchen in Europa“ in epd-Dokumentation Nr. 40/2005, Gemeinschaftswerk Evangelischer Publizistik, Frankfurt 2005, page 16-25, especially 17f

For the attitude of a Christian towards another Christian from a different confessional and cultural background is impregnated by the experiences accumulated over generations. To reappraise these experiences in view of a new form of koinonia means on the one hand that we need to recover the hidden positive aspects of coexistence and, on the other hand, that we especially recognise and process the pain without blaming each other.

And that recognise : I am listening to the VIEW of the others history as part of their cultural and religious identity. And I do not try to influence or change their alleged „wrong view“.

For Christians have experienced the reconciliation with and salvation by God, and they believe what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:18: “God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.”

### **1.5. Reconciliation Means the Reconciliation of Memories <sup>7</sup>**

According to probably the oldest confession of God in the Old Testament, Miriam praises her God by remembering the history of her nation with this particular God at the “Reed Sea”: “Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea” (Exodus 15:21). This as well as many other experiences of a common history with God connect the people of Israel together for over more than 3000 years now.

The “Faith and Order” committee of the World Council of Churches published its ten year long experience on the modalities of reconciliation. The committee reminds us that Christians, too, break the bread and pour out the wine “in remembrance of Jesus Christ”<sup>8</sup>. The authors of the Gospels and the Letters of the New Testament emphasise repeatedly that the foundation of faith is the history of salvation of humankind through Jesus Christ.

The confession of fathers and mothers has become a confession of sons and daughters. The communion with former generations is the foundation for the communion with the present generations in the church.

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<sup>5</sup> Charta Oecumenica 3

<sup>6</sup> Michael Lapsley SSM: "Healing Memories - Overcoming the force as part of the mission of the church", 22<sup>nd</sup> 06.2002, [www.healingofmemories.sa](http://www.healingofmemories.sa) (p.2.)

<sup>7</sup> some parts of this chapter are quoted from dieter Brandes/ Johnston McMaster 4f

<sup>8</sup> “Participation in God’s Mission of Reconciliation –MA Resource for Churches in Situations of Conflict” – Faith and Order Paper 201, World Council of Churches, Geneva 2006, 52 Nr. 148.

## **2. Cultural and religious Identity**

### **2.1. Aspects of orientations in different personal context**

Pattern of judge between human of different religion and culture are influenced and accumulated through experiences over generations. To recognise this “impregnated influence” as a background of a new “Koininia of Religion and Cultures” means to recognise us well the good common experiences us well as the sometimes “hiding places of separation and division” of religious and cultural historical identity.

Therefore it is very important for empathy in cultural and religious identity of others to understand how is formed identity in consciousness of human and how are formed in the same way the patterns of judge between human.

Richard Kearney : „Before traditions can be properly reconciled, it first is necessary to understand how and why traditions play such an important role in our contemporary lives”:<sup>9</sup>

The historical influenced religious and cultural identity of human as a “Social Creature” is influenced and formed through 4 pattern who seem to influence us well the good common relations us well as the relations of separation and division.<sup>10</sup> :

#### **[1] Importance of environment of children**

Early experiences and pattern of live of the **environment of children are very important and are very substantial for the young peoples and for their hole live.**

**The real perceptible experiences of this environment** where he grows to maturity, especially the long period of “support and guidance provided by his parents caring for this young man with love, appreciation and attention, stimulating, encouraging and challenging him”, cumulate resources in the child from which he will later learn to “endure under difficult circumstances and fight for a better life.”<sup>11</sup>

But when parents pass on their negative experiences with other people and groups, they do this exactly in order to protect their child from these experiences.

Such self defence mechanism can be transmissioned in later live and lead to prejudice against other cultures and religion and may lead to “internalised norms” (notice [4] below)

And such prejudice and internalised norms may continue through generations even when the real reason of self protection is over since a long time.

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Kearney: “Myth and the Critique of Tradition” in “Reconciling Memories” edited by Alan D. Falconer and Joseph Liechty, Dublin, page 37-56, hear p. 37

<sup>10</sup> cf. for instance . Joachim Bauer „Das Gedächtnis des Körpers“ , Eichborn 2002 und Irene Behrmann „Zurück ins Leben, Erfahrungen mit der ambulanten Regressionstherapie“, Berlin 2002. compare also Dieter Brandes “Healing of Memories in Rumänien” aaO. p. 32 f and Dieter Brandes, Johnston McMaster aaO. P. 5f

<sup>11</sup> ibid

In that way may “Memories of Pre-Generations” hinder peaceful and reconciled common live for the next generations.

## **[2] conditionings and accumulations**

Children are learning with conditionings and accumulations danger situations to understand and to activate naturally defence in way of mental connections of similar situations.<sup>12</sup>.

They need this ability that they acquire through learning and experience in order to survive and to be accepted in their common social group.

Individuals respond similarly under similar circumstances. This has its positive biological purpose in that one need not undergo painful experiences repeatedly. Such “**conditionings**” will teach people to observe the danger and activate their natural preventive systems in practical situations of live as well as in alleged or real encounter situation.

But in our historical context this effect can lead to negative preparation of individuals and groups. These terms can be effective as transmission of past generations and hinder to learn new experiences even with peoples of other cultures.

## **[3] Sympathy- und Preventive Mechanisms:**

As reaction of conditionings and accumulations may be created Sympathy- und Preventive Mechanisms.

In that case through different features on the surface like language, cultural features, religious praxis of other human and other groups may take place a “very unrealistic vision of existence of others” who live in different environments.

In view of the regional common life of Romania may be kept in mind that on the one hand there are traditions of tolerance and acceptance over centuries between cultures, regions and nations.

But on the other hand there is no religious, ethnic or culture community that would not have experienced real injustice during its history

- be it during the Hungarian monarchy until 1540
- be it in time of Transylvanian principality until 1687
- be it in the rule of the Habsburgians until 1867
- or be it during the Hungarian era until 1918.

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<sup>12</sup> Irene Behrmann p. 17

And after 1920 as a result of peace treaty of Trianon with have to notice the fact that just the privileged groups before had likewise to experience the “opposite pain” being a switched group from Majority to Minority in a variety of ways. Ethnic groups that have dominated the country have become minorities in their own lands.<sup>13</sup>

Especially in past wars and following deportations are developed Preventive Mechanisms, who are hindering the way of understanding and reconciliation on duration.

These preventive mechanisms can indurate, even when there is no potential threat for the individual. In this manner these memories can continuously hinder people on their way towards harmony and reconciliation from experiences of injustice of generations of a distant past.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore it is a main task of churches, religious groups and nations to be reflected, understand and work out as a essential task for healing of Memories.

#### **[4] Messages of “social human net” and internalized norms**

Children and youth provide a demonstrative material and translation not only of a parental tradition but also as “reactions on direct and indirect **messages received from the social net**”.<sup>15</sup> They learn conceptions of norms and worth from referential figures such as grandparents, priests, teachers, etc.

Experiences of the “environment of children”, the formed “conditionings and accumulations”, through distance phenomena as cultural pattern of self protection within a coherent group and through Messages of “social human net” will become **internalized norms**.

It is a social danger that these internalized norms will lead to fixed norms over life against other human and groups and against other cultures, religion and nations.

To understand and to revise such reconciliation hindering norms needs intensive processes of pastoral guidance and Intercultural Pastoral Care and Mediation.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Dieter Brandes „Healing of Memories in Rumänien“ aaO. p. 32

<sup>14</sup> Dieter Brandes and Johnston McMaster p. 6

<sup>15</sup> Irene Behrmann aaO. p. 23

<sup>16</sup> “It is an essential precondition for walking together towards a “reconciled Koinonia of the churches” that the negative experiences and feelings of segregation accumulated in the family and ethnic communities are diminished, and assistance is provided through pastoral guidance helping to reappraise historical harms so that positive experiences take a more clear shape.” : Dieter Brandes, Johnston McMaster p. 6

## 2.2. Basic Aspects to form personal positions in social Identity : The „Quartet of social Identity“

Each life and each relation of life on the one hand takes place in interpersonal, intercultural, transcendental, political and ecumenical context and on the other hand is influenced of the same phenomena.

The human being forms personal individuality in a "**Quartet of the Social Identity**" as

- [1] **Interpersonal Communication** (individual and family aspects)
  - biographic situation
  - biographic processes
  - emotional relations
- [2] **Cultural-Historical Context** (cultural and national aspects)
  - in historical environment developed orientation of literature and art
  - in historical environment developed orientation of cultural values
  - in historical environment developed position in national and cultural groups
- [3] **Experience in Religious and Ethic Praxis** (ideal and religious aspects)
  - religious symbols
  - religious und church traditions
  - life style and believers principles
  - religious and spiritual support
- [4] **Political and Economical Context**  
(political participation and economical situation)
  - historic political development
  - social and political circumstances and development
  - role and function in society
  - economical financial situation

Human being induces a whole life between the four polarities of these "quartet of identity"

Together with Johnston McMaster I call his "Social-Cultural-Religious Identity".<sup>17</sup>

Within that formed identity human being finds security, warmth and "lifestyle"

One move in this Social-Cultural-Religious Identity like in a protective house",<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> cf. Dieter Brandes, Johnston McMaster "Healing of Memories/Healing Through Remembering p. 7

<sup>18</sup> ibid

Common points are that the four aspects are determined through personal remembered experiences, telling stories, written history and actual remembered events and influences.

Healing of Memories may bring a special contribution for reconciliation in Europe with concepts of empathy to understand and respect human with other Social-Cultural-Religious Identity and create learning in Intercultural Communication and Pastoral Care.

HoM also may open new spaces of intercultural living together and may show therein the wideness and openness of Christian existence in human society.

### **2.3. Ways to create intercultural and interreligious acceptance and respect**

#### **a) intercultural Convivence**

The Romanian region is rich in cultures and historical ethnicities, like they were formed in centuries of common history. But nevertheless Transilvania is building up also tensions between human of different cultures, religion and ethnicities.

A church with self confidence of being a church for peoples and taking care sensitive of their live and worrying about their cultural feelings and tensions may called as a “Seelsorgerliche Kirche” (Church of Pastoral Care).

For this human challenge was formed in South America the term of “**CONVIVENCE**”.<sup>19</sup>

Interpreted with the term of Convivence are forms of daily “Life- and Way – Community” between members different cultural and religious background : the mutual respect, interest in life of others and also assistance and solidarity in hard situation of live.

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<sup>19</sup> This term is formed in latin american Theology of Rescue – more to read in „Konvivenz und Differenz“, Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Th. Sundermeier, edited by V. Küster, Erlangen 1995 or Theo Sundermeier „Den Fremden verstehen“, Göttingen 1996, or Theo Sundermeier „Den Fremden verstehen“, Göttingen 1996

## **b) Socio-cultural Analysis**

„It is important for practice of Pastoral Care, ... to understand the cultural differences of the clients in face to me.”<sup>20</sup>. (Helmut Weiss)

To understand the cultural way of life from individual persons and groups we call “Socio-cultural Analysis”. The way to analyse can be done with the following points of structure :<sup>21</sup>  
(with comments to the intercultural situation in Romania)

### **[1] language and symbols**

Citizens of Romania are using different mother tongues : Romanian, Hungarian, Serbian, German, Turkish, Slovakian, Ruthenian, Romanesc etc.

### **[2] religion :**

Citizens of Romania are living since centuries in different “worlds of believing” with different liturgies, practice of prayers, daily forms of religious practice and different imagines of god.

### **[3] social behaviour**

Relation for instance to parents and old members of family, relationship between man and woman, relation to superiors, relationship to foreigners, behaviour in front of priests (and woman pastors !), relation to other church hierarchies are very different practiced.

### **[4] relationship in families**

Family values are going to change in Romania fundamental according to the “New Business”. This very shortly change of values is leading to social tensions and distribution of relations in normally stabile relations.

### **[5] moral and ethic values**

In past centuries peoples lived in the main environments in separate village communities in Romania. In this case different moral and ethic values where confronted very few with values of other cultures. But in present time the borders between values of cultures are growing down more and more.

### **[6] philosophical and cultural background :**

One Bishop of Transilvania was calling the common life of Citizens in Transilvania as a “Neighbourhood of at least three consequent separated cultural societies”.

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<sup>20</sup> Helmut Weiss aaO. p. 269

<sup>21</sup> compare to the followings : Helmut Weiss aaO. p. 270-272

**[7] transmission between cultures**

The daily practice of partnership between married couples (and their Children) of partners coming from different cultural and/or religious background leads to permanent (often unknown) “Transmissions between Cultures”. This is to mention and to realise in practice for a “Pastoral Care church”.

**[8] spiritual strengthening**

What essentials are leading my life ? What goals are strengthen my personal courage ?  
What gives hope to my life, to my partnership and to human environment ?

**c) Dialogical Competence**

The Christian way of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5, 18) is brought in the discussion, in deep respect for experience of the other in participation to the all thinks which are important for people, especially in pastoral care dialog of mutual respect.

For the dialogical being together<sup>22</sup> there are developed „four aspects of dialog“<sup>23</sup> as communicative basis.“ They are also important for the process „Healing of Memories“ and especially for the „intercultural and inter-religious communication and pastoral care“:

**[1] Generative Listening :**

In the process of a „open and concrete hearing“ develop new ideas and experience in itself. That lead to new knowledge and new forms of analyses

**[2] Radical respect :**

Radical respect means, for the dialog between Christians of different confessions and cultures“ „to recognise the others, in them essence, as legitime“. That means : „I accept not only who you are, I try also to „walk with your own shoes“ and to see the world from your perspective.“<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> cf. William Isaacs „Dialogue and the art of thinking together. A pioneering approach to communicating in business and in life“, New York 1999 and also Martina Hartkemeyer, J.F. Hartkemeyer und L.F. Dorothy „Miteinander denken – Das Geheimnis des Dialogs“, 3. edition. Stuttgart 2001

<sup>23</sup> cf. Martina Hartkemeyer “Das Geheimnis des Dialogs” in Helga Egner “Heilung und Heil” Düsseldorf und Zürich 2003 p. 11-39, heare p. 20 ff

<sup>24</sup> Hartkemeier p. 24

### **[3] unreserved discussions:**

An „I already know what in comes!“ is unfortunately familiar also under the Christians of different confessions. The unreserved discussion means „to go upon the others, to foreigners“.<sup>25</sup>.(Hartkemeyer)

### **[4] Suspension of acceptance and appreciation:**

These four „aspects of dialog“ determine the ability of the participants, during the dialog, to change them opinions and interpretations.

Martin Buber`s „real Dialog“<sup>26</sup> with aspects of generative hearing and radical respect and suspension of acceptance means a learning process. A learning process exists only „in freedom through Christ“ (Paulus : Gal. 5,1) which leads to an eliberation from centuries of historical and cultural appreciation regarding the „other believers“

### **3. Ways of Reconciliation of Memories (A.1. McMaster S. 7-9)**

The foundation of reconciliation is the readiness to reappraisal sensible “*deep historical streams* that feed sentiments, attitudes and reactions, which can therefore influence the situations and developments”.<sup>27</sup>

Healing Memories therefore is a process of the generations that includes:<sup>28</sup>

- Partial process A: walking together through history
- Partial process B: taking share in the pain of others
- Partial process C: preparing the future together

#### **3.1.Walking Together Through History<sup>29</sup>**

##### **a) Methodology :**

“Walking together through history” represents practical steps of

##### **[1] Retelling your own history to the other**

For all implied parties this is an important but also a painful step. For both in case of my own presentation or when listening to others I have to accept not only that the other experiences

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<sup>25</sup> ibid p. 21

<sup>26</sup> Martin Buber „Das dialogische Prinzip“ . Gerlingen , 6. Aufl. 1992 p.295

<sup>27</sup> Marynowych, *op. cit.*, 36

<sup>28</sup> Dieter Brandes/Johnston McMaster “Healing of Memories/Healing Through Remembering- Bridge between Churches, Cultures and Religions” page 9 in “Healing of Memories in Europe - A Study of Reconciliation between Churches, Cultures and Religion”, edited by Dieter Brandes, Cluj Napoca – Leipzig 2007, p. 3-12

<sup>29</sup> the following chapter is in parts quotation of “Healing of Memories / Healing through Remembering” op.cit. p. 9 ff

history in a different manner, but it also implies that I do not look for excuses, but accept the other's view of history.

**[2] Substantiating observations on both sides**

This is probably the most painful step from a pastoral point of view. For this implies that one relives (in words) the pain of the others and say: "I understand why you feel sorrow." And I do not sum up my own sorrows against this.

**[3] To repeat the presentation in one's own words**

Only when I have repeated the presentation of pains and sufferings of the other side with my own words and confirmed this as an understandable view and understandable suffering, only then I can say: "We have walked through history together, not only everyone through his own history".

**b) Realization of Part A in Romania :**

From 2004 to 2007 in Romania part A was realized: "Interdisciplinary Research and Consultation of comparative study of Church History in Romania as a religious-cultural borderland in central Europe". This special part is specified as an interdisciplinary research in cooperation with Faculties of Theology, History and Sociology. Part A elaborates a synopsis of the different **view of history** of the different denominations, religions and cultures.

Since 2004 nine conferences in nine historical regions of Romania were accomplished:

*Transylvania* in Cluj Napoca May 2005, *Moldova* in Iași and *Bucovina* in Suceava May 2006, *Banat* in *Timișoara* and *Bihor* in Oradea June 2006, *Muntenia* in Bucharest and *Dobrogea* in Constanța November 2006, *Maramures* in Baia Mare March 2007, *Sathmar* in Satu Mare November 2007. An "International Conference Healing of Memories in Romania" took place in addition in Bucharest<sup>30</sup> in June 2007.

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<sup>30</sup>The results of the conference are published in "Healing of Memories Vindecarea Memoriei între biserici, culturi si religii în România" and in the German translation in "Die Geschichte der christlichen Kirchen aufarbeiten – Healing of Memories zwischen Kirchen, Kulturen und Religionen in Rumänien". (see page 4)



In the process HoMRO are involved 16 faculties of theology, 7 of history and 2 of sociology. Further 6 other historical institutes are included. So far sometimes more than 150 coworkers were involved in the workshops and conferences during the process.

Nine denominations participate in the process: the Orthodox, the Apostolic Armenian, the Roman-Catholic, the Reformed, the Evangelical A.B. (Transylvania Saxons), the Greek-Catholic, the Evangelical-Lutheran (Hungarian speaking) and, the Union of the Baptist church and the Unitarian Church. Also the Federation of Jewish Communities and the “Muftiatul Cultului Musulman din Romania participate.

### **3.2. Taking Share in Each Other’s Pain Underway to a “Doubly Reconciled Koinonia”**

#### **a) Methodology :**

Partial process B “Taking Share in Each Other’s Pain” stressed out the responsibility of churches for pastoral care.

Partial process HoM B is valid in those communities and cultures who on the one hand lived together over centuries in good condition. But in history they also have fought against each other and mutually caused harms to each other are still present in mind. Because experienced

injustice and suffering of the generations of our fathers and mothers are confirmed in the real or presumably real current experiences of people.

In this manner the centuries old experience of coexistence of cultures presents itself as a good foundation for a Europe with reconciled cultures.

But in face of the “deep layers of remembrances and presumptions” it is important to create with sensible pastoral care processes a dialogue culture of brothers and sisters. Through this we can create the preconditions for a Christian communion based on “taking share in the pain of the others”.

The Healing of Memories is the middle of a phase described as “approaching each other with pastoral and profoundly historical considerations”.<sup>31</sup> A sympathetic pastoral way implies both : an vertical (reaching over generations) and a horizontal (among present confessions and cultures) way. This opens the door towards a “doubly reconciled koinonia”.

#### **b) Realization of Healing of Memories in Romania part B for Transylvania**

On a basis of a “historical conflict analysis” as well as on the basis of the in part A in several languages published „Comparative history of the Christian churches“ several regional interreligious and intercultural seminars will take place in close co-operation with the departments for Pastoral Care at the education centers and faculties of the churches involved.

The project HoMRO part B is planned in the following two phases:

- (1) Training of suitable priests, ministers and other suitable persons
  - a) in the education centers of the churches
  - b) in form of interdenominational courses:
- (2) Realisation of regional Seminars of Healing of Memories in Regions with co-moderation by those trained participants of the two courses above.

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<sup>31</sup> for both expressions cf. *ibid*

ad (1) International experts and representatives of the involved education centers<sup>32</sup> created in a consultation from 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> August of 2008 a common curriculum and common structures of educational programs with the following themes :

- Healing of memories as a challenge of Transylvanian Churches
- Telling own stories
- Bases of communication in Church and Society
- Dialog between humans from different denominations, ethnic groups and cultural traditions
- Learning of group management with the principles of intercultural communication and pastoral care

The courses are planned to be created in partnerships European wide with :

- Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling SIPCC
- Seelsorgeinstitut der Church of Norway
- Seelsorgeinstitut der Church of Finland
- Facoltà Valdese di Teologia Roma
- Röm-Kath. Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart
- Istituto di Studi Ecumenici „San Bernardino“ Venezia
- Seelsorgeinstitut Kecskemet/Ungarn.
- Evangelische Landeskirche Hannover.

ad (2) The goal of these seminars is to promote mutual attention and ecumenical co-operation between humans from different denominations, ethnic groups and cultural traditions locally by „deeper becoming acquainted with “and by respecting the cultural and historical identity of the others.

Thereby different traditions will not be stressed out but things in common like language, traditions, religion and setting of tasks in society will be however particularly stressed. Models are looked for and are tested, that both different identities can be accepted and commonalities within a larger framework - thus over the persons involved in the respective groups beyond - can be realized.

It is aimed that those involved participants of the seminars notice the fact that common acting over the borders of denomination, culture and language strengthens also the own identity and is of advantage for all (“win- win result”).

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<sup>32</sup> 7 Faculties of Theology in Sibiu, Cluj, Alba Iulia the Protestant Institute of Cluj (Reformed and Lutheran) and the Faculty of Theology of Baptist Union in Oradea are taking part.

### **3.3. Preparing the Future Together**

The Charta Oecumenica reminds us under section 3. “Moving towards one another” that “it is important to acknowledge the spiritual riches of the different Christian traditions, to learn from one another and so to receive these gifts”.<sup>33</sup> The fact that one has not only to recognise but actively engage oneself in preparing the way towards a reconciled koinonia of the churches, opens a new Partial process C : “to prepare the future together”. That may become project of the future. But this step must be discussed first of all with the participating churches.

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<sup>33</sup> Charta Oecumenica, chapter 3 Moving towards one another. *op. cit*

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Bernd J. P. Kähler

## Stolpersteine

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*Versöhnung mit der eigenen Geschichte und mit den  
Nachbarn heißt, sich der eigenen Geschichte und der  
eigenen nationalen Untaten zu stellen.  
Auch in scheinbar kleinen Zeichen.*

### Das Projekt „Stolpersteine“

Die Mythen der eigenen Geschichtsbildung zu entmythologisieren, darin sah Eric Hobsbawm schon vor Jahren die eigentliche Aufgabe des Historikers. Vor dieser Aufgabe stehen auch wir als Theologen, und die europäischen Kirchen haben sich zu dieser Aufgabe in der *Charta Oecumenica* bekannt.

Seit 1945 gibt es in Deutschland einen breiten selbstkritischen Strom der Erinnerung an die Untaten der national-sozialistischen Reichsregierung Deutschlands. Dies gilt sowohl für die frühere BRD wie für die frühere DDR. Ein wichtiger Teil dieses Stromes sind die evangelischen Landeskirchen und eine Form dieser Erinnerung sind die „Stolpersteine“.

Die Stolpersteine sind Messingplatten, die an einzelne Todesopfer des NS-Regimes erinnern, und die in den Gehwegen vor den einstigen Wohnungen dieser Menschen eingelassen sind. Sie sind in vielen Orten Deutschlands kleine Mahnmale. In meiner Stadt, Hamburg-Harburg, wird für jeden der Erinnerten zudem ein Faltblatt erstellt, das ihn oder sie vorstellt. In der Regel werden diese Platten von einzelnen Menschen oder Gruppen gelegt und finanziert, die keine direkte persönliche Beziehung zu den Opfern oder zu dem früheren Wohnhaus der Opfer haben.

Das primäre Ziel dieser Form des Gedenkens und Mahnens ist, durch die Erinnerung den Ermordeten ihre Ehre wiederzugeben. Ihr Leben können wir ih-

nen nicht wiedergeben, wohl aber können wir sie ehren und mit Scham in unsere Gemeinschaft zurückholen. Durch die Beschäftigung mit einzelnen Menschen lernen wir ihr persönliches Leben kennen und öffnen gleichzeitig den Blick auf die vielschichtige Geschichte unserer Stadt, Deutschlands und auch Europas. Die persönlichen Fragen/Probleme mit der eigenen Geschichte (und Gegenwart) werden so bewusster und möglicherweise auch geklärt.

Ein Einblick in die europäische Geschichte erfolgt z.B. dadurch, dass einige Opfer jiddische Migranten aus den damaligen Staaten Mittel- und Osteuropas sind. So taucht in der Erinnerung mehrfach die Region „Galizien“ mit ihrem multikulturellen Leben auf – und führt zu aktuellen Fragen und Problemen des multikulturellen Zusammenlebens in der eigenen Stadt. Und auch zu der Erkenntnis, wie begrenzt unser eigenes historisches Wissen ist.

Mit anderen Formen des Gedenkens und Mahnens haben die Stolpersteine gemeinsam, dass wir uns der eigenen Geschichte mit ihrem ganzen Erbe und nicht nur mit einem idealisierten Teil stellen. Dies liegt in der Tradition biblischer, alttestamentlicher (und auch neutestamentlicher) Geschichtsüberlieferung. Und in meiner eigenen seelsorgerlichen Praxis erlebe ich es das auch, z.B. in den Gesprächen mit anonymen Alkoholikern. Das angestrebte Ziel ist dabei, den Überhöhungen der eigenen Geschichte/Nation zu widersprechen und sie abzubauen. Seelsorgerlich ist im Zusammenhang von „healing of memories“ möglicherweise auch die Frage interessant und heikel, wie weit es Formen der eigenen Überhöhung als Täter oder auch als Opfer gibt.

Das Verlegen und die Pflege der Stolpersteine wird in Harburg von einer Gruppe im Rahmen des Ev.-Luth. Kirchenkreises Hamburg-Harburg getragen. Finanziert wird ihre Arbeit durch Mittel dieses Kirchenkreises sowie des staatlichen Bezirks Harburg des Landes Hamburg. Ich selber gehöre zu den Initiatoren dieser Gruppe, hatte in meiner Mitarbeit

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Bernd J.P. Kähler, Pfr.i.R. der NEK, langjähriger Gemeindepfarrer in Hamburg-Harburg.

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eine zeitlang pausiert und gehöre jetzt wieder zu den Aktiven.

### **An wen wird erinnert?**

Zur Arbeit der Gruppe gehören auch regelmäßige Veranstaltungen zum 9. November. Diese Gedenkveranstaltungen waren in den ersten Jahren vorrangig an den jüdischen Opfern orientiert. Nach einigen Jahren wurden aber auch andere Gruppen von allgemein anerkannten, unstrittigen Opfern – Schwule, politisch Verfolgte (zumeist Kommunisten und Sozialdemokraten), Sinti und Roma – in den Blick genommen. In diesem Jahr, 2008, wird es um die „Zeugen Jehovas“ gehen. In den beiden letzten Jahren wurde an den jugendlichen Widerstand und Protest der „Swingjugend“ und der „bündische Jugend“ erinnert, von den Jugendbünden der Weimarer Zeit bis zu den „Edelweißpiraten“.

Die Beschäftigung und Thematisierung einzelner Gruppen ist jeweils auch mit einer Auseinandersetzung mit eigenen Vorurteilen/Stereotypen sowie eigenen Geschichtsbildern verbunden und kann zu überraschenden Reaktionen führen. Ein Beispiel: Beim diesjährigen Reinigen von Stolpersteinen zögerte plötzlich ein emeritierter Pastor: „Das ist ja ein Kommunist“. Er reinigte den Stolperstein weiter...

In diesem Jahr wollten wir zudem erstmalig zu einem Gedenken des 8. Mai 1945 als „Tag der Befreiung“ einladen; aus organisatorischen Gründen ist das gescheitert. Mit diesem Vorhaben rückten auch andere Personengruppen in das Blickfeld: Kinder<sup>2</sup>, Frauen (auch Soldaten?), die ja auch Opfer des Krieges der NS-Zeit sind. Ist ihrer durch unsere Gruppe auch zu gedenken? und: Wie? Das sind nicht so einfache Fragen. Werden da nicht gewichtige Unterschiede verwischt, gar die zwischen Tätern, Mittätern/Mitmachern, Mitläufern und Opfern?

Und in einer Stadt wie Harburg, in der diejenigen mit „deutscher Geschichte“ keineswegs die einzige Bevölkerungsgruppe sind, ist zudem zu fragen: Betrifft die Aufforderung zu gedenken alle – auch die vielen Immigranten, die Türken, Kurden Portugiesen, Araber? Haben viele nicht schlicht eine andere historische Herkunft? Und wie ist es mit dem Immigranten jiddischer Herkunft? Es gibt gute Gründe, alle einbeziehen zu wollen. Aber welche sind es?

### **Fragestellungen und Impulse für das Gespräch im Workshop:**

- Rückfragen zu den Stolpersteinen: Was sind die Kosten, wer trägt sie? Wer trägt die Aktion? Beteiligung der Kirche? Zusammensetzung des Trägerkreises?
- Wessen wird gedacht? Juden; „Juden“; Zigeuner / Sinti und Roma; Behinderte / Lebensunwerte; „sozialauffälliger Jugendliche“; Kommunisten, Zeugen Jehovas, Schwule... Bei welcher Gruppe stützen wir / stütze ich?
- Ziel des Gedenkens: Den Opfern „ihre Ehre wiedergeben, sie in die Gemeinschaft zurück holen“; Die Frage nach möglichen persönlichen Motiven (auch Motivationen in den Kirchen), sich der eigenen Geschichte zu stellen; auf welchen Sperren in uns (auch: in unseren Kirchen / Gemeinden / bei unseren Gesprächspartnern) stoßen wir?
- Welche (religiöse?) Basis hat unser Protest gegen „Überhöhungen“? Was bieten wir – als einzelne Menschen, Seelsorger, als Kirchen - an für das Zusammenleben, für das Sich-Erinnern, für heilende Erinnerungen, für das Zusammenleben zwischen den Kirchen und Völkern? Wie reagieren wir selber auf Störungen?
- Was heißt „heilende Erinnerungen“ / Erinnerungen heilen? Muss man Erinnerungen wach halten, wecken? Ist nicht auch der Verlust belastender Geschichtserinnerungen in einem harmonisierenden (oder auch nur: vergesslichen) Bild gemeinsamer Geschichte möglich und auch akzeptabel?

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<sup>2</sup> Vgl. dazu Sabine Bode, Die vergessene Generation – Kriegskinder brechen ihr Schweigen, München 2007.

# Identitätsbildung in Kirchen – Lernen durch Partnerschaft

Eberhard von der Heyde / Dinesh Kumar

## Vorbemerkungen

Wir, Pastor Dinesh Kumar Chand und ich, stehen hier als Team und berichten gemeinsam über die aktuelle Partnerschaftsarbeit zwischen zwei Kirchen. Das allein ist schon neu. Möglich wurde dies durch das Dialog-Training „Storytelling in Conflict“ unter der Leitung von Prof. Dan Bar-On von 2006 bis 2008, das wir gemeinsam absolviert haben. Das Training hat uns dazu herausgefordert, den aktuellen Stand der Zusammenarbeit zwischen den beiden Kirchen nicht nur gelegentlich, sondern gemeinsam und koordiniert zu reflektieren. Die Rückmeldungen und die Unterstützung der international zusammen gesetzten Gruppe im Training waren dabei besonders hilfreich.

In meinem Teil unserer Präsentation möchte ich auf einige Veränderungen in der Beziehung zwischen der Jeypore-Kirche in Orissa (JELC), Indien, und der Nordelbischen Kirche im Norden Deutschlands (NEK) eingehen. Natürlich tue ich dies aus meiner Perspektive. Angesichts der gebotenen Kürze müssen die gekennzeichneten Positionen in ihrer Darstellung thesenartig bleiben. Dennoch hoffe ich, Ihnen damit Einblicke in einen Prozess zu ermöglichen, den ich angestoßen habe, damit wir unsere eigene Rolle in der Gestaltung dieser Beziehung besser verstehen und, wo nötig, verändern können.

Als Indikator dafür, dass dies Anliegen nach vielen Gesprächen schließlich aufgenommen wurde, gilt für mich, dass die kritische Reflexion und Neugestaltung der Beziehung nach der Wahl der neuen Kirchenleitung der Jeypore-Kirche ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der offiziellen Zusammenarbeit zwischen beiden Partnerkirchen wurde. Dafür bin ich Bischof A.Ch. Khosla und den Amtsträgern der Jeypore-Kirche sehr dankbar. Ebenso danke ich den Verantwortlichen in der NEK für Begleitung und Unterstützung. Viele

haben seitdem daran mitgewirkt, die bestehende Beziehung auf verschiedenen Ebenen voranzubringen und durch vielfältige Programme zu unterstützen. Der bisherige Prozess ist mit der Unterzeichnung und Ratifizierung der Partnerschaftsvereinbarung zwischen beiden Kirchen zum Jahresende 2007 an einen entscheidenden Punkt gekommen.

In einem ersten Schritt möchte ich auf einige Aspekte aufmerksam machen, die mir auch mit Blick auf das Tagesthema wichtig scheinen:

- Es ist das Fremde, es sind die Anderen, die den Anstoß geben, sich selbst zu reflektieren – und wir brauchen die Anderen / das Fremde auch, um überhaupt in der Lage zu sein, unsere eigenen Haltungen als ein Teil dessen zu reflektieren, was uns ausmacht und was als „Identität“ bezeichnet werden kann. Wenn ich mich zurückerinnere an meine Kindheit und Jugend, so ging es zunächst doch darum, angemessen zu funktionieren. Es ging darum, die jeweiligen Rollen in der Familie wie auch in anderen Gruppen und Kontexten, in denen ich mich bewegte, klar zu kriegen. Ich hatte – im Unterschied zu anderen offenbar - viele Gelegenheiten und Orte, an denen ich mich abgrenzen und meine Fähigkeiten zur Auseinandersetzung üben und erproben konnte: Ob in der Geschwisterreihe in der Familie als zweiter von vieren, als Junge in von Mädchen dominierten Aktivitäten (Rollschuhlaufen, Chorsingen), als Begründer eines Gebetskreises in der Schule oder als Gymnasiast in der Bundeswehr, überall kam es zu Unterscheidungen, Klarstellungen und damit Orientierungen. Es erschien mir natürlich, bestimmten Erwartungen widersprechen zu können und andere Möglichkeiten auszuprobieren. Die Möglichkeit zu demonstrieren, die Politik zu kritisieren, die Rolle Deutschlands und „der Deutschen“ in der Geschichte kritisch zu reflektieren und die Belastbarkeit der Konventionen auszuloten, konnte dies nur bekräftigen. Ich bewegte mich damit in einem Kontext, der so umfassend war, dass ich nicht genötigt war, mich nun besonders als Deutscher zu fühlen oder meiner Einstellungen auf eine bestimmte Kultur oder Tradi-

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*Autoren-Info v.d.Heyde*

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tion – ich ging ja davon aus, dass ich gerade meine eigene entwickelte – zu beziehen. Vor allem Begegnungen im Ausland, in Norwegen und Israel, und damit die Erkenntnis, dass ich mit all meinen Eigenheiten so einfach als Deutscher zu erkennen war, haben die Frage von „Identität“ drängend mit ins Bild gerückt und damit geholfen, die bis dahin bestehende kontextuelle Begrenztheit zu erweitern.

- Die „Richtung“ einer Beziehung kann dazu führen, Begegnungsmöglichkeiten zu begrenzen. Im Interesse gemeinsamen Lernens ist es wichtig, mit den jeweiligen Gefühlen von Überlegenheit oder Unterlegenheit so umzugehen, dass sie andere Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten nicht ausschließen. Sich auf den Anderen wirklich einlassen zu können wird durch ein hohes Maß an Sicherheit und Selbstvertrauen unterstützt. Nach Übernahme der Verantwortung in meiner Kirche für das Erbe der Indienarbeit, für ihre geschichtlichen Wurzeln und die angemessene Pflege ihrer Früchte, und gleichzeitig dafür, diese Beziehung weiterzuentwickeln, habe ich oft erlebt, dass es uns an Möglichkeiten mangelt, die Begrenztheit in unserer Kommunikation bezüglich dessen, was wir tatsächlich von dem Gegenüber wissen, wahrzunehmen. Gründe hierfür sehe ich in unseren eigenen Ambitionen, unserem Handeln und in einer Tendenz zur Wahrung der bestehenden Rolle in den Strukturen der Beziehung.

- Die Partnerschaftlichkeit einer Beziehung steht ständig zur Disposition. Dies geschieht auch allzu leicht von wohlmeinender Seite. So verführt m.E. die aktuelle Diskussion um das wichtige Thema „Korruption“ - entgegen ihrer eigenen Absicht - zu einer Verfestigung der bestehenden Rollen und Verhältnisse. So wie diese Debatte geführt wird, gefährdet sie einen wirklich hilfreichen Austausch wie er zwischen gleichwertigen Partnern stattfinden sollte. Sie zeigt eine Tendenz, Strukturen über das Thema „Geld“ anzugehen und damit eher zu „einfachen Lösungen“ zu greifen, als z.B. Fragen von Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit ernsthaft zu bearbeiten.

## Von Abhängigkeit zu Weggemeinschaft

### 1 Top-Down und Bottom-Up

Seit zehn Jahren bin ich nun für die Gestaltung und Neu-Gestaltung der Beziehung zwischen einer regionalen lutherischen Kirche in Deutschland und einer lutherischen Kirche in Indien offiziell zuständig. Alle meine Vorgänger in diesem Amt waren sich dahingehend einig, dass dies eine Beziehung „von Kirche zu Kirche“ sei. Alle damit verbundenen Ange-

legenheiten werden dementsprechend seitens der deutschen Kirche durch ihre Missionsorganisation als der dafür zuständigen Stelle wahrgenommen. Unter dieser Maßgabe gab es weder Raum noch Möglichkeit oder Notwendigkeit für direkte Beziehungen zwischen Personen, Gruppen, Gemeinden oder Einrichtungen auf beiden Seiten. Stattdessen waren einige der ehemaligen Missionare weiterhin einflussreich in unserer Kirche. Einige blieben sehr aktiv und waren weithin bekannt. Sie pflegten ihre individuellen Kontakte, Freundschaften oder Beziehungen in Indien und fühlten persönlich eine große Verantwortung für eine weitere Unterstützung der indischen Kirche. Die Diskussionen im Vorstand und in den verantwortlichen Gremien des Nordelbischen Missionszentrums waren bestimmt von den Hoffnungen für die indische Partnerkirche und den Erwartungen an sie - wobei die Themen immer wieder wesentlich von den Fragen finanzieller Zusammenarbeit bestimmt waren. Dies trug dazu bei, dass die Beziehung als eine Beziehung finanzieller Abhängigkeit angesehen wurde mit der Konsequenz, dass die einseitige finanzielle Unterstützung eine grundlegende Bedeutung in der Gestaltung dieser Beziehung behielt. Dieses Bild blieb wirksam, so ermüdend es auch empfunden wurde.

Die Realität der „Partner“ wurde dementsprechend weitgehend mit dem Vorzeichen des „Mangels“ charakterisiert: Mangelnde Leitung, mangelnde Ausbildung, mangelnde Einkommensmöglichkeiten, mangelnde Gesundheitsversorgung usw. Diese Haltung wurde von Seiten der Partner immer wieder verstärkt, weil sie in ihrer Selbsteinschätzung von einem „Rückständigkeits-Komplex“ bestimmt waren und regelmäßig Beschreibungen ihrer eigenen Hilflosigkeit wiederholten: „Was können wir schon machen?“.

In Anbetracht dieser Vorgaben und angesichts einer gleichzeitigen Halbierung meiner Stelle als eines weiteren Anzeichens dieser Gesamtschau der Beziehung, wenn nicht gar des einseitigen Versuches, mit dieser Situation umzugehen, nahm ich meine Verantwortung unter einigen Grundüberlegungen auf, verbunden mit entsprechenden Entscheidungen und Handlungen:

- 1) Wenn wir diese Beziehung lebendig erhalten wollen, muss sie sich auf vielfältige Weise entfalten können und in den Gemeinden auf beiden Seiten verankert werden. Darum wurden Möglichkeiten für direkte partnerschaftliche Kontakte gesucht und gefördert. Einzelpersonen und Gruppen werden zu aktiver Beteiligung innerhalb der Beziehung aufgefordert.

2) Wenn wir einander besser verstehen lernen wollen, müssen wir Gelegenheiten für vielfältige Arten des Miteinander-Teilens und der Kommunikation schaffen, in denen unterschiedliche Personen eingebunden werden und sich einbringen können. Darum wurden gegenseitige Besuche ermutigt und Einladungen an Personen basierend auf bestimmten Fähigkeiten anstatt von Positionen gefördert.

3) Wenn wir eine Veränderung in der Haltung in Bezug auf die bestehende Beziehung wollen, wird es hilfreich sein, andere Erfahrungen in gegenseitigen Beziehungen kennen zu lernen. Darum wurden gegenseitige Besuche und Workshops mit benachbarten Kirchen in Indien ermutigt und organisiert, wobei unterschiedliche Themen miteinander verhandelt und auch Teilnehmende aus Deutschland mit eingebunden werden konnten.

In der weiteren Reflektion der Beziehung in dieser Richtung und insbesondere meiner eigenen Rolle in diesem System entfernte ich mich zunehmend von der Einschätzung, dass das Geld als solches und die finanzielle Förderung der Partner das Grundübel und die Ursache der bestehenden Konflikte sei. Ich bin zu der Überzeugung gelangt, dass hinter den Problemen des Geldes und der ungleichen Machtverhältnisse die weitgehende Unverbundenheit zweier Kommunikationssysteme wesentlich dazu beiträgt, andauernd Konflikte zu verursachen. Anstatt dass wir offen miteinander unsere gegenseitigen Erwartungen aussprechen und dementsprechend unsere Nöte und Ressourcen einander mitteilen und miteinander teilen, trägt diese Kommunikationsblockade dazu bei, bestehende und zur Gewohnheit gewordene Arrangements aufrecht zu erhalten. In dieser Struktur beziehen wir uns aufeinander nur innerhalb der bestehenden jeweiligen Zuschreibungen. Dabei können wir die sich regelmäßig aufbauenden Spannungen nur dadurch relativieren, indem wir sie dann gemeinsam auf sogenannte „Missverständnisse“ zurückführen. Aber was missverstanden wurde, bleibt unausgesprochen und unreflektiert.

Mein Bestreben, diese Fragen genauer untersuchen zu können, wird dadurch begrenzt, dass es schlicht unmöglich ist, mich selbst in die soziale Kommunikation innerhalb der indischen Partnerkirche einzufügen. Diesbezüglich muss ich feststellen, dass alle mir zugängliche Information bereits den bestehenden „Regeln“ entsprechend spezifisch geformt ist. Und meine Rolle als offizieller Repräsentant der Partner führt zwangsläufig dazu, dass jedweder Kommentar oder Information, die ich erhalte,

selbst nur wieder die spezielle Perspektive des bestehenden Systems reflektiert.

An diesem methodisch schwierigen Punkt eröffnete das Dialog-Training „Storytelling in Conflict“ eine Möglichkeit und die Chance der unmittelbaren Zusammenarbeit mit einem Kollegen der indischen Partnerkirche. Der Name des Trainings selbst war provozierend, aber ermöglichte uns deshalb konfliktive Komponenten von beiden Seiten her in die Betrachtung der Beziehung einzubeziehen. Dies wirkt weiterhin für viele beängstigend. War es in der Vergangenheit zu Konflikten gekommen, konnten diese als Störung der bestehenden Beziehung angesehen werden, ohne die Beziehung als solche in Frage stellen zu müssen. Die Schuldigen wurden gefunden und der Konflikt wurde somit auf ein Problem von/durch Einzelpersonen reduziert.

Der gemeinsame Weg, der schließlich zur Unterzeichnung einer Partnerschaftvereinbarung geführt hat, ist seit 2002 vorangetrieben worden. Schon der Prozess selber hat auf verschiedenen Wegen einen Wandel in den Betrachtungsweisen der Beziehung gefördert, selbst wenn bislang viele der gewohnten Umgangsformen und Erwartungen an das, was vom jeweils anderen erwartet werden kann, noch weiterbestehen. Die dabei zu überwindenden Schwierigkeiten sind angesichts der oben angedeuteten Ausgangsvoraussetzungen nur allzu verständlich. Dies muss angemerkt werden, selbst wenn bereits viel getan wurde, diesen Prozess, der in erster Linie ein Top-Down-Prozess war, so gut wie möglich innerhalb der Mitgliedschaft der beiden Kirchen zu verankern. Die gemeinsame Weiterarbeit in der Erstellung der speziellen Richtlinien, wie sie als Anhänge zu der Vereinbarung bezogen auf die unterschiedlichen Paragraphen beschlossen worden sind, wird dazu beitragen.

Ein eindrückliches Beispiel für die veränderte Haltung und die neuen Rahmenbedingungen, die für Begegnungen entwickelt werden, und die damit verbundenen Erwartungen an Lernprozesse „von unten nach oben“, ist das gegenseitige Besuchsprogramm *Places To Remember*. Bei den Begegnungen 2006 in der Jeypore-Kirche und in diesem Jahr im Mai in der NEK wurde der Ansatz des Storytelling genutzt. Solche neuen Erfahrungen werden durch weitere Aktivitäten auf beiden Seiten ergänzt und unterstützt. So kam es in diesem Jahr z.B. auch zu zwei erfolgreichen Begegnungen junger Menschen in den Dörfern, wobei gemeinsames Arbeiten und der Austausch zu vorab vereinbarten Themen miteinander verbunden wurden. Die so entstandenen Beziehungen werden weitergeführt werden. Außerdem

wächst die Anzahl direkter partnerschaftlicher Kontakte auf Gemeindeebene, und mehr Menschen als in den letzten Jahren besuchen einander und tauschen sich über ihre jeweiligen Anliegen aus.

## 2 Das „Emmaus-Paradigma“

Während der letzten drei Jahre wurde die biblische Geschichte der zwei Jünger auf ihrem Weg nach Emmaus (Lk 24, 13-35) zum Paradigma eines neuen Verständnisses der Beziehung zwischen den beiden Kirchen. Diese Erzählung reflektiert die Situation der beiden Jünger Jesu am Ostersonntag. Als Zeugen des Todes und der Grablegung Jesu können sie noch nichts mit den Erfahrungen des leeren Grabes, die sie gehört hatten, anfangen. Während sie also nach Emmaus gehen und miteinander reden schließt sich ihnen eine dritte Person an und hört ihrem Gespräch zu. Auf die Nachfrage nach dem Hintergrund ihrer Unterhaltung ist Er es schließlich, der ihnen die Bedeutung der Schriften erklärt und warum all dies geschehen musste. Aber erst als sie zusammen am Tisch sitzen und das Brot miteinander teilen, erkennen sie, dass es Jesus selbst war, der mit ihnen ging und dem sie zugehört haben.

Dieser Erzählung folgend haben wir unseren gemeinsamen Weg mit dem Weg der zwei Jünger identifiziert. In Seminaren und Begegnungen in Deutschland und in Indien haben wir diesen Text gemeinsam studiert. Es hat uns Mut gemacht, unsere Hoffnungen und Sorgen miteinander auszutauschen. Wir entdeckten, dass verdeckt von den Geschichten und Erinnerungen, die wir auf beiden Seiten weitertragen und auch offen miteinander austauschen, viele weitere Lagen von Geschichten zu finden sind. Es gibt Geschichten, die bislang nur unter Personen des jeweiligen Umfeldes und nicht mit den Partnern ausgetauscht wurden. Es gibt Geschichten, die sind wirklich lustig oder absurd oder belehrend und andere, die bis heute erschüttern und nichts von ihrem Schrecken eingebüßt haben. Aber alle diese Geschichten sind Teil unserer gemeinsamen Erinnerung und viele von ihnen wurden schon von Generation zu Generation weitergereicht. Indem wir auswählen, welche Erinnerungen wir erhalten und welche nicht, indem wir entscheiden, wann wir die andere Seite von diesem Erinnerungsprozess ausschließen und bestimmte Geschichten somit unter Verschluss halten, nehmen wir Einfluss auf die Gestaltung unserer Beziehung. Wir formen unsere gemeinsame Geschichte auf eine bestimmte Weise und eventuell auch so, dass wir einen wirklichen Lernprozess verhindern.

Nun ist uns zugesagt, dass während wir einander begleiten, uns Jesus seinerseits begleiten wird. So wie die Jünger in dieser Geschichte. Dass wir dieses Paradigma als Grundlage in unsere Partnerschaftvereinbarung übernommen haben, hat uns dabei geholfen, in dieser Vereinbarung auch die Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Kirchen sowie innerhalb jeder einzelnen ausdrücklich anzuerkennen. Diese anerkennend setzen wir uns dafür ein, miteinander zu teilen und uns für ein tieferes gegenseitiges Verstehen einzusetzen – und uns darauf vorzubereiten, dass er uns unsere „Augen öffnen“ wird, damit wir auf tiefere Weise werden sehen können.

## Überlegungen zu Identität und Individualität

Obwohl einer der Jünger in der Erzählung namentlich genannt ist, sind die beiden Personen kaum individuell gezeichnet. Abgesehen von ihrer Trauer bleiben sie weitgehend farblos. Dies zieht sich weiter bis in die Kunstgeschichte hinein. Viele Bilder der Jünger auf dem Weg zeigen die beiden von hinten. Werden sie von vorne dargestellt und sind ihre Gesichter zu sehen, dann werden ihre Körper zumeist von der Figur Jesu überragt. Er steht im Mittelpunkt. Natürlich haben auch wir uns dieser Geschichte in derselben Weise genähert. Wir haben uns Zeit gelassen, über ihr „stehenbleiben“ nachzudenken. Wir haben uns auf sie konzentriert wie sie Jesus „zuhören“.

Aber wenn ich weiter über diese beiden Gestalten nachdenke, frage ich auch nach ihrer Individualität und Identität. Beide sind Jünger Jesu, aber heißt das denn auch, dass sie die gleiche Geschichte haben? Beide gehen sie da traurig miteinander, aber heißt das denn auch, dass sie mit ihrer Trauer auf die gleiche Weise umgehen? Ich gehe eher davon aus, dass wohl einer von ihnen in seiner Trauer all seine Energie verloren hat, während der andere vielleicht auch Wut verspürt. Ich könnte gut verstehen, wenn der eine – in seiner ganzen Hilflosigkeit – versuchen würde, den anderen dazu zu bringen, ihm zu sagen, was nun noch zu tun bleibt. Und was würde der andere denn wohl versuchen zu entwickeln, so verwirrt er doch selber gerade ist? Würde er vielleicht versuchen, die unangenehme Situation dadurch zu überwinden, dass er jede Menge Erklärungsversuche produziert?

Wenn ich über konkrete Personen aus unseren beiden Partnerkirchen nachdenke, wie sie miteinander auf dem Weg sind und ihre Geschichten miteinander austauschen, dann bekommen solch individuelle Reaktionen eine große Bedeutung. Ich habe

in den letzten zehn Jahren erfahren, wie solch unterschiedliche Verhaltensweisen im gemeinsamen Kommunikationsprozess zu gegenseitigen Erwartungen und Gewohnheiten festgelegt worden sind. Wir haben unsere jeweils zugeschriebenen Ansprüche und Rollen gut gelernt – wenn nicht sogar genossen. Und wir haben diese Bilder voneinander und ihre entsprechenden Gegenstücke verfestigt, indem wir ihnen weitere Attribute hinzugefügt haben, die die bereits bestehenden Bilder des jeweiligen Gegenübers bestätigten.

In diesem Zusammenhang ist mir die kritische Analyse von Amartya Sen hilfreich geworden. In seinem Buch *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny* (2006) macht er angesichts des so leicht möglichen Missbrauchs zugeschriebener Identitäten auf die Chance des Zugewinns an Komplexität aufmerksam: „If we shift our attention from the notion of being identical to oneself to that of sharing and identity with others of a particular group.“ Folgten wir diesem Ansatz, könnten wir anerkennen, dass „the same person can be, without any contradiction, an American citizen, of Caribbean origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, a liberal, a woman, as vegetarian, a long-distance runner, a historian, a schoolteacher, a novelist, a feminist, a heterosexual, a believer in gay and lesbian rights, a theatre lover, an environmental activist, a tennis fan, a jazz musician, and someone who is deeply committed to the view that there are intelligent beings in outer space with whom it is extremely urgent to talk (preferably in English).“

Auf unserem Weg liegt damit die wunderbare Aufgabe vor uns, unser Wissen voneinander zu erweitern. Ist es möglich, dass wir einander auf so vielfältige Weisen kennenlernen, dass wir über die bestehenden Unterschiede hinweg neue Gemeinsamkeiten entdecken und so unsere Vorstellungen voneinander und Erwartungen aneinander bereichern lassen? Würde dies nicht ein Loslassen der gewohnten Rollen(bilder) erleichtern und unser Zuhören verbessern?

Rev. Dinesh Kumar Chand

## Identitätsbildung in Kirchen Lernen in Partnerschaft

Vor längerer Zeit lernte ich eine Übung. Es ging darum, wie man mit einem Partner zusammen ein Bild zeichnet, indem beide den Zeichenstift mit ihren Händen halten. Bei der Übung wurden wir angewiesen nicht miteinander zu reden und uns auch nicht mit Gesten zu verständigen. In der Auswertung der Übung erschien es der Gruppe so, dass verschiedene Phasen der Entwicklung beobachtet und beschrieben werden konnten, genauso wie bei einer Partnerschaft.

Die erste Phase ist davon geprägt, dass man nicht weiß, wie man starten soll, und dass man einen Plan entwickelt für den Start. Hierbei übernimmt zumeist eine Person die Initiative. Dies ist die *Phase der Beobachtung des anderen*.

In der zweiten Phase beginnt jemand mit der Zeichnung, während der andere ihn zunächst einfach zeichnen lässt, selbst passiv und unterwürfig bleibt und Angst hat, etwas falsch zu machen. Es ist die *Phase der totalen Abhängigkeit*, in der man alles akzeptiert, was der andere tut.

Dann kommt die *Phase, in der es um die Frage nach Identität* geht. Der unterwürfige Zeichner denkt, dass er auch einige eigene gute Ideen hat, wie das Bild aussehen sollte, und dass er eigentlich nicht nur der Richtung des anderen folgen will.

Dann folgte die *Phase der Kooperation*, in der beide das Bild in harmonischer Weise zeichnen und die Ideen von beiden Seiten einfließen lassen. Das ist die Phase, in der beide Identität des anderen akzeptieren und lernen, was die Emotionen und Beweggründe des anderen sind und seine Potenziale, und in der sie einen Weg der Zusammenarbeit finden, der von einer Machtbalance geprägt ist, damit man die gemeinsame Vision des Bildes verwirklichen kann.

Die verschiedenen Phasen folgen nicht strikt aufeinander. Sie können sich auch vermischen, denn sie gehören eng zusammen. Diese Phasen kann man nicht nur auf Zweierbeziehungen übertragen, sondern auch auf Beziehungen wie die zwischen der deutschen nordelbischen Kirche (NEK) und der indischen lutherischen Kirche von Jeypore (JELC). In dieser Hinsicht möchte ich nun in die verschiedenen Phasen darstellen:

### 1. Die Phase der Beobachtung:

Als die Missionare von Deutschland aus Indien erreichten, waren sie mit einer sehr andersartigen Welt

konfrontiert. Es war nicht nur die Sprache der Menschen in Indien anders, auch ihr Essen, ihre Kultur, ihre sozialen Strukturen, ihre Religion und vieles andere mehr. Die Missionare bauten Kontakte zu unterschiedlichen Gruppen von Menschen und Kasten auf. Am Anfang gingen sie besonders auf die Angehörigen der oberen Kasten zu. Die erste Frau, die in unserer Kirche getauft wurde, kam auch aus einer der oberen Kasten. Aber so war es nur ganz am Anfang. Später kam es zu Massenbekehrungen von Menschen aus den Gruppen der Ausgestoßenen, der Dalits und der Adivasi. Sie wurden angezogen von der Botschaft der Gleichheit aller Menschen, was wiederum für die Menschen aus den oberen Kasten unmöglich war zu akzeptieren. Für die Angehörigen der niederen Kasten oder die Menschen ohne den Status einer Kastenzugehörigkeit war es außerdem leicht, die Missionare zu akzeptieren, denn sie hatten eine besondere Hautfarbe. Die Hautfarbe der Deutschen war noch heller als die Hautfarbe der Brahmanen, und ihre Worte schienen wie die Botschaft von Engeln zu sein. In Indien ist die Hautfarbe eines Menschen Merkmal seiner Zugehörigkeit zu einer bestimmten Kaste. Allgemein könnte man als Regel sagen: je heller die Hautfarbe, desto höher die Kaste.

In dieser Phase der ersten Anfänge einer Beziehung zwischen Menschen aus zwei total unterschiedlichen Kulturen wird es wohl so gewesen sein, dass die beteiligten Personen zu aller erst nur die Unterschiede gesehen haben, die zwischen ihnen standen: die unterschiedlichen Weisen zu kommunizieren, die unterschiedlichen Verhaltensweisen, die unterschiedlichen Weisen mit anderen Menschen umzugehen, den unterschiedlichen Lebensstandard. In dieser ersten Phase wird es wohl schwer gewesen sein, auch nur einige Ähnlichkeiten zu sehen, außer einigen menschlichen Grundgefühlen oder dem Bedürfnis nach Schlaf, den Hunger oder das Verlangen nach Sicherheit und Glück und Ähnliches.

Aber obwohl es so viele Unterschiedlichkeiten zwischen ihnen gab, waren die Menschen doch gewillt, das Abenteuer einer Beziehung zu beginnen, ohne wissen zu können, was sie zu erwarten hätten und wie alles sich entwickeln würde. Vielleicht waren es die Unterschiede, die die Menschen interessiert machten, mehr voneinander zu erfahren und in einen engeren Kontakt zu kommen.

## 2. Die Phase der Abhängigkeit:

Als klar war, dass die Missionare blieben und dass auch ihre Arbeit fortgeführt würde, begann eine andere Phase, die Phase der Abhängigkeit. Die Missio-

nare lernten die Sprache und lernten auch viel über kulturelle Gewohnheiten im indischen Kontext. Die Menschen hatten die Hoffnung, dass die Missionare sie von den Fesseln des Kasten-Systems befreien könnten. Dass sie als menschliches Wesen angesehen wurden und dass sie nicht nur im Blick auf ihre Kaste eingestuft wurden, ließ die Menschen sich in großen Massen zum Christentum bekehren.

.....

Es ist schwer, eine von Abhängigkeit geprägte Beziehung zu verändern in eine andersartige Beziehungsform. So, wie sich die Praxis, etwas zu empfangen, in Menschen „einwurzelt“, so wurzelt sich auch das Gefühl der Erniedrigung ein. *Sich erniedrigt zu fühlen* wurde also zu einer Art von Gewohnheit und zu einem Teil des Lebens, so dass die Scheu schwand um Hilfe zu bitten oder um Unterstützung. Die indischen Menschen sahen sich selbst als die empfangenden und sie sahen die Deutschen als die Geber und Spender.

Aber es existierte nicht nur eine materielle Abhängigkeit. Es existierte auch eine emotionale Abhängigkeit. Selbst bei Prozessen der Entscheidungsfindung innerhalb der JELC, wenn es Krisen oder Probleme gab, waren Hilfe und Vorschläge der Deutschen nötig – und sind es oft immer noch. Der deutsche Partner wurde als Führer betrachtet, um Vorschläge zu machen und die Probleme zu lösen. Die Inder ergaben sich vollkommen unter die Direktiven und die Fürsorge der Deutschen.

## 3. Identität:

Diese völlige Ergebung und Abhängigkeit führt unausweichlich an den Punkt, an dem eine Phase des Nachfragens beginnt, ob es denn nicht eine eigene Identität gäbe - außer passiv zu sein und zu akzeptieren, was auch immer einem vorgeschlagen würde. Innerhalb des indischen kulturellen und religiösen Kontextes fragten Inder, die anderen Religionen als dem Christentum angehören, ob denn die christlichen Inder sich als Teil einer pluralistischen Kultur verstehen würden oder ob sie sich als Außenseiter verstehen würden, die ausländische Gewohnheiten angenommen hätten und nun beanspruchten, dass sie allein die Wahrheit besäßen

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So stellt sich die Frage, ob wir als indische Christen nicht auch unsere eigene Kultur, unsere Talente und Fähigkeiten haben, die wir einsetzen können, um unserem Glauben Ausdruck zu verleihen. Viele Inder, besonders die, die hohe Positionen in der Kirche innehaben, wagen es nicht, solche Gedanken zu

unterstützen. Sie denken, dass so etwas gegen den Respekt und die Ehre gegenüber den Missionaren verstoßen würde und auch gegen das, was sie gelehrt hätten. So etwas würde nur Illoyalität zeigen. Außerdem gibt es eine unterschwellige Angst, dass solch eine Illoyalität die Beziehung zwischen beiden Kirchen verletzen würde, der NEK und der JELC. Angst war immer ein verborgenes Thema im Leben der ersten Generationen von Christen in der JELC. Immer, wenn jemand die Kirchenregeln verletzt hatte, wurden disziplinarische Maßnahmen von den Missionaren gegen ihn ergriffen.

Die Frage nach einer eigenen Identität führt aber auch zu der Frage, ob es nicht möglich sein könnte, ohne (Selbst-)Erniedrigung und auch ohne Selbstbestrafung zu leben. Christen in der JELC haben es nicht umzusetzen gewagt, eine eigene Identität in Verbindung mit ihren eigenen Talenten zu besitzen

In der Tat ist das nun so, dass der deutsche Partner, die NEK, sich seit den Zeiten der damaligen Mission gewandelt hat. Die JELC braucht noch etwas Zeit, um zu realisieren, dass sie längst schon den Status einer unabhängigen Kirche erreicht hat. Wir fürchten es, Selbstbewusstsein zu haben und auch Selbstvertrauen, von dem aus wir eigene Ideen für eine Zukunft entwickeln könnten, in der wir unsere Selbst-Fixierung auf unsere passive und rezeptive Rolle überwunden hätten.

#### 4. Die Phase der Kooperation:

Heute ist die Beziehung zwischen der NEK und der JELC nicht mehr länger als Beziehung zwischen der Mutterkirche und der Tochterkirche definiert, sondern als eine Beziehung zwischen Partnerkirchen. Das kann man nun als *Phase der Kooperation* bezeichnen. Partner sind dazu da, dass sie sich über ihre jeweiligen Gefühle austauschen und sie kennen lernen, dass sie sich gegenseitig begleiten und den anderen nicht im Stich lassen, dass sie sich ermutigen und unterstützen, wenn ein Partner müde wird, dass sie gemeinsam Zeugnis ablegen von der Freude, der Hoffnung und der Vision, wie sie das durch den EINEN erfahren, der ihre Mitte ist.

Beide Kirchen wissen immer noch nicht genau, wie sie ihre gegenseitige Begleitung definieren können. Es ist besonders auf der indischen Seite schwierig, den Perspektivenwechsel von dem alten Modell, eine Tochterkirche zu sein, zu vollziehen hin zu dem neuen Modell einer Partnerkirche.

Die Beziehung war wirklich lange genug aufgebaut auf den Fragen rings um Geld, also um das Annehmen und das Geben. Aber eine Beziehung zwischen

Menschen sollte auf etwas anderem aufgebaut sein als auf Geld. Das bedeutet auch, dass auf der Prioritätenliste der gegenseitigen Gespräche nicht mehr Finanzfragen an erster Stelle stehen dürften. Statt Finanz-Statistiken und Finanzierungsvorlagen zu bearbeiten, müssen wir uns gegenseitig zuhören lernen, um uns erst einmal zu entdecken und um uns nicht länger in Rollen zu betrachten, sondern als Menschen. Solch eine Entdeckungsreise würde die Chance bieten zu sehen, welche anderen Dinge es in der Beziehung der Kirchen geben könnte, abgesehen von Geld.

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Wenn wir auf der Seite unserer indischen Kirche den anderen als Partner begegnen wollen, müssen wir bereit sein unsere eigenen Stärken und Potenziale zu sehen. Nur dann wären wir in der Lage, von uns aus die Begegnung auf Augenhöhe zu gestalten.

In diesem ganzen Prozess ist es – wie gesagt – bedeutsam und wichtig, dass wir einander zuhören lernen und dass wir auf diese Weise uns gegenseitig tiefer verstehen lernen, unsere Gefühle und unsere Motivationen und unsere Lebensgeschichten insgesamt.

Für mich war es daher großes Privileg, dass ich an den Dialog-Trainingsseminar von Professor Dan Bar-On „Story-telling in conflict“ in Hamburg teilnehmen konnte (von 2006 bis 2008). Es gab mir die Gelegenheit, zuhören zu lernen, sowohl bei den Geschichten von Kirchen als auch bei Lebensgeschichten, und in vielerlei Hinsicht durch einzelne Interviews zu lernen - und das alles zusammen mit meinem Trainingspartner Pfarrer Eberhard von der Heyde.

Dadurch, dass ich jetzt drei Jahre in Norddeutschland war und viele Kirchenprojekte kennen gelernt habe, habe ich nicht nur viel über unsere Kirchenbeziehung und ihre Herausforderungen, die anstehen, gelernt. Ich habe außerdem auch gelernt, meine eigene Kirche JELC von außen zu betrachten. Hier im Ausland zu leben hat mir dabei sehr geholfen. Es hat die Reflektion verbessert und mir neue Einsichten für das Streben meiner Heimatkirche nach einer eigenen Identität und Würde gebracht - im Blick auf das Ziel, Partner auf Augenhöhe zu sein.

Wenn auch diese Phase der Kooperation noch viel an Anstrengungen benötigt, so ist das der Mühen und Geduld wert, um die gemeinsame Vision zu verwirklichen und gemeinsam unseren Glauben und unsere Hoffnung in dieser sich wandelnden Welt zu bezeugen.

## **SIPCC – identity building in churches - learning in partnership**

by Rev. Dinesh Kumar Chand,  
Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church, India

First of all I like to start with a small story as an introduction.

Once I learned how to draw a picture together with my mate holding one pen with each one of our hands together.

We were told not to talk or instruct each other even by gesture while drawing the given picture. It was not an easy task to understand how my mate would like to start and how I could match my mind to go with him in one direction and vice versa. But somehow through feeling each other we could guess that my mate or I liked to go in a specific direction, sometimes I had to follow not knowing where he was taking me. Sometimes I had been worried about not finding my balance and what I wanted to draw I could not draw because my mate tried to pull me into his direction. I was bound to cooperate with him and also he had to cooperate with me whenever I wanted to draw the picture according to my wish. However we could manage to draw together a scattered piece of a picture.

It was a learning process to understand the other ones' feelings, holding and moving the pen together although we have different ways of drawing...just we had to accompany each other: Sometimes the hand of one person leads the way of the pen, sometimes the hand of the other one. When we tried to do this type of drawing more often we somehow could learn to understand the thought and feeling of the other one in which direction he might move so that we were able to draw a picture together.

When the result of our picture was good we were quite happy that this picture was our joint-effort : the result of our accompanying and cooperation.

The process of the relationship between the Northelbian Church (NEK) from Germany and the Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) from India could be compared with the above described situation. It takes a long time to get to know each other, to understand each other and to know the differences and similarities of each other.

While drawing the picture there could be observed different phases, similar to the one in the relationship. The first phase is the phase of not knowing how to start and of setting a plan how to start, mostly one takes the initiative. This phase could be compared with the arrival of the missionaries from the Breklum mission of the Northern part of Germany in 1882 in India. Neither the starting process of the relationship was clear nor the result of the relationship in the future had been clear as the outcome of the picture to draw was also not clear. The missionaries first of all did not know the language, the culture and traditions of the Indians as well as the Indians could not understand the missionaries. It is a *phase of observing* the other one.

In the next phase someone starts drawing the picture and the other one just lets the other one do while being passive or submissive and fearing to do wrong. In the relationship of the churches it could be compared with the *phase of total dependency* and accepting whatever the missionaries were teaching.

Then comes the *phase of the question of identity*. The submissive painter thinks that he also has some own ideas how the picture should look like and he does not only want to follow the direction of the other one.

Following this comes the *phase of cooperation*, painting the picture in a harmonious way together and putting in it the ideas of both partners.

It is a phase of accepting each others' identities, learning what are the other ones' emotions and motions, potentialities and finding a way to cooperate with each other in a way of balanced powers to realize the common vision of a picture.

The different phases do not strictly follow one after another, they can exist even next to each other because they are very closely interlinked.

Now the different phases shall be described a bit more in detail:

**The phase of observation :**

When the missionaries from Germany reached India they were confronted with quite a different world. Not only the language of the Indian people was different, but also their food, culture, social structures, religion, etc.

One of the most crucial things was (and still is) the Indian caste-system which determines the fate of the people from child-hood: Being born in a low caste means that there is no chance of a social upliftment and recognition.

There exist four major castes:

Brahmins - the priests and teachers,

Kshatriyas - the kings and warriors

Vaishyas – traders

Shudras – agriculturists.

Outside of this caste-systems with its thousands of sub-castes there are the Dalits, the Downtrodden or the Untouchables and the Adivasi, the Indigenous People. They are the ones having the lowest status and being despised by the society.

When the missionaries reached they made contact to different groups of people and castes.

Especially they made in the beginning approach to people from the upper castes. Even the first women who had been baptised in our church came from an upper caste.

But this was only at the very beginning. Afterwards the mass-conversion of people from the oucastes, the Dalits and Adivasi, took place.

They were drawn by the message of equality of all human beings which was impossible for the people of the upper caste to accept.

For the low and out-caste Indians it had been easy to accept the missionaries also because of their colour of skin. The German's colour of skin was even fairer than the ones of the Brahmins and their word seemed to be the angels' message. The colour of someone's skin shows in India the identity to the caste. Generally it could be observed that the more fair someones' skin is the higher is his / her caste.

In this phase of the very beginning of the relationship between the people of the two complete different cultures the involved persons might have seen first of all only their differences from each other: their different ways of communication, their different behaviour, their different ways of dealing with people, different living-standards.

In this very first phase it might have been difficult for them to see any similarities except the basic human feelings and needs of sleep, hunger, security, happiness etc.

Although there had been so many differences from each other the people were willing to start the adventure of a relationship not knowing what would expect them and how it would develop.

Maybe the differences made the people interested to discover each other more and to come into contact more closely.

**The phase of dependency:**

With the staying of the missionaries and their work started another phase, the *phase of dependency*.

The missionaries learned the language and also a lot about the cultural habits of the Indian context.

People had the hope that the missionaries could set them free from the bondage of the caste system. Being accepted as a human being and not being seen only by the caste made the people converting in masses into Christianity.

As in the Indian society castes often stayed in one area together also the Christians lived in one area together, in the Mission Compound which was surrounded by a wall. The missionaries also lived with them in the Mission Compound, in the big mission bungalows so that they were seen and regarded as the good kings, ruler, protector and the people themselves felt as the citizens of this glorious kingdom. This time is being remembered often as the glorious, heavenly times.

The Germans were (and still they are often) being addressed as the Sahibs, which is respective way of addressing a white person which means the owner or boss.

The people also started addressing them as “mother and father” which expresses a close relationship with each other as well it expresses respect and adoration.

Many Indians were adopted by the missionaries and they accepted themselves to be the “Child” of the missionaries and were brought up in the hostel with strict discipline.

They called the matron “mother” and the missionary being in charge of the boys' hostel “father”.

Punishment is being remembered by many as a grace and as a “sacred touch” to bring the children on the right path and also as a great teaching for their life to become a good person onwards.

They were brought up in the mission boarding school and stayed there until their adulthood, although they had a home where they went for holidays only.

Often even the decision of marriage of people was at the hand of missionaries: they selected a bridegroom from the boys' hostel for the bride from the girls' hostel.

When they became parents and got children, they taught their children, that also they should call the missionaries as “Father or Mother, Sahib” and should not forget to respect and fear them.

The teaching of the parents to regard, adore and fear the missionaries passed from generation to generation and even it is still prevailing in every church and house.

The missionaries guided the Indian people religiously and helped them also economically, fulfilling as much as possible the peoples' desires and needs.

Even I had been taught by my society that the missionaries and after the time of the mission the visiting Germans are the ones' in the parents' role to care and help. In the church announcements it was told how much financial help had been allocated and what type of project is being sanctioned. The children and youth-groups listened this and learned that everything is being sanctioned so they also used to write applications to ask for a donation even for a football, thinking that 'why our small desire shall not be fulfilled?'. And it was often sanctioned.

This habit and practice is deeply rooted so that it is difficult to change the relationship of dependency into a relationship of something different.

As the the practice of receiving is rooted also a feeling of humiliation is rooted.

Feeling humiliated became also one type of habit and a part of life so that the shyness to ask for any help or support has been overcome.

The Indian people saw themselves as the receiver whereas they saw the Germans as the giver and donor. But there has been existing not only a material dependency but also an emotional dependency. Even in decision-making process when any crisis or problems within the JELC itself arose then the help and suggestion of the German was needed and often is still needed.

The German counterpart has been recognized as the guider to give suggestions and to solve the problems. The Indians surrendered themselves completely under the Germans' directions and care.

### **Identity:**

This complete surrender and dependency leads inevitably to the point of the *phase of questioning* whether there exists an own identity beside being passive and accepting whatever had been suggested.

In the Indian cultural and religious context on the one hand people from other faiths raised the

question whether the Christians in India do understand themselves as a part of the pluralistic culture or whether they do understand themselves as outsiders adopting all the foreign habits and claiming to have the sole truth.

On the other hand the Indian Christians ask themselves in how far they have to give up all their original cultural identity to be a Christian. The Indian Christians of the Jeypore Church respect and honour the former missionaries so much which is still expressed in the life of the church.

There is a set of rules and regulations which were introduced many decades ago by the missionaries and which are still valid until now.

These rules were followed all the time without questioning them and if there are any doubts then there is the opinion that the missionaries have introduced it, so it cannot be changed.

For instance, it is given priority in singing the European/ German songs in the Indian translation instead of the Indian compositions. The Indian compositions are often even not allowed to be sung in the main church-services, because they seem to be "less holy".

This has also a root-cause in the missionaries' former denial to sing the Indian traditional songs and to deny everything that is connected with the Indian culture and religion.

The question raises whether we as an Indian Christian do not have our own culture, talents and capacities to connect this with our expression of faith.

Why shall the Indian compositions not be worth to be sung in the church? Many Indians, especially those holding positions in the church cannot dare to support this because they would feel that it hurts the respect and honour of the missionaries and of what they had taught and it shows disloyalty.

Beside that there is a hidden fear that a disloyalty may harm the relationship between the two churches, NEK and JELC.

Fear had been a secret issue in the life of the first generations of Christians of the Jeypore Church. If someone had violated the rules of the church then disciplinary action was taken by the missionaries. These violations of the church had been for example visiting the Hindu-feasts and festivals, making music at a Hindu's marriage etc.

As a punishment they had to stay in the place of shame, a place in the back corner of the church, covered by a wooden fence. They had to be the first ones in the church and the last ones to go after finishing the church-service so that everyone could see them and realize the person's fault in order not to repeat it again. These type of punishment had been accepted as a necessary action to keep up the discipline for the congregation as a whole. People did not speak about this punishment with anger but inside they kept this type of action as a feeling of humiliation.

The question of an own identity leads also to the question whether it could not be possible to stay without any humiliation and also self-subjugation.

Christians in the Jeypore Church did not realize to have an own identity in connection with its own talents. The people got used from childhood to adopt and accept whatever came from Germany, identifying themselves as a daughter-church.

It is indeed, that the German encounter, the NEK, has changed since the era of mission, but the JELC takes time to realize that it has already reached the status of being an independent church. We fear to have self-conscience and self-confidence to develop own ideas to go into the future to overcome the own fixed role of being passive and receptive.

### **Cooperation:**

Nowadays the relationship between the two churches, NEK and JELC, is not defined anymore as a relationship of a mother-church and a daughter-church, but as a partnerchurch-relation.

It could be described as the *phase of cooperation*.

Partners are there for each other to share and know each others' feelings, to accompany each other and not letting the other one alone, to encourage and support each other when being tired, to witness together each others' joy, hope and vision experienced through the *One* being in the

midst.

For this the Emmaus-story from Luke 24, 13-35 had been chosen by the Lutheran World Federation as a paradigm to describe the vision of a partnership. This paradigm had also been chosen to describe the relationship between our two churches, NEK and JELC.

The two churches still do not know how the accompaniment could be defined. Especially from the Indian point of view it is difficult to switch from the former model of being a daughter-church to a partner-church.

The relation was long enough build on the issue of money, of receiving and giving. But a human relation should be build on something different than on money that means we should not give our time to financial discussions priority. Instead of giving papers of figures and countings we have to give each other an ear to discover, not to see the other ones in fixed roles but as human beings. This discovery could be a chance to see what other elements are there in our churches' relation, except money. What will grow as a new basis if the old basis of the one-sided dependency will pass away? Many new questions may arise towards a new definition of our relation.

But raising the question and giving an ear to each other might open a way into a reciprocal relationship, into a mutual giving and receiving not in the terms of finances. One often used word is "learning from each other", so we shall rise the questions:

What can we learn from each other? What can we teach to each other? Why do we need each other?

If we from the Indian church want to encounter the other ones as a partner than we have to be ready to see our strengths and potentialities. Then only we would be able to meet in an eye-to-eye-level. It is a difficult phase - there are many challenges and many struggles to be done.

The process has already begun to move forward towards a new horizon. To strengthen our both churches' relationship in the present context we need to listen to each other. Through listening about each others' life we could understand someone's deeper emotions and learn from each other.

To learn how to give an ear to each other and how to listen to each others' life-stories it has been a great privilege for me partaking in the Dan Bar-On dialogue-training "story-telling in conflict" from 2006-2008, as one of the milestones on the way of our changing relationship.

It gave me an opportunity to listen to both churches stories and life-stories in many aspects through interviewing individuals, through bringing two groups from each setting into dialogue and through analysing and reflecting the stories of them with my training-partner Rev. Eberhard von der Heyde. Staying for the past three years in the Northern part of Germany and being engaged in different activities of the church and social life not only I learned a lot about our relationship and its challenges which we are facing but also I could learn to see my church JELC from far away. Living for some time outside of the own country helped me a lot to reflect and get another insight into the strive for the own identity and dignity of my home-church, JELC to see it as an equal partner. Learning about oneself and learning about the other one enables us to understand each other and to accompany each other as partners.

Though this phase of cooperation needs much endeavour, the patience is worth to realize the common vision and to witness together the faith and hope in this changing world.

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*Wir haben es hier mit einer Sache von sehr hoher Komplexität zu tun und wenn wir das abtun wollen oder wenn wir das verleugnen, dann nützt das niemandem. Man kann diese Komplexität nicht reduzieren...*

*(David Stevens – mündlicher Diskussionsbeitrag)*

## Nachbetrachtung zum Seminar in Bratislava

*von Klaus Temme*

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Als es um die ersten Überlegungen und Planungen zu diesem Seminar in Bratislava ging, war den deutschen Mitgliedern der SIPCC-Planungsgruppe eigentlich die Thematik „Heilung von Erinnerung“ beziehungsweise „Heilen durch Erinnerung“ ein vorrangiges Anliegen. Sie orientierten sich dabei an dem Projekt „Healing of Memories“, bei dem verschiedenartige Gruppen in Ländern und Gesellschaften, die Konflikte untereinander haben, nach Versöhnung suchen. Im ersten Austausch hierüber mit Partnern in Bratislava wurde bald deutlich, dass dieses Thema von ihrer Seite aus nicht ein vorrangiges Anliegen sein konnte. Nach ihrer Überzeugung gehe es in der dortigen Situation und den politischen, ökonomischen und kirchenpolitischen Kontexten nicht um Heilen von Erinnerungen zwischen verschiedenen Gruppen. Es wurde in diesen Diskussionen für uns alle deutlich, dass das Thema Identität beziehungsweise „Identität(en) im Verlauf von Umbrüchen“ das tiefergehende Thema sein würde, von dem aus sich dann andere Aspekte möglicherweise auch erschließen lassen würden.

Die Entscheidung, diesem Thema zu folgen, hat sich als richtig erwiesen. Im weiteren Verlaufe zeigte sich aber, wie schwierig es ist, in solchen Zeiten der allgemeinen Umbrüche und der vorsichtigen Veränderung von Identitäten zu Versöhnung und Heilung in und mit den jeweils anderen Gruppen (mit ihren anderen Loyalitäten und Identitäten) „hinüber“ zu kommen.

Dass es in Kommunikation und Beziehungen ganz wichtig ist, *sichere Räume zu schaffen und Vertrauen aufzubauen*, wurde in den theoretischen Beiträgen des Seminars deutlich. Aber im Seminar-geschehen insgesamt, dem Erleben zwischen den Teilnehmenden von Tag zu Tag, konnten Be-

ziehungen mehr und mehr verwirklicht und eingeübt werden.

### *Ertrag der Arbeit an einem Begriff von Identität*

Die Konzeptionierung eines Begriffes von Identität war in der abendländischen Tradition mit der Intention verbunden, in einen Personbegriff die Elemente von Verlässlichkeit, Beständigkeit und Wiedererkennbarkeit einzubinden. Im Seminar wurde nun verschiedentlich darauf hingewiesen, dass bei einem Personbegriff und einer Konzeptionierung von Identität auch die Tatsache einbezogen werden müsste, dass Personen sich in ihrem Kern und in ihrem Selbstverständnis unter dem Einfluss verschiedenartiger Ereignisse und Faktoren ändern, ja, dass fließende Hin- und Herbewegungen zwischen verschiedenen *Seiten innerhalb einer Person* auch im Alltagsgeschehen, besonders in Situationen starker existenzieller Betroffenheit, durchaus normal sind.

Ebenso stark wurde darauf hingewiesen, dass Identität und Gruppenbezug zusammengehören, stärker und massiver, als es wohl bei den alten Konzeptionierungen eines Identitätsbegriffes in der philosophischen abendländischen Tradition berücksichtigt wurde. Wobei auch hier deutlich war, dass Personen in ihren jeweiligen und mehrfachen Gruppenbezügen dann auch entsprechend unterschiedliche Identitätsseiten hervorkehren können.

Es wurde auch verdeutlicht, dass alle Konzeptionsbildungen von Identität vom jeweiligen sozialen, philosophischen Kontext beziehungsweise Zeitgeist beeinflusst und stark geprägt sind.

Schließlich wurde auch dargelegt, dass es so etwas wie „Identitäts-Fallen“ gibt. Dass Personen

sich eine „falsche“ Identität (*false identity*) zulegen, dass dies unter Umständen als Erleichterung empfunden wird - oder jedenfalls als leichter, als sich in die Arbeit an einer *selbstkongruenten Identität* hinein zu begeben -, dies war in analytischer Betrachtung von Identität ja schon lange diskutiert worden. Aber hier wurde noch radikaler hinterfragt, ob in bestimmten Zusammenhängen das Konzept von Identität selbst sich als Falle erweisen könnte.

Bei der theologischen Arbeit an der Fundierung beziehungsweise der Kritik eines Identitätsbegriffes wurde von „Christus-Gemäßheit“ gesprochen. Es ging dabei, darum dass sich Christus selbst auf die Welt, auf die Kontakte und die Bezogenheit zu anderen einlässt und dies für ihn Grundlage, Motivation und Ziel von Identität und Identitätsarbeit wurde. In gleicher Weise wurden auch Mündigkeit und Emanzipation als Identitätsaufgaben genannt, die Christus gemäß sind.

#### *Arbeitsansätze für pastoral-theologisches Arbeiten an Identität*

Bei der Arbeit an dem Erfassen von Identität und der Ausarbeitung eines kritischen Identitätsbegriffes, der zugleich auf Umsetzbarkeit, Einsetzbarkeit und Realitätsnähe für seelsorgliches Handeln zielt, wurden zumeist die bewährten und nötigen Wege beschritten, auf Erkenntnisse der Soziologie und Psychologie zu schauen, hermeneutisch und historisch zu arbeiten, biblische Theologie heranzuziehen und reflektierte Erfahrungen seelsorglicher Praxis auszuwerten. Darüber gingen einige Arbeiten auf gewisse Weise hinaus. M. Esperandio bezog sich auf ihre Selbstversuche im Erleben der weltweit neu heraufziehenden charismatischen Groß-Sekten und auf die Analyse der ‚Internetrealitäten‘ rings um die Existenz junger Erwachsener. E. von der Heyde und D. Chand bezogen sich auf ihre Erfahrungen in einem langfristigen, außer-kirchlich entwickelten und angebotenen Trainingsprogramm. J.A. van den Berg und J.I. Pudule hatten sich gewünscht, eine besondere Form von Workshop-Arbeit in das Programm einzubinden, nämlich die Arbeit an einem Film.<sup>2</sup> In dem Film „Totsi“ wird die Welt jugendlicher Straßengangster einfühlsam nachgezeichnet. Auf diese Weise ist es für pastorale

Arbeit möglich, sich einer Sub-Kultur und der in ihrem Kontext geschehenden Identitätsarbeit der einzelnen Akteure zu nähern, wie das sonst auf keinem anderen Wege für Theologen denkbar wäre. Es stellte sich durch das Anschauen und Erleben des Films ein sehr elementarer Zugang zu Grundsituationen ein, bei denen es im menschlichen Leben einen Anstoß zu Identitätsveränderung geben kann, auch unter *un-möglichen* Bedingungen, sowie zu der Bürde und dem Geflecht von Verwicklungen, wenn diese Identitätsveränderung gegen die Identität der bisherigen Bezugsgruppe umgesetzt werden muss.

#### *Christologie*

Es war eine Besonderheit dieses Seminars, dass Studierende der Fakultät nicht nur auf freundliche und hilfreiche Weise die Logistik des Seminars sicherstellten, sondern dass sie auch am Seminar teilnahmen. Besonders in der Arbeit in kleineren Gruppen gingen von ihnen Impulse aus. Häufig waren sie es, die elementare Fragen stellten, so dass „Grundannahmen“, die bei den Älteren sonst immer nur impliziert werden, explizit dargestellt werden mussten. So ging es verschiedentlich auch darum, die theologischen Denkfiguren, die benutzt wurden, noch einmal anzuschauen. Es war so, dass es immer wieder und im Laufe der Tage immer mehr um *Christologie* ging, um das, was Kondeszendenz ist, um das, was mit der Königs-Herrschaft Christi beschrieben wird, auch um das, was Mission meint, zugespitzt auf den Bereich der seelsorglichen Handlungsmöglichkeiten im Umfeld von Identitätsveränderungen und Umbruchsituationen und die Frage, wie dies alles Teil der *Missio Dei* ist. Hier wurden Fragen aufgeworfen, die weitere pastoral-theologische Arbeit benötigen.

#### *Die Gleichzeitigkeit von Identitätsveränderungen von Individuen und Gruppen*

Über die Notwendigkeit, dass Identitätsveränderungen von Einzelnen und Gruppen zusammen einhergehen müssen, wird man leicht Einigkeit erzielen. In den weltweiten „Healing of Memories“-Projekten ist dies grundlegende Arbeitshypothese und ständige Forderung zugleich. Für mich war es sehr bewegend zu erleben, wie die gemeinsame Veränderungsgeschichte zwischen der nordelbischen Kirche und der lutherischen Kirche von Orissa von Eberhard v.d. Heyde und Dinesh Chand mit ihrer eigenen Ver-

<sup>2</sup> Dieser Arbeit kann hier nur angedeutet werden, weil sie im wesentlichen nicht im Text-Form stattfand.

änderungsgeschichte als handelnden Personen in diesen Prozess für uns dargestellt wurde, wie hier Postulat und Theorie zur Praxis, zu gelebtem Leben wurde. „Great Narratives“ gibt es ja immer noch, und sie werden als Gruppenmythen auch in Konflikten weiter hochgehalten. Diese alte Dynamik zu verlassen, erfordert viel an Kraft und Weitsicht, an Solidarität und an solider Basis, hier dem Glauben.

Zugleich konkretisiert sich für Seelsorgetheorie und Seelsorgepraxis darin exemplarisch ein neues Arbeitsfeld, das in der weltweiten Seelsorgediskussion des letzten Jahrzehnts in den Vordergrund getreten ist, nämlich die Arbeit an Strukturen, Systemen und Kontexten.

Wie es den beiden Personen (und wohl auch den beiden handelnden Kirchen) gelungen ist, das, was in dem alten Konglomerat von Verstrickungen offenbar wie eine Art ‚Krankheitsgewinn‘ vorhanden war, hinter sich zu lassen, finde ich bewundenswert. Über die Funktionalisierung von Haltungen der als schwächer Deklarierten (wer auch immer die Deklaration auch ausspricht) so offen zu reden, zu arbeiten und das hinter sich zu lassen, was darin an Machtspielen verborgen war, gehört zu dem Bewundernswerten dazu.

#### *Emotionen bei den Fragen um Identität*

D. Stevens hat auch auf *ethnische Grenzlandgesellschaften* hingewiesen, die dadurch gekennzeichnet sind, dass mehrere Ethnien auf einem Staatsgebiet leben, die unterschiedliche sprachliche und nationale Identitäten haben. Wenn es sich um solche Konstellationen dreht, dann sind spezifische emotionale Realitäten bei der Haltung der Menschen in der jeweiligen ethnischen Gruppen hoch wahrscheinlich, und dazu gehört ein hoher Anteil von Misstrauen beziehungsweise ein deutliches Fehlen von Vertrauen zueinander.

Während der Arbeit in der Woche wurde deutlich, dass noch einige andere Emotionen zu beobachten sind, wenn es um Identitätsveränderung in Umbruchsituationen geht. Immer wieder entsteht Angst, aber immer wieder auch wagendes, mutiges Vertrauen und die Hoffnung, die sich auf ‚irdische‘ und auf ‚jenseitige‘ Veränderungen bezieht. Es geht um Neugier, um Sehnsucht (nach Altem wie nach Neuem), um Lust, die Dinge anzupacken, und auch um Wut - und last but not least um Scham. Es erschien so, als ob in Umbruchsituationen bei Identitätsveränderungen der Gegensatz zu Vertrauen nicht Misstrauen, Angst,

oder Verweigerung des Kontaktes wäre, sondern Scham und entsprechende Reaktionen des Verhüllens / Verhüllen-Wollens. ▣