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**Thematic focus
of this issue:**

**SOME SELECT TOPICS
IN THE FIELD OF
SOCIAL WORK AND
THEOLOGY THAT
RESONATE AND
ARE DISCUSSED AT
NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL
LEVELS TODAY**

ACTA MISSIOLOGICA**Peer-reviewed academic journal**

Our mission is to create an international platform for experts engaged in the area of Christian mission and missiology, charity, social, humanitarian and development work at the theoretical, research and application levels. The journal publishes a wide spectrum of articles relevant for education with special focus on helping professions in the above-mentioned areas. This area includes all educational, health, social and spiritual topics connected to the missionary context.

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EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues and Readers of *Acta Missiologica*,

Some select topics in the field of social work and theology that resonate and are discussed at national and international levels today – that is the theme of the current issue of the academic journal *Acta Missiologica*. It opens space for thought-provoking and inspiring scholarly discussions and reflections focused on the issues that are highly relevant in contemporary Europe. As we can see, Europe is today destabilized and faces many problems, including unresolved demographic issues and a turn-away from Christian values that have also had significant consequences for social development. Due to this turn-away, its culture is perceived as post-Christian. Given the circumstances, is it going to be able to withstand the pressure from the Islamic world that has, in contrast to Europe, a growing demographic trend and both its culture and politics are strongly influenced by its own universalist religion? This question follows from many others that are new in the European context. Our role as academics and practitioners from various relevant professional disciplines is to reflect on them as adequately as possible. This can be pursued in many forms at both applied and academic levels, as we can clearly see, for instance, in the articles published in the current issue of the journal, on the phenomenon of migration and the related opportunities for inter-religious dialogue. It is the dialogue, as argued for in this article – that is, dialogue buttressed by missiological elements – that can provide such a model of inter-religious coexistence and relationship-making with adherents of other religions that respects differences among religions, offers guidelines for establishing relationships, *inter alia*, through encounters with the other – as a way of being for others – and is deeply rooted in shared humanity. Such a model can become a starting point for inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

Furthermore, the purpose of the other articles in the issue is, to a certain degree, to point out the significance of continued research in some additional areas that can accentuate and strengthen Christianity, both at international and national levels. These include, for example, the following: dialogue as a form of proclamation (i.e., the initial form of proclamation that accepts, respects, and values the life of another human being as desired and created by God), making a case for the thesis that *the dialogical mode of existence is a fundamental form of mission*; the relationship between ecumenism and ethics, in the framework of which is, for the first time ever, applied the method of differentiated consensus to the realm of ethics, thus enabling a qualitatively new approach to the traditionally controversial points of departure for the confessional understandings of Catholic and Protestant moralities; an analysis of the homilies, delivered by Pope Leo the Great after the Council of Chalcedon, which continue to be relevant with respect to the ongoing dialogue between the Catholic Church and the so-called Non-Chalcedonian churches; or the method of Bibliodrama that meets the yearning of contemporary humans for the discovering and experiencing of authentic spirituality, arguing that the message of biblical texts concern them personally and insisting on its ability to mediate this experience.

To be able to adequately address the contemporary issues Europe faces due to migration dynamics, several socio-economic and political aspects need to be strengthened in the Slovak context, both at national and international levels

The topics related to the social sphere that are discussed in this issue of the journal first and foremost point out the need to significantly reinforce pro-family strategies and policies. In this sphere, many key supporting factors are still absent. The topics of the articles in this section, in their distinct ways, confirm that it is necessary to search for academic as well as applied solutions that support the contemporary family.

The issue of the implementation and support of early childhood intervention remains to be debated. The future risks include, especially, the issues of funding and the lack of methodology related to this service in Slovakia. In Slovakia, another challenge in this respect is the issue of establishing the systems of early childhood intervention for all people who need this service, especially those most in need. This challenge includes the issue of ensuring the quality of and equal treatment related to the service. Another solution for supporting the family that needs to be seriously addressed in academia is the question of further developing the already established points of departure for intervention at the macro-level, especially with respect to adequate family policy-making.

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THE CHRISTIAN AND ATTITUDES TO OTHER CULTURES: REASONS FOR THE HOSTILITY TOWARD MUSLIM MIGRANTS (TOLERANCE, OPENNESS, OR ISOLATION?)



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Abstract

Background: This paper explores the identity of Muslim migrants in a Central European context from a religious perspective. Furthermore, it aims to discuss the historical aspects of migration as well as the points of departure for reflection on this theme that are highly relevant in contemporary Europe. In addition, current attitudes to and confrontations with migrants are addressed from the perspective of present events.

Based on the current approaches to and the relationship of coexistence with, especially Muslim, migrants, the paper argues that their identity and religion establishes the foundation of their culture. At the same time, it explains some aggressive reactions, radicalism, the intimidation strategy, fears, the media-shaped image of migrants, and, last but not least, the atmosphere of mistrust toward Muslims.

Conclusion: Regarding the point of departure for mutual coexistence with Muslim migrants especially within the framework of the cultural aspects and traditions related to both Islam and Christianity and considering both practical implications and the opportunities for further research, this paper refers to inter-religious dialogue and the efforts being made which strive toward adequate, up-to-date, and also authentic education in this highly relevant topic from the perspective of religious studies.

Keywords: Migration – Islam – Muslim migrants – hostility toward Islam – Islam-Christianity.

Introduction

The well-known literary work *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Hans Christian Andersen mirrors some aspects that currently often take place at the social, public, and political levels of society, especially in certain European countries. These aspects can also be observed with respect to the issues related to migration. Like characters in this fairy-tale, today there are also numerous people who adopt the position of yea-sayers, vis-à-vis highly prominent public opinion-makers. Through their action, these people often even overlook the potential danger that results from migration, labelling it with the most noble terms just to make sure that nobody could possibly see them as being intolerant or xenophobic. Regarding migration as a threat could, allegedly, violate the human rights that are of supreme value. They claim that there is no room for unsubstantiated concerns and that the „project“ of a „brand new multicultural world“ under construction today is going to work perfectly. There is, so the argument goes, no real danger; there only are intolerant individuals or groups that refuse what they do not know suf-

ficiently and what is alien to them. However, a serious question for reflection comes to mind: Is that really so? Although the promoters as well as supporters of the „brand new multicultural world project“ refuse to admit it, the answer is very simple: Definitely not!

One of the most important resources for writing this paper is personal experience in confrontation with Islamist radicalism. I had a chance to spend some time living in a country with a high number of Muslims. In Berlin, Germany, I was at the Christmas market, right at the location of the 19th December 2016 terrorist attack that received much attention from the media, just a few hours before it took place. These and similar negative events make one more aware of the fact that Western-world countries are increasingly confronted with a high number of the people who arrive to, in their view, rich Western Europe as (predominantly economic) migrants.² It was just several years ago that people living in the Western world only noticed migrants through the media. Moreover, these migrants were coming from Global South countries or from places struck by military conflicts. Back then, the citizens of Western-world countries did not realize that migration would soon concern them very significantly on various levels. This also includes those countries, such as Slovakia, Poland or the Czech Republic, that have so far been mere transit countries for migrants from Africa and the Middle East. Nevertheless, even the latter must dedicate increased attention to this theme, especially due to their commitment to the EU member states located on the small continent of Europe, and with respect to the academic perspective that is proving to be equally necessary today. Even though the occurrence of a Muslim minority in these countries has so far been low, the situation could change over time. Even if a part of the migrants later decided to go back to the countries of their origin, a considerable number of them would certainly not leave Europe since many migrants opted to come to Europe for a limited period of time until the situation in their countries stabilized but came to this continent to stay.

With respect to an altered flow of refugees from the Middle East due to various reasons, European countries must address social, political, healthcare, educational, and religious questions that will require effective and adequate solutions from the perspective of long-term mutual coexistence with an intact population in specific countries. Due to the reasons specified above, this paper especially deals with the religious aspect of the identity of Muslim migrants in the Central European context as this aspect is among the most problematic ones. We will most likely be increasingly confronted with this aspect in the years and decades to come due to the increasingly significant presence of Islam in Europe. Furthermore, it aims to briefly discuss the historical aspects of migration as well as the points of departure for the resettling of a Muslim population that are highly relevant in contemporary Europe, intensely seeking a correct attitude at the threshold of a new situation. In addition, it also addresses the confrontations vis-à-vis often undesired, mostly Muslim migrants from the perspective of current events.

A history of migration: the biblical context and the relationship to strangers in the Bible

Historically, migration is not a new phenomenon as it has accompanied humankind from the earliest recorded time. People have always been on the move, seeking a better life or trying to save their existence from war or persecution. The Bible shows many specific examples of migration. One can *pars pro toto* refer to Abraham as well as the other patriarchs. God's call made Abraham leave his country to go to a different one: „Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.“ (Gen 12:1). Another instance

2 This paper distinguishes between a *refugee* (i.e., a person who left their home country due to losing their home and livelihood, for example, because of war, natural catastrophes, etc.) and a *migrant* (who has come to Western Europe with the view of an economically better life).

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of a migration situation can also be observed with the people of Israel on their forty-year pilgrimage from Egypt, where they had been slaves, to the land promised to them by God. The Holy Family itself, Mary, Joseph, and infant Jesus, was also forced to emigrate to escape from the threat of Herod; Joseph „got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod“ (Matt 2:14-15a). The Holy Scriptures in several places contain God's orders regarding strangers. Some of them are indeed very strong; for instance, the following passage from the Hebrew Bible book of Leviticus:

„When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God“ (Lev 19:33-34).

The stranger who was, in the biblical perspective, a guest to be accepted; he or she was entitled to receive attention and care, and was not to be regarded by the Israelites as an enemy. This is further supported by the Book of Hebrews: „Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it“ (Heb 13:2). The history of humankind is essentially one of migrations; there is no people anywhere on earth that would not be familiar with the phenomenon of migration. With respect to this phenomenon one must be intensely aware that every human being has the right to permanently leave his or her country, for example, also for the reason of retaining his or her religious freedom. Such a decision is done to enable one to exercise one's religion as a free person under the circumstances of liberty. At the same time, however, one must not forget the fact that it is exactly religious differences that often play the most important role in the confrontation of two distinct cultures. Religion *can influence the way* an individual, a community or a whole society accepts strangers. Therefore, religious tolerance is frequently brought up in this respect, and an appeal is made to show sympathy for and help the unfortunate people who were forced by war or the brutality of Islam to leave their country of origin. Similar appeals should as a matter of fact be superfluous since Christianity and the European humanist tradition commit people to such action. When the life and well-being of a fellow human being is concerned, it is the duty of a Christian to make every effort to save his or her life and give any possible help to enable him or her to have a free life in a new environment. It can be asserted that European countries seek to do that, though, admittedly, not all of them to the same degree.³ At the same

3 Vnuk, František. „Kde je tolerancia, kde reciprocity?“ [„Where Is Tolerance, Where Is Reciprocity?“] 2. However, the refugee camps already built around the world often do not provide any solutions with respect to the opportunity to lead a free life, including the issue of religion together with regard for cultural and religious differences in the specific countries where the refugee camps are located. Their main concern is to ensure as many necessities of life as possible and to provide especially the material assistance for life in the camp for the period in which the refugees are forced to stay there for various reasons. (Kráľová, Zuzana, and Dominika Kuklová. „Volunteer work as a specific form of aid to refugees in refugee camps“. 23, 26.)
 „In most cases this involves: material provision, including meals, the distribution of clothing or access to hygienics; the provision of healthcare facilities as well as leisure time facilities, especially for children and the youth; the provision of basic psychosocial support services as well as of protection for the refugees during their residence in the camps with the aim of ensuring a sense of security, while also preventing the emergence of situations of conflict among the refugees. Furthermore, this also includes the provision of assistance by way of professional healthcare and professional psychological, social, and legal counseling and education.“ (Kráľová, Zuzana, and Dominika Kuklová. „Volunteer work as a specific form of aid to refugees in refugee camps“. 26.) However, practical experience shows that even this effort (...) of the staff and volunteers in the refugee camps is not sufficient to ensure the dignified life for the children and adults living therein.

time, however, the religious identity of the migrant who is coming to a particular country is of great importance as it can significantly affect the degree of his or her integration into the majority society.

The identity of migrants and their religion

According to Slovak Archbishop Msgr Stanislav Zvolenský it is clear with respect to the European context that most migrants who have recently come to Europe are Muslims.⁴ Regarding the ethnicity of this population especially in economically developed countries of Western Europe there is a long-term trend of differing experiences with the integration of the Muslim migrants or the integration of the Muslim world into the intact Christian society. In recent years in Europe, there have been a number of brutal terrorist attacks with the perpetrators claiming their allegiance to Islam.⁵ Does this mean that the larger the Muslim community in a certain country, the greater the probability of acts of violence toward the majority population? In this situation it is legitimate to ask questions regarding the nature of the religion to which this community claims allegiance and to explore to what degree it contributes to the society in which it lives. Our aim, however, should not be a strong one-sided view of this sensitive issue. Rather, we should strive to really get to know the principles of Islam, its limits, the historical experience with Islam, and, last but not least, also the opportunities dialogue brings for inter-religious life and relationships among members of different religions, especially Christians and Muslims.

Looking at historical experience, however, it is clear that indigenous Christian communities that had as a result of aggression come to live under Muslim rule started to gradually wane or were forced to resettle under unfavourable circumstances. In the territory of Islam, the non-Muslim population was killed and vilified in *jihad*. Christian churches were turned to mosques, many monasteries were burned down, and Christians and Jews were forced to convert to Islam.⁶ In the conquered territory, *sharia* was gradually implemented, together with the *dhimma* contract, i.e., the rules for non-Muslims who were perceived as second-class citizens. The non-Muslims living in the subjugated lands were humiliated by the order of the Quran (9:29) to pay a life tax. The tax duty for non-Muslims came with officially ritualized humiliation as they had to come in person by foot; while making the payment they had to stand up while the tax collectors were sitting down. The tax collector subsequently grabbed them by the back of their neck, shook them and shouted: „Pay the tax!“ After having paid, moreover, they were patted on the back of their neck.⁷ While a Muslim never testified against another Muslim, he was allowed to lie to a non-Muslim. All the facts cited above,

(Kráľová, Zuzana, and Dominika Kuklová. „Volunteer work as a specific form of aid to refugees in refugee camps“. 26.)

4 The text modified for the purposes of this paper is based on the material by the Press Office of the Episcopal Conference of Slovakia: Zvolenský, Stanislav. *Kresťanstvo sa s islamom nachádza v permanentnom konflikte. [Christianity Is in Permanent Conflict with Islam.]* <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20170221028> (accessed October 17, 2017).

5 In a Central European context, it is probable that the tragic wheel of terrorist attacks has been spun by the arrogance of *Charlie Hebdo*, a cynical French magazine, whose caricatures made clear that it has respect for nothing. It is sad that European Union leaders showed support for this magazine through a public campaign in the name of freedom of expression. However, freedom of expression must not be exercised through the denigration of individuals or groups and absolutely not through the profanation of a religion whose adherents are willing to kill or even lead wars without any scruples, like in the case of Islam.

6 Ye'or, Bat. *Il declino della cristianità sotto l'islām. Dal jihād alla dhimmitudine.* 47–77f.

7 Sarka, Róbert. „Katólicka edukácia v dialógu s islamskými migrantmi“. [„Catholic Education in Dialogue with Muslim Migrants“.] 80.

in addition to the high birth rate of the Muslim population, provoke legitimate concerns in developed Europe.⁸ When compared to Western countries, even the demographic issues do not count among long-term priorities. Now, it is, therefore, not possible to predict the impact the consumerist life-style and the turn-away from Christian faith in Europe will have on this both new and uncertain situation, regarding especially but not exclusively the religious and social relations on the „Old Continent“. Instead of searching for effective precautionary measures to address the demographic issues in question or to strengthen Christian traditions in Europe, European countries are, paradoxically, concerned with questions such as the increase of the statutory retirement age, the support for abortion or the establishment of funds for financing abortions even in developing countries. All these actions even reinforce the Europeans' fear of future coexistence with Islamic culture.

Coexistence with the Islamic reality

The coexistence of Christians with Islam is in most cases very problematic. One of the reasons is the fact that *both religions are universalist*. It means that *they are keen on globally spreading their faith* as they essentially see theirs as the only true religion. This fact would not necessarily be a relevant source of concern if there were equal, inherently strong cultures in the world, facing one another. However, one must admit that the present situation is different. The developed Western civilization, with its Christian roots and culture, has shown the increasingly small influence of Christianity in recent decades.⁹ In sociology, this receding influence has become known as the so-called *post-Christian* world. In contrast, Islamic culture goes through a diametrically different stage; there is no „*post-Islamic* world,“ quite the contrary. Islam shows a developing tendency. Despite this situation it is necessary to search for a peaceful mode of coexistence with Islam, while not forgetting the fact that Christianity often gets in open and permanent conflict with Islam, in spite of all attempts for dialogue.¹⁰ The tense situation is further exacerbated by the Western military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya, perceived by Muslims as attempts to subjugate and conquer them. In this respect it must be pointed out that history is full of events that were decisive for the future, stability, and power of Christian civilization on the European continent.¹¹

Islam as a source of migrant culture

It is not easy to reflect on Islam from a scholarly perspective, not least due to several reasons. *Islam* as a religion is *not a homogeneous reality*. Muslims are divided religiously as well as politically. The practice of Islam in Arab countries differs from that in former Soviet countries. While a visitor to Egypt is not going to have a negative impression from the Muslims living in that country, the case would be very much different in northern Sudan. This situation in many respects depends on the particular interpretation of the Quran. Islam does not recognize anything like the Catholic Magisterium that would provide a binding doctrinal approach to

8 Wheatcroft, Andrew. „Nevěřící. Střety křesťanstva s islámem v letech 638 – 2002“. *Infidels: [“A History of the Conflict between Christendom and Islam”]* 8 –19.

9 Ibid., 8 –19.

10 The text modified for the purposes of this paper is based on the material by the Press Office of the Episcopal Conference of Slovakia: Zvolenský, Stanislav. *Křesťanstvo sa s islamom nachádza v permanentnom konflikte. [Christianity Is in Permanent Conflict with Islam.]* <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cisloclanku=20170221028> (accessed October 17, 2017).

11 Rahner, Karl. „Křesťanstvo a nekřesťanské náboženství“. *Křesťan v dnešnom svete. Vybrané úvahy z diela. [“Christians and the Non-Christian Religions. The Christian in the Contemporary World: Select essays”]* 60–87.

the Quran. Since the downfall of the Ottoman Empire there has been no *Khalifa*, or a spiritual authority, who would be able to set out on the journey of Islamic formation toward a critical reading of the Quran.

When getting to know Islam, one does well to avoid two extremes. The first one is *Islamophilia*, i.e., uncritical affection for Islam.¹² To acquire a balanced comparison, one can turn to numerous witnesses and uneasy stories of the people who live or lived in Muslim majority countries. However, it is equally important not to fall prey to the other extreme, namely, *Islamophobia* (the excessive fear of Islam), currently represented by some radical groups.

Fears of migrants – Muslims

The emotions related to religion are very strong as they deeply impinge on one's intimacy; playing around with these emotions can lead to serious conflicts. The fear of migrants is related to the fact that there may be terrorists hiding among Muslim refugees. But why are there so many terrorists among Muslims?

Based on his long-term research in this field, important Slovak scholar of religion and priest Róbert Sarka lists the following possible reasons that drive some Muslim refugees to terrorism. These include especially:

- aggressive reaction to the (godless) Western milieu;
- the intimidation strategy as part of Islamization;
- insults against Muslim sensitivities.¹³

The aggressive reaction to the immoral Western milieu

What should be the response of a Muslim migrant who has only seen the eyes of a young veiled woman in their home culture when they now see almost completely unveiled women in the West? What should be the response of a migrant who has been instructed, for example, in Belgium that same-sex relationships are currently perceived in Europe as something natural and socially acceptable? How should a pious Muslim perceive the West where families fall apart, euthanasia is promoted, food is wasted, drugs are legalized, and more energy is invested in saving animals than people? Why did terrorists and mercenaries, fighting for the Islamic State, grow among second and third generation Muslim migrants? Would not a young Muslim, raised in a pious Muslim family, perceive the environment that forces immorality upon him or her contrary to his or her conviction, to be a reign of evil and Satan?

The bottom line is that *Islam essentially does not recognize the separation of religion, culture, and politics*. From an Islamic perspective, public life is a representation of religion. Based on this argument, a Muslim perceives the whole secular West as Christian, although secularism has deep implications for public life.

12 Here, a typical representative is Hans Küng and his work *Der Islam*. (2004). (Italian translation *Islam. Passato. Presente. Futuro*, 2014.

13 Sarka, Róbert. „Katólicka edukácia v dialógu s islamskými migrantmi“. [*“Catholic Education in Dialogue with Muslim Migrants”*] 72–74.

The intimidation strategy as part of Islamization

Recently, Msgr Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, openly said that Muslims are keen on conquering Europe.¹⁴ Also, bin Laden even made no effort to conceal this goal some time ago:

The Holy Book (i.e., the Quran) is very clear on this. The nonsense of peace on earth was invented by the Jews and Americans. It is but a children's fairy-tale. They use it to simply dull the senses of the Muslims, so the latter can be defeated easily. And the slaughtering goes on. When we defend ourselves, they call us terrorists. The Prophet said: „The Hour (i.e., the end of time) will not begin until you (i.e., the Muslims) fight the Jews, until a Jew will hide behind a rock or a tree, and the rock or tree will say: ‘O Muslim, O slave of Allah, here is a Jew behind me; come and kill him!’ Whoever claims there will be permanent peace between us and the Jews is ungodly because he denies what the Book says.”¹⁵

One of the recent indications of Islamization was voiced in the third most prominent holy site of Islam, at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque, in September 2015, when Sheikh Muhammad Ayed delivered a sermon on the conquering of Europe through migration and mixed marriages with European women:

“... we will trample them (i.e., the Europeans) underfoot, Allah willing... (we will) breed children with them, because we shall conquer their countries. We shall soon collect them (i.e., the migrants) in the name of the coming Caliphate.”¹⁶

In this respect it is of course necessary to remind that such radicalization is not present within the whole of Islam and with all Muslims. On the other hand, however, Muslim countries must also be made aware that countries such as Slovakia experienced more than a hundred years of Ottoman occupation in the past. This negative experience with Islam was subsequently reflected in Slovak folk-lore, thus significantly shaping the strong relationship of the Christian Slovak society to the Islamic world. Inhabitants of the countries with experience like that of Slovakia do not forget the years of oppression that Islam exerted on the subjugated nations. Today, the West might be ethically paralysed but it is not weak, and, if necessary, it will rise against radical Muslim groups and their subjugation efforts.

The atmosphere of mistrust toward all Muslims

When encountering migrants in general, and Muslims in particular, it is crucial to avoid their blank refusal on the grounds of their different religion. Any expressions of hostility against, disrespect or contempt for Muslims can contribute to their radicalization. The aim of Christian conduct is to pursue healthy inter-religious relationships, no matter how difficult that might be, and to show that we can live side-by-side in mutual respect and hospitality.

The media image, terrorism, and favouritism: Why is there radicalization against Islam today?

14 Williams, Thomas D. *Archbishop of Vienna: ‘Many Muslims’ Want European Conquest*. Available from: <https://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/09/13/archbishop-vienna-many-muslims-want-european-conquest/> (accessed October 17, 2017).

15 Kepel, Giles. *Válka v srdci islámu. [The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West]*.118.

16 Lhoťan, Lukáš. *Eurabia. Mýtus nebo realita budoucnosti? [Eurabia: A Myth, or the Reality of Tomorrow?]* 29.

In his research, the already cited scholar of religion Róbert Sarka suggests the following reasons for the potential radicalization of Islam :¹⁷

- *one-sided image of Islam in the media;*
- *terrorist attacks;*¹⁸
- *favouritism toward Muslims at the expense of the local indigenous population;*
- *inadaptable life of Muslim communities.*

Presently, some mass and online media are bent on creating an exclusively one-sided, negative image of Islam. Such a media image is by and large dominated by emotions and the fear of the unknown. Thus, the West may fall prey to the prejudice that Islam is an intolerant, militant, and backward religion. The truth is, however, that Islam is a missionary religion that is very explicit about its intention to conquer the whole world, even if it should be through war.¹⁹ The fact is that Muslims are responsible for most terrorist attacks today. On the other hand, however, most victims are Muslim, too. Despite this, not all Muslims can be labelled as terrorists.²⁰ A certain degree of favouritism toward Muslim migrants is already evident in some European countries at the expense of indigenous citizens. Some Muslim migrants have received benefits, although it was not clear whether they would ever do anything for their host country in the future. They were given apartments and jobs, while many other foreign workers must have been dismissed from employment. All these facts increase the hostility of the indigenous population, and Europeans in general, against migrants, as the former regard these measures as injustice against themselves. Furthermore, not to be neglected is the fact of the inadaptable life of numerous Muslim communities that until this day exercise some practices that are foreign to the European population, such as child marriage, female circumcision, etc. In larger cities in the West there have emerged Muslim ghettos where Muslims practice their way of life; these pose a threat to many people. Although they live on somebody else's territory, they behave arrogantly, as if inhabiting a conquered land. Due to the facts cited above, mistrust also emerges toward poor strangers who really need help and the expressions of solidarity from European countries.

Inter-religious dialogue as a point of departure

Despite the circumstances discussed above, it is of utmost importance *not to turn one's back on any Muslim willing to be involved in dialogue*. Christians as well as Muslims were created by the same God in God's image, as dialogical beings.²¹ Therefore, the first

17 Sarka, Róbert. *Katolícka edukácia v dialógu s islamskými migrantmi*. [*Catholic Education in Dialogue with Muslim Migrants*.] 75 –76.

18 Introvigne, Massimo. *Hamás. Islamský terorizmus ve Svaté zemi. [Hamás: Islamic Terrorism in the Holy Land.]* 19 – 20.

19 Roux, Jean Paul. *Střet náboženství. Dlouhá válka mezi islámem a křesťanstvím (7. až 21. století). [A Clash of Religions: The Age-long War between Islam and Christianity (7th to 21st C.)]* 17 – 33.

20 Radical Muslims represent approximately 10% of the overall adherents to Islam. (Sarka, Róbert. *Katolícka edukácia v dialógu s islamskými migrantmi*. [*Catholic Education in Dialogue with Muslim Migrants*.] 76.)

21 With respect to the practice of the dialogue between Christians and Muslims it should also be noted that one of the dimensions of mission is that it „takes place dialogically, in conversation among concrete people in concrete situations.“ (Bargár, Pavol. *Concepts of theology of mission relevant today as discussed in significant missiological works*. 14). This dialogue also needs to include the elements of prophetic dialogue, as introduced by missiologists Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder. With respect to terrorism and migrants, this especially concerns reconciliation and the efforts toward justice and peace. (Ibid., 14).

point of departure for coexistence with Muslims undoubtedly is inter-religious dialogue that leads to respect for other religions. This means to take seriously and honour the human being with all his or her aspects. Furthermore, inter-religious dialogue helps better understand one's own religious identity, enables a critical evaluation of the dark sides of one's religious past, and it gives one an opportunity to learn the hidden limits of one's religion vis-à-vis another faith.²² In the inter-religious dialogue with Islam it is especially essential to respect the fact that Muslim religious thinking is not identical to the Christian one.

Christians in Muslim countries

In the contemporary discussion on migration, relatively little attention is dedicated to the destiny of Christians in the Middle East. These Christian communities are forced to face physical extinction. For this reason, more than two thirds of all Christians living in Iraq left the country by 2003. A similar trend can be observed in Syria. Christians flee from war, are persecuted by the terror of the Islamic State, raped and enslaved. Many of them died because they had refused to renounce their faith and convert to Islam. There is a real danger that the Christian communities in the Middle East will completely cease to exist in a few years. While many of them escaped to the Kurdish territories in Iraq and Syria or to relatively safe Lebanon, they can also be found in refugee camps in Turkey as well as Europe. However, even there they are not completely safe as there are more and more reports on Muslims bullying Christians. Paradoxically, the West has shown no interest in and made no effort to help these Christians in recent decades. Contrary to times long past, Europe presently feels no responsibility for the destiny of Christians around the world. It can be asserted that the development of public life in Central Europe today has adopted an unfavourable, even negative attitude toward the preservation and growth of Christianity.²³ In the context of the current migration crisis, it is, therefore, invaluable that Slovakia, together with Poland and the Czech Republic, specifically decided to help and accept Christians from the Middle East. These Christians ought to be provided help preferentially, not only because of civilizational and value proximity, but especially because they belong to the most endangered groups that have no advocate today. In this respect there emerges the question of how the actions of the West will stand up to the judgement of history and how Westerners will explain their passivity and hesitance to openly provide help for the sake of the persecuted Christians.²⁴

22 The interreligious dialogue among Christians and Muslims can be further supported and strengthened by the so-called *kenosis* model that requires imitating Jesus' act of embodiment in relation to people of another faith based on shared humanity. Such *kenosis* demands complete openness toward other people as fellow-humans and believing Creation. At the same time, however, it provides an opportunity to distinguish oneself from the other based on religion, culture, etc. Therefore, it offers a model of inter-religious coexistence and relationship-making that respects differences among religions, provides instructions for making relationships, and is based on shared humanity. For more details on this model of making relationships with adherents of a different religion see, for instance: Frederiks, Martha Th. "Kenosis as a model for Interreligious dialogue". *Missiology* 33, no. 2, (April 1, 2005): 211-222. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/009182960503300207>
A notable case for the interreligious dialogue between Christians and Muslims is also made by David R. Smock in his *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*. (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002).

23 Warraq, Ibn. *Proč nejsem muslim*. [Why I Am Not A Muslim.] 321– 329.

24 Vnuk, František. "Kde je tolerancia, kde reciproita?" ["Where Is Tolerance, Where Is Reciprocity?" 2.

Support of education and good will

Inter-religious dialogue represents a framework for supporting the good will of those Muslims who seek to establish relationships of friendship with Christians and integrate into the society from which they as Muslims expect something.²⁵ It is equally necessary to reject xenophobia consistently and, if relevant, to support cooperation on joint projects, such as the struggle against terrorism, the pursuit of peace and values in society, humanitarian activities, the protection of religious symbols of both religions, etc.²⁶

The whole European community is facing the difficult task of portraying Islam truthfully, without any misrepresentations or concealments. The Islam that is tolerant can indeed change to an intolerant, even violent one. Islam is a missionary religion that is very explicit about its intention to win and subjugate the whole world for Islam. One cannot, therefore, request that Islam renounce this aim,²⁷ just like it cannot be demanded with respect to Christian mission. Christianity and Islam are two "competing religions" in Europe that, however, can coexist, convincing the world about the existence of God. Mutual coexistence of Christianity and Islam does not necessarily have to be one of war but rather one of tolerant competition.²⁸ The fundamental method of this part of Catholic education is critical dialogue. This form of dialogue also presupposes a critique of one's own religion and its representatives as well as an honest attitude to the errors, mistakes, and improper actions that might occur, no matter how hard the truth would be, because the past should teach us avoid mistakes in the future. This criticism is also to be related to the whole church community that has long been perceived as a "world for itself, a static entity that one either accepts the way it is or else is doomed."²⁹ (...) neither is it to be regarded as a mere 'intermezzo' between God and the world."³⁰ (...) keeping its distance from the world, enclosed behind the church walls."³¹ On the contrary, the whole church community needs to keep in mind that it is to be, first and foremost, a "church-with-others," that is, the church of an ecumenical paradigm.³²

25 Christians can help Muslim migrants integrate to society, *inter alia*, by teaching them that the latter would not betray their faith if they accepted certain traditional European principles.

26 As a Christian, one does not have to concur with everything Islam proclaims to stand up for when somebody profanes what Muslims regard as sacred. In the framework of both inter-religious dialogue and the *kenosis* model it is necessary to search for as many converging elements as possible that might bring the two religions closer together. As an example, one can mention the identical opinion of the Christians and Muslims who simultaneously voiced their protest against an outrageous controversial TV commercial promoting a certain energy drink brand that was recently broadcast in the mass media, including the Internet. This ad that shows Jesus committing a sin dishonored the person of Jesus Christ, thus making an attack on the foundations of Islam, too. The element connecting the two religions is, in this case, the person of Jesus Christ who is honored by both faith traditions, albeit in different ways and meanings.

27 The mission of Islam can be pursued through a violent *jihad* as well as through proclamation in the effort to convince others. From a Christian perspective, there can be no objections with respect to the latter as the two religions share this conviction regarding mission. Nevertheless, any promotion of religion by force is unacceptable.

28 Sarka, Róbert. "Katolícka edukácia v dialógu s islamskými migrantmi". [*Catholic Education in Dialogue with Muslim Migrants*].] 73, 77.

29 Bargár, Pavol. "Concepts of theology of mission relevant today as discussed in significant missiological works". 11

30 *Ibid.*, 11

31 *Ibid.*, 15.

32 *Ibid.*, 15.

It is to be a missionary way of “the coexistence with people in their everyday reality toward God’s kingdom; as equal brothers and sisters devoid of any superior, patronizing attitude of certain individuals vis-à-vis the other members.”³³

Conclusion

Certain concerns of the European population with respect to Islam are related to the identity crisis vis-à-vis the Christian traditions and culture of the whole European community. The massive turning away of many people in Europe from the Christian faith means that Europe has lost the supporting pillars of its Christian civilization. The presence of Muslim migrants can be a major impulse for a new evangelization, only if, however, there will be enough credible witnesses to the Christian faith. Dialogue with Islam is, therefore, inevitable and right, as the Second Vatican Council also has it. Reflecting on the current cultural situation in Europe should not be a reason for Europeans to give up their task of helping the poor and victims of conflicts, especially in the countries where these problems originate. On the contrary, such action testifies about the commitment to maintain the Christian traditions of the European continent as well as the Christian commitment toward one’s neighbours that regards the whole Christian community. On the other hand, the arrival of more than a thousand Muslim migrants may substantially change European civilization and the European community might not be able to withstand this encounter over several decades, especially due to demographic and cultural factors.

Islam is a synthesis of religion, politics, and culture. Unless it goes through a process of separation of politics and culture from religion, the Islam in Europe will be unpredictable in its relation to the secular Western society. The research conducted for this paper has also shown that the point of departure for mutual coexistence with Muslim migrants is conditioned by an open, respectful, and correct discussion dedicated not only to Islam but also to inter-religious dialogue. At the same time, this dialogue ought to be further strengthened by other models of establishing contacts and relationships with members of a different religious faith, such as the expansion, *diakonia*, presence, and *kenosis* models. On the other hand, it is also for the benefit of this discussion as well as of both religions, that the European community be able to truly describe the reality, and not to be affected by the interests exclusively focused on supporting the “project” of a “brand new multicultural world” under construction today. These interests can, for example, have the graceful, yet ultimately false expression of “multiculturalism”³⁴ or “democracy” as illustrated in *The Emperor’s New Clothes* in the introduction of this paper. Christian, especially Catholic, education also needs to be taken very seriously. Education must never, neither today nor in the future, conceal that part of the history of Islam that provides evidence of violent Islamization in many parts of the world, including our countries. Educational efforts also need to be applied to liturgy as it is necessary, with respect to the facts cited above as well as common sense, to keep in memory as much as possible those liturgical remembrances (Our Lady of the Rosary, the Feast of the Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary) related to the cessation of the Muslim expansion in the past. Furthermore, one should not forget the significance of the saints, such as Blessed Marco D’Aviano, a hero of the 1683 siege of Vienna.

33 Ibid., 11.

34 On the other hand, serious and relevant reflections on multiculturalism are pursued in, for example, this intriguing study: Modood, Tariq. “Multiculturalism”. *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2007.

At the very end of this paper it can be said that migration is a challenge that the European community must not be afraid of, if it retains and deepens its own religious and cultural identity. In relation to Islam, it will then be able to offer such an understanding of God that can be closer to the human heart.

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**INTERFAITH DIALOGUE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF SYRIAN MIGRANTS
IN THE ALEXANDRIA REFUGEE CAMP IN GREECE**Ladislav Bučko, ✉^{1,2} Mária Hardy, ✉¹ Milica Páleníková, ✉^{1,3} Jaroslava Poloňová, ✉^{1,4} Martin Fero, ✉^{1,4} Mária Jackulíková ✉^{1,5}¹ St. John Paul II. Institute of Missiology and Tropical Health at St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Science, (Bratislava, SK)² St. Maximilian Kolbe Institut House of Hope, (Phnom Penh, KH)³ Public health programme SEU, Gabčíkovo and Hegyeshalom, (Hegyeshalom, HU)⁴ SEU MSc Programme Mukuuru Nairobi, (Nairobi, KE)⁵ UNHCR Camp Velika Kladusa and SEU Migrant Health programme Bosnia and Herzegovina, (Bosnia and Herzegovina, BA)**Submitted: 3 March 2018****Accepted of publication: 17 September 2018****First published: 15 October 2018 © Acta Missiologica | No. 2 | Vol. 12 | 2018 |****Abstract****Background:** This article seeks to contribute to the discussion on the dialogue between Christianity and Islam. It introduces the results of the research on inter-religious dialogue from the perspective of Syrian Muslim migrants in the Alexandria Refugee Camp in Greece. Its primary aim was to identify the key religious values and the degree of tolerance of Muslim migrants vis-à-vis Christians and their perception of inter-religious dialogue.**Methods:** With respect to the highly specific nature of the environment as well as the type of respondents (i.e., Syrian Muslim migrants), a quantitative research strategy was chosen. The research method was one of a survey with 102 participants. For the research, the relevant results were collected from 96 participants, due to their religious adherence to Islam. The collected data was analysed through a statistical method using SPSS software.**Results:** The research results are presented in four main areas: religious experience, dialogue of life, life expectations of Muslim migrants in Europe, and intercultural dialogue/dialogue of cooperation.**Conclusion:** The research results can especially be applied to the field of group and community work with the people on the run who are predominantly Muslim.**Keywords:** Interreligious dialogue – Religious experience – Dialogue of cooperation – Christians – Muslims.✉ **Contact on author: prof. PhDr. Ing. Ladislav Bučko, PhD. – e-mail: misia@vssvalzbety.sk**✉ **Contact on author: Asoc. Prof. Mária Hardy, PhD. – e-mail: hardy@vssvalzbety.sk**✉ **Contact on author: RNDr. Mgr. Milica Páleníková – e-mail: milica.palenikova@vssvalzbety.sk**✉ **Contact on author: Mgr. PhDr. Jaroslava Poloňová, PhD. – e-mail: j.polonova@gmail.com**✉ **Contact on author: Mgr. Martin Fero, PhD. – e-mail: feromartin@gmail.com**✉ **Contact on author: Mgr. Mária Jackulíková – e-mail: maria.jackulikova@gmail.com****Introduction**

Nowadays, when Europe is facing strong migratory movement, intercultural and interfaith dialogue is being challenged especially ethnically and religiously in relatively homogenous countries, such as Slovakia. European Christian values and 'Islamisation' of Europe are increasingly discussed. As Daniel A. Madigan said, there are many sceptics of interfaith communication on both Christian and Muslim sides, who only emphasise the numerous cultural, political, theological and even practical differences, which are subsequently presented as insurmountable barriers to dialogue or used as an excuse for mutual contact. However, the dialogue between Christians and Muslims is the most important thing right now, when divisions between these two religions are growing.⁴¹ The fact that Muslims and Christians make up approximately 50% of the world's population making the interfaith dialogue between them necessary because there can't be peace in the world if there isn't peace between these two religions.

A team of authors from the Department of Missiology at the St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Science in Bratislava decided to contribute to the discussion on interfaith dialogue through researching people fleeing Syria who were temporarily staying in one of the many migrant camps in Greece. The incentive for research was the so-called European migration crisis in 2015, which was caused by a large number of economic migrants and refugees who had come to Europe via the so-called Balkan route. St. Elizabeth University, led by its founder, Professor Vladimír Krčmery, responded to this situation by sending medical teams to the Hungarian-Austrian border (Hegyeshalom – Nickelsdorf), where thousands of migrants had headed mainly to Germany.⁴² The medical team members provided basic medical assistance to migrants. Later on, the university set-up field hospitals in detention camps in Slovenia and finally in Greece.⁴³ As a site for their research, researchers at the Department of Missiology selected the population in a migrant camp in Alexandria, Greece, where the St. Elisabeth University medical team worked and helped them to carry out this research in terms of organisation and logistics.

Theoretical background

Theoretical perspective is based on history. Saint Francis of Assisi, the founder of the mendicant Order of Friars Minor, rejected the idea of crusades against Muslims. He realised that the crusades couldn't be a means of converting Muslims. A method of words and examples should be followed. Regarding the work of mendicant orders during this period, they found that they must first get to know the people to whom they had been sent, their culture, their language, their religion and they must come to them as friends in order to be successful in their mission.

St. Francis arrived in Egypt by ship, which had been taking crusaders' reinforcements for the fifth crusade. Some sources say that he came to Syria.⁴⁴ He tried to persuade the Crusaders to accept Sultan Malik Al-Kamil's offer and sign a ceasefire to avoid the defeat that he predicted. However, his efforts were in vain and the Crusaders were defeated in 1221. After this event, St. Francis received permission from the Cardinal to visit the Sultan. But he didn't succeed in making peace between Christians and Muslims or in the idea of 'Crusades without weapons'. However, the Sultan gave a document to the Franciscans, allowing them to remain

41 Madigan, Daniel A. *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Difficult Times*. 57-88.42 Krčmery, Vladimír. "Infekčné choroby u utečencov a migrantov počas migrantskej krízy v Európe 2015". [*Infectious diseases in refugees and migrants during European migrant crisis 2015*]. 122-124.

43 Bydžovský, Jan. et al. "Experience with migrants on Balkan Route from the Field Hospital on the Slovenian-Croatian Border". 32.

44 Pospišil, Ctirad, Václav. *Františkánské prameny 1. [The written sources of the Franciscans I.]* 406, 900-908.

in Palestinian regions, to move freely and to help local Christians. The Franciscans in Palestine began to develop dialogue with Muslims and negotiate in the hope of mutual agreement. They have been the guardians of holy places there to this day, performing pastoral activities and managing apostolic works.

In addition to Palestine, the Franciscans now also live among Muslims in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mindanao in the Philippines, Sudan and other Sub-Saharan countries where Islam has gradually expanded. In spite of various situations, they are still trying to engage in dialogue, practice solidarity with the poor, proclaim the Gospel, and work together with Muslims in public welfare activities.⁴⁵

Interfaith dialogue can be described as communication between people of different faiths, in which there is mutual understanding and respect, allowing them to live and work together despite their religious differences.⁴⁶ Therefore, the term describes cooperation and positive interaction between people of different religions at both personal and institutional level. Dialogue isn't something that only takes place at the academic level – it's part of everyday life, whereby different cultural and religious groups work together and establish relationships.

Dialogue between members of the religions helps both sides of the dialogue to mature and manifest themselves in the freedom of human dignity. The process of dialogue can be compared to dancing – dynamic human touch expressing interest in the other, the need to open-up, to give something and to accept something, especially trust.⁴⁷

The issue of the interfaith dialogue is based on the Second Vatican Council's conclusions, as well as on the post-conciliar reflection from the Catholic Church. The Council stated that there were things that were true and holy in the non-Christian religions. These religions reflect the rays of Truth, which illuminates all people. Therefore, it encourages Christians to respect the spiritual, moral, cultural and social values of these religions and allow their development in dialogue and cooperation with members of other religions. In doing so, they shouldn't forget that Christ is 'the way, the truth and the life', in whom God was reconciled with people. The Council also spoke with respect to Muslims, and emphasised Abraham, Jesus and his mother, Mary, as contact biblical figures (NA 2-3).

According to *Redemptoris missio*⁴⁸, interfaith dialogue shouldn't arise either from tactics or from one's own interest. Other religions are a challenge for Christians to deepen their own identity. The dialogue requires mutual evidence for progress on the path of spiritual search and religious experience, which serves to overcome prejudices and misunderstandings. The dialogue is directed to inner purification and conversion (RM 28, 56).⁴⁹

Nearly thirty years after the Council, the issue of dialogue with non-Christian religions was addressed by a joint document of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, *Dialogue and Proclamation*⁵⁰. According to this document, the interfaith dialogue forms can be divided into four categories:

- The dialogue of life, where people from different religions strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations.
- The dialogue of action, whereby Christians and members of other religions collaborate for the integral development and liberation of individuals and society.
- The dialogue of theological exchange, where theologians and specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and appreciate each other's spiritual values.
- The dialogue of religious experience, where people, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches and experience, for instance with regard to prayer, meditation, contemplation, and ways of searching for God or the Absolute. It also includes the dialogue of culture because there are many bonds of culture and religion (DP 42; cf. RM 57).

The Oxford Islamic Studies recognises the following modes of interfaith dialogue: *parliamentary dialogue* (held at large international assemblies for religious representatives, such as the World's Parliament of Religions, the World Congress of Faiths, or the World Conference on Religion and Peace); *institutional dialogue* (the effort to initiate communication between institutional representatives of religions, such as the dialogue carried out by the Vatican and the World Congress of Churches); *theological dialogue* (structured meetings primarily focused on theological and philosophical issues), *dialogue in community* and *the dialogue of life* (focusing on practical issues of common interest, such as issues arising from inter-religious marriage, the relationship between religion and the state, etc.), and *spiritual dialogue* (concerning the development and deepening of spiritual life through meetings of members of various faiths).⁵¹

Cardinal Tomko, the former Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, said that the dialogue isn't to be a confrontation of religious systems and traditions, but rather to a meeting for believers of different religions. Representatives of the dialogue are people, groups and communities that open and communicate with one another, not religious systems as such, which can only be studied and compared⁵²; (RM 10).

According to Dojčár, interfaith dialogue is a requirement of the time or a sign of the time. It primarily concerns religious and cultural plurality and, at the same time, the unity of the human race, the cooperation of people in the global world, the mission of Christ and the calling of all to the unity of the People of God.⁵³ Therefore, the dialogue helps to find and promote the human and spiritual values of the dialogue's participants.

Subsequently, we are going to interpret the conducted research.

Research location and methods

The aim of the research was to identify the key religious values and the level of tolerance of the Muslim migrants towards the Christians and their perceptions of interreligious dialog.

45 Brocanelli, Vincenzo. *Františkáni bez hraníc. Misie menších bratov vo svete [Franciscans without borders. Mission of lesser known brothers around the world.]* Bratislava: Serafin, 2009.

46 Forde, Gerard. *Journey Together: A Resource for Christian Muslim Dialogue*. 7.

47 Čelko, J., and A., Gúth. *Využitie tanca v prevencii a v liečbe. [Use of dance in the prevention and therapy.]* 211-224.

48 John Paul II. *Redemptoris missio* (December 7, 1990), (hereafter cited in text as RM), (The Slovak translation of: *Redemptoris missio*. Trnava: Spolok svätého Vojtecha, 2001)

49 Kuschel, Karl-Josef. *Christology and Interfaith Dialogue*. 383.

50 *Dialogue and Proclamation* (May 19, 1991), (hereafter cited in text as DP).

51 *Oxford Islamic Studies Online. Muslim-Christian Dialogue*.

<http://oxfordislamicstudies.com/print/opr/t236/e0567> (accessed February 25, 2018).

52 Tomko, Jozef. *Misie do tretieho tisícročia. [Mission into the Third Millennium.]* 294-296.

53 Dojčár, Martin. *Medzináboženský dialóg II. [Interfaith Dialogue II.]* 53.

We conducted the research in the summer of 2016, at a migrant camp in Alexandria, northern Greece. The camp is located on the former military barracks site on the outskirts of the city. The camp's population at the time of the survey was 730. The camp's population lived in tents in the barracks alleyways. They were war refugees from Syria and predominantly Muslim, but Christians were also found amongst them. Many of them had survived a year or more in camps in Turkey.

A Slovak medical team from the St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work worked in the camp in 2016 and 2017, and provided basic health care to the camp's population at a temporary field hospital. Serious cases were transported by ambulance to Veria or Thessaloniki. Throughout their work, the medical team gained the authority and trust of the camp's population owing to their service, helping researchers to get in contact with the camp's population that formed a research sample to collect the data through questionnaires.

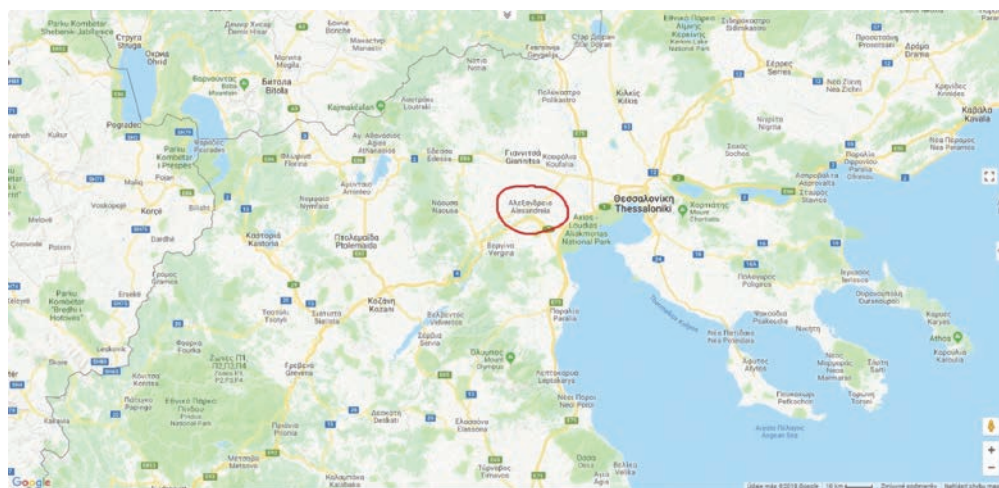


Fig. 1 Map of geographical area of the research

Due to the great specificity of the environment as well as the type of respondents, as they were camp residents, a quantitative research strategy was chosen. The research technique was the questionnaire methodology conducted in the mentioned refugee camp. In the mentioned refugee camp, the respondents were randomly selected. The camp's residents could only take part in the research if they were 14 years old and were willing to respond to questions regarding their life situation, religious values and related attitudes towards the religious affiliation. As a tool, we used our own questionnaire that dealt with the following topics:

- dialogue of religious experience;
- dialogue of life;
- dialogue of cooperation;
- life expectation in Europe;
- socioeconomic status;

Respondents filled-in the questionnaire in Arabic in the presence of a researcher and an interpreter in case they didn't understand a question or how to fill-in the questionnaire. The research sample was made up of 102 participants, whereby 74 were men and 28 were women aged between 14 and 63, with a mean age of 34 years. Regarding religious affiliation, the questionnaire was completed by 96 Muslims (69 men and 27 women), 1 Christian, 2 Yazidis, and 3 atheists. For the purpose of the research in question, 96 of the above-mentioned participants were relevant due to their religious affiliation to the Islamic religion.

During data collection, communication with respondents and filling-in the questionnaire, we didn't encounter rejection from the respondents'. On the contrary, many respondents thanked the researcher for the opportunity to fill-in the questionnaire and to think more deeply about their faith and situation.

The data collected was analyzed using a statistical method via SPSS software.

Research results

For the study in question, we present the results and interpretations of the questionnaire survey regarding the mentioned topics in the form of graphs with relevant comments.

Respondent's education

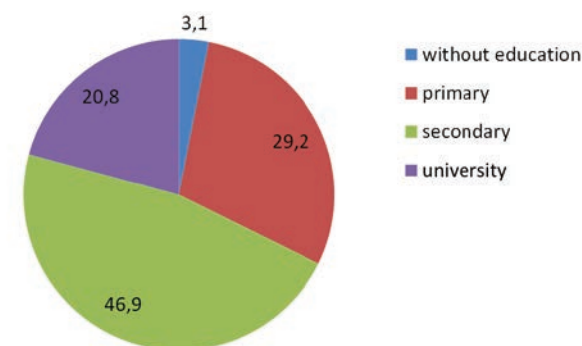


Fig. 2 Respondents' education (Muslims, n = 96)

The most frequent respondents' education level was secondary education (46.9%), followed by university education (20.8%) and primary education (29.2%). Only 3.1% of respondents' checked the 'Uneducated' box. It was a surprising finding for us as we didn't expect such a high proportion of university-educated respondents.

Respondents' field of education

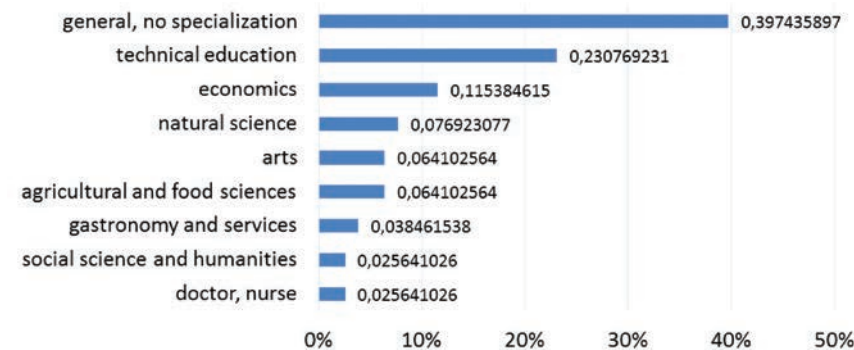


Fig. 3 Respondents' field of education (Muslims, n = 96)

As illustrated by the diagram, most respondents received a general education (39.7%), followed by technical (23.1%), economic (11.5%), scientific (7.7%), etc.

Dialogue of religious experience

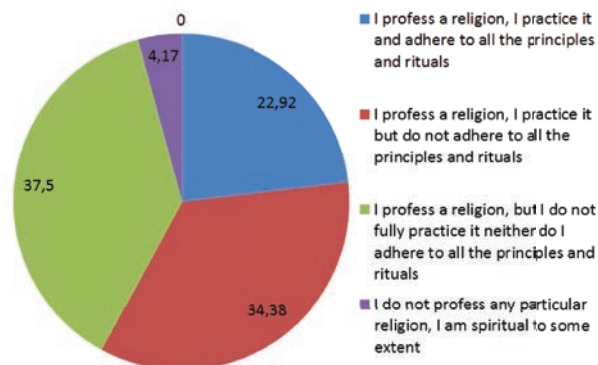


Fig. 4 Response to the question: Which option best describes you?

In the context of the religious experience dialogue, we found out whether respondents profess religion, live by it and abide by all principles and rituals. The majority of respondents stated that they professed religion, didn't live by it in practice very much and didn't abide by all principles and rituals (37.5%), there were fewer who professed religion, lived by it in practice, but didn't abide by all principles and rituals (34.4%), followed by those who professed religion, lived by it in practice and abided by all principles and rituals (22.9%). Only 4.2% of the respondents didn't profess a specific religion but have some spirituality and only one respondent said that he didn't profess religion and wasn't a spiritual man. This result was also a bit of a surprise for us, as we expected the largest number of respondents with the answer that they professed religion, lived by it in practice and abided by all principles and rituals. On the other hand, it's important to realise that Syria belonged to relatively developed countries with some degree of Western influence, which may be manifested by increased secularisation.

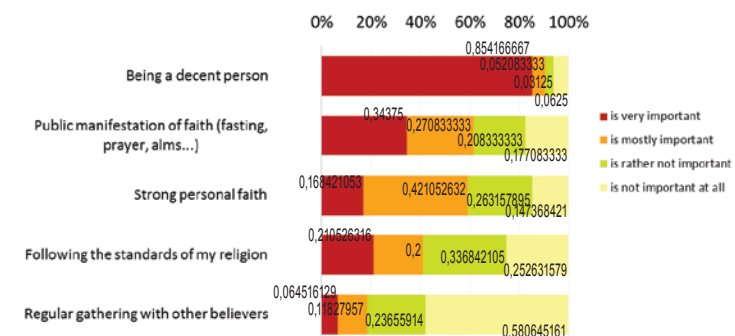


Fig. 5 Response to the question: To what extent is it important for you to experience and proclaim your faith?

By using this question, we wanted to find out to what extent it is important for the respondents to experience and proclaim their faith. Being a decent person is important for 85% and somewhat important for 5%, which is 90% of respondents. Public proclamation of faith is important for 34% of respondents and somewhat important for 27%, which is 61% of respondents, but up to 18% of respondents said it wasn't important and 21% somewhat unimportant (a combined 39%), which surprised us. Abiding by religious standards is considered unimportant by 25% and somewhat unimportant by 34% of respondents, forming a combined 59%. However, the most surprising fact is that up to 58% of respondents stated that regular meetings with other believers were not important at all and, together with the 24% of respondents who said it was somewhat unimportant, makes a total of 82% of respondents, which is an unexpected number. These answers surprised us.



Fig. 6 Personal relationship with God

In this matter, we were interested in a personal relationship between the respondent and God. Most respondents identified themselves with having a relationship with God as someone watching them and feared God's punishment (78.9%), whereas the smallest number of respondents (25.3%) accepted the vision of God as a loving father to whom they turned. This result tends to be the Old Testament concept of God as a relationship that Jesus of Nazareth introduced us to.

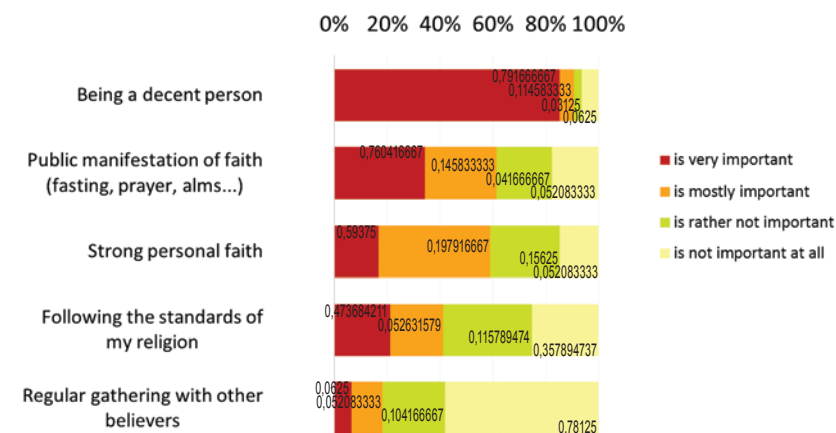


Fig. 7 Response to the question: What does Prophet Muhammad mean to you?

Using this question, we found out what Prophet Muhammad meant to respondents. Interestingly, up to 6% of respondents said that they had no relationship with the Prophet, and another 5% said they supported it, making a total of it 11%. Because the respondents proclaimed Islam, this was a surprising result.

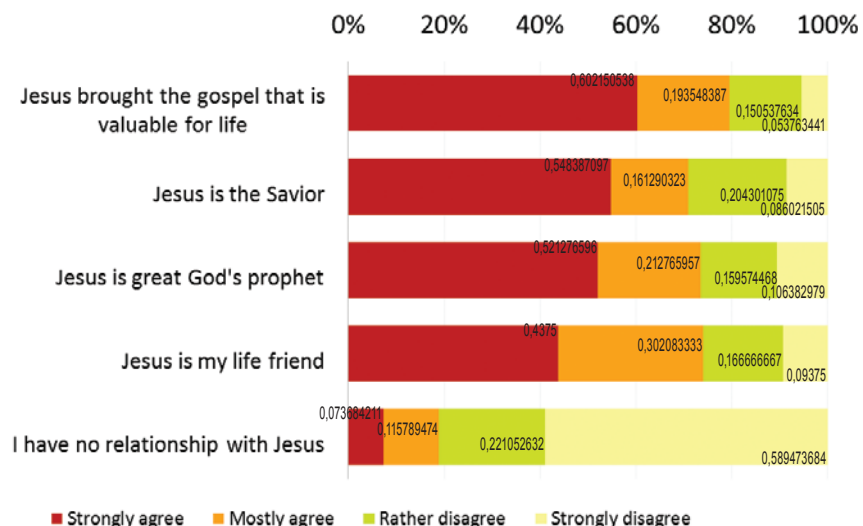


Fig. 8 Response to the question: What does Jesus mean to you?

We were interested in what Jesus meant to the respondents. 19% of the respondents questioned their relationship with Jesus, which is only 8% more than questioned their relationship with Muhammad (cf. Fig. 7). However, regarding this issue it's very interesting that up to 60% of respondents fully agreed and 19% somewhat agreed that Jesus had brought a Gospel that is valuable for life, making up a total of 79%, which is the majority of respondents. Most respondents (55%) fully agree and 16% somewhat agree that Jesus is the Saviour (71% together). Therefore, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its redemptive value could be the points for engaging in the dialogue with our research respondents.

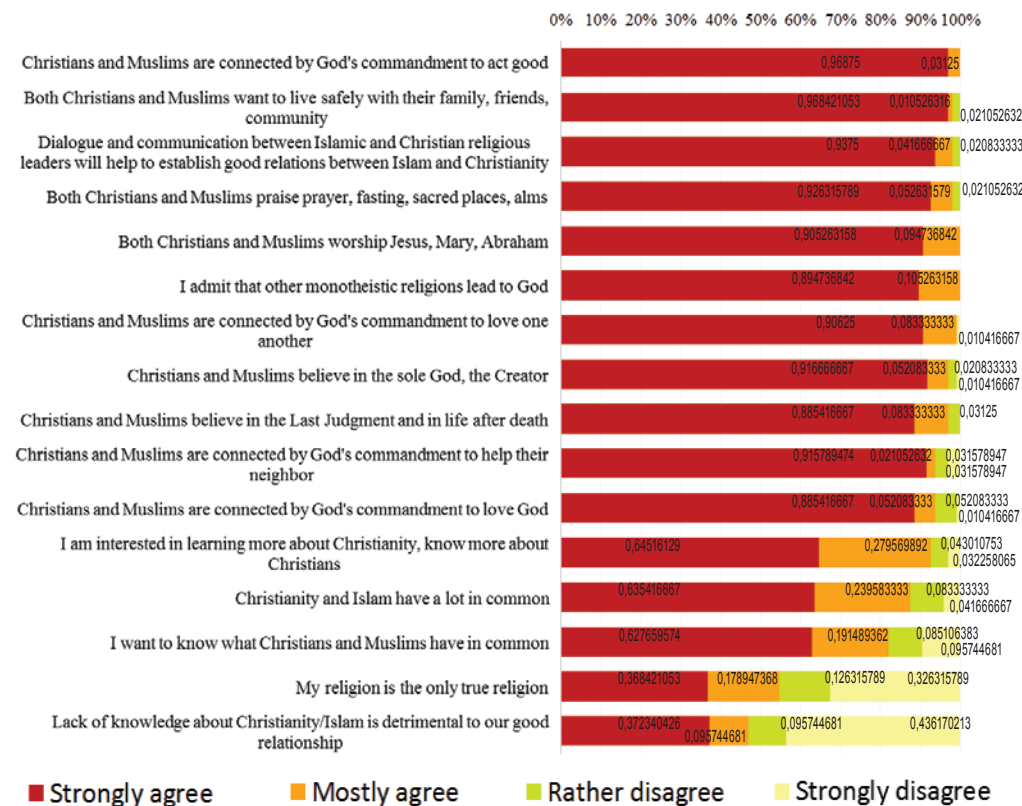


Fig. 9 Degree of agreement or disagreement with these statements

As showed in Diagram 9, the highest number of respondents (96.9%) fully agreed with the claim that Christians and Muslims are connected by God's command to do good, and also with the claim that Christians and Muslims want to live safely with their family, friends and community (96.8%). In terms of interfaith dialogue, the relevant result is that up to 93.8% of the respondents fully agreed with the claim that dialogue and communication between Christian and Muslim religious leaders will facilitate good relationships between members of both religions. It's a surprise that up to 53.2% of respondents fully or somewhat disagree with the claim that lack of knowledge regarding Christianity or Islam is detrimental to good relationships between members of both religions.

The dialogue of life



Fig. 10 Response to the question: Did Christians live with you in your country of origin?

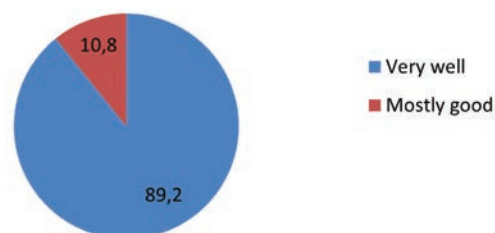


Fig. 10.1 Response to the question: How did you coexist with Christians?

Using these questions, we wanted to find out how the respondents coexisted with Christians. The responses from Diagram 10.1 show that most respondents lived with Christians in their country of origin (87.3%) and they saw them relatively often (approximately once or twice a week), and 89.2% of respondents coexisted with them very well. It seems that this result is too optimistic, but it may not be unrealistic, as Christians have been living in the territory of what is today's Syria for almost twenty centuries and Muslims for thirteen centuries. Life expectation in Europe

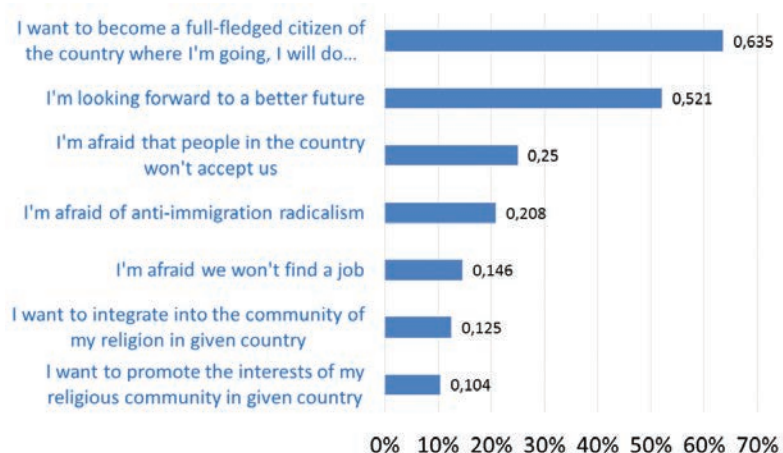


Fig. 11 Refugees' feelings and fears of arrival to the country of destination

The majority of respondents, but not very significant (63.5%), wanted to become full citizens of their destination country and wanted to do everything to achieve it. Only slightly over half of the respondents (52.1%) were looking forward to a better future, 25% were concerned about not being accepted by their destination country, and 20.8% even worried about anti-immigration radicalism. These results don't appear very optimistic. However, only 12.5% wanted to integrate into their religious community in their respective country, and only 10.4% wanted to promote the interests of their religious community in their destination country. This relatively small percentage was probably caused by the questionnaire not specifying what interests these would be.

Intercultural dialogue and the action dialogue

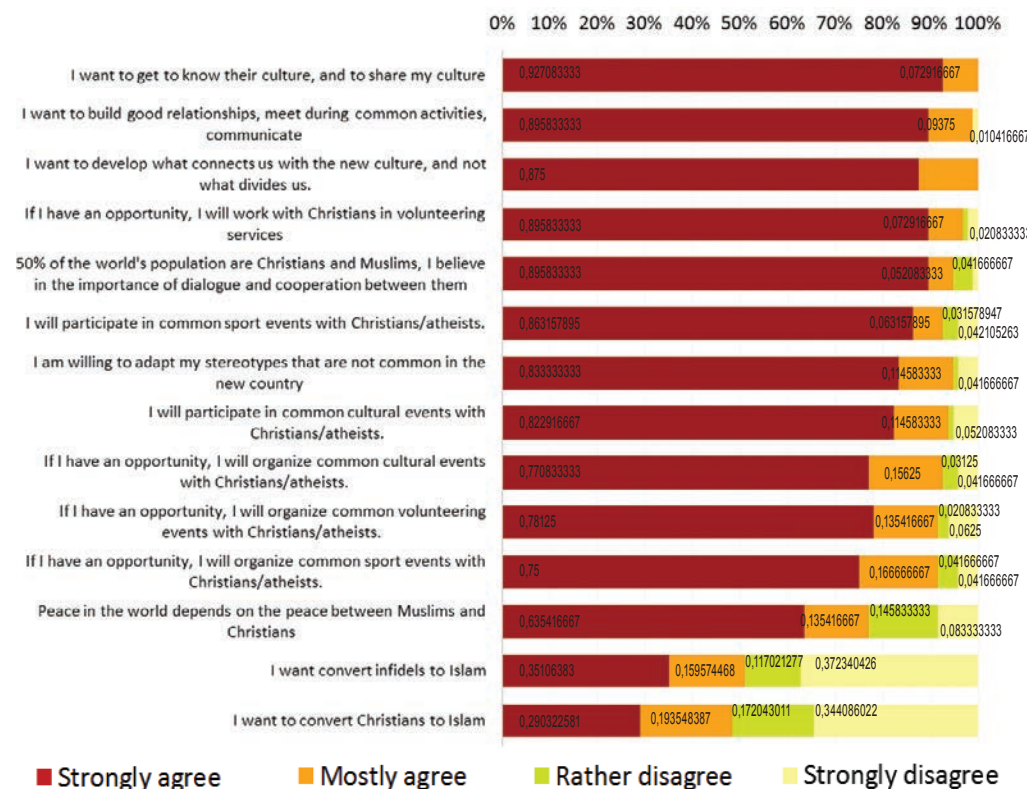


Fig. 12 Respondents' openness in relation to intercultural dialogue and action dialogue

This diagram focuses on openness to intercultural dialogue and the action dialogue as expressed by the respondents in the questionnaire. The openness to intercultural dialogue is nearly 100% when adding 'fully agree' and 'somewhat agree' and the openness to action dialogue ranges from 92% to 99%, which are very high figures. This could be caused by expectations of hope and by the optimism of migrants who were on their way to European

countries, in those areas of life that they could affect themselves. The last box is surrounded by questions, as up to 29% of respondents fully agreed and 19% somewhat agreed (48% in total) that they wanted to convert Christians to Islam.

Discussion

The number of participants who took part in the research was 102, with 96 of them considered relevant with regard to the purpose of the research and religious affiliation to the Islamic religion. Generally, they had secondary education (46.9%). We were surprised by the relatively high proportion of university graduates (20.8%), which shows Syria as one of the more developed Near East countries. The results of our research cover the area of the dialogue of religious experience, the dialogue of life, the area of the life expectations of Muslim migrants in Europe, as well as the area of intercultural dialogue and action dialogue. The discussion is based on these areas.

The area of the *dialogue of religious experience* is among the major areas of research. This includes religious beliefs and practices, as well as observing its principles and rituals. One surprising result was the fact that most respondents (37.5%) said they professed religion but didn't live by it in practice or abided by all the principles and rituals associated with it. Also, the public proclamation of faith is represented by only 61% of respondents, and the meeting with other believers is irrelevant for 82% of the believing respondents. On the one hand, this may be due to the fact that Syria belonged to countries with more liberal influence, and society is more secularised there. On the other hand, as the workers from social projects for migrants in Germany also stated, migrants from some Near East and Middle East countries are not accustomed to religious freedom, and seeing multi-religious cooperation can make it easier for them to get used to this unfamiliar reality. These examples are the subject of post-secular theorists who argued that, unlike dominant Western discourse values, such as freedom, democracy and equality, it may sometimes be better to support these values within a framework that isn't exclusively secular.⁵⁴

Other aspects of the religious experience dialogue point to respondents' personal relationship of our research with God, with the Prophet Muhammad, and to the relationship with Jesus Christ. 78.9% of respondents had the idea of God watching and punishing people from above. Surprisingly, it was found that up to 11% of respondents had no relationship with Muhammad despite their affiliation with Islam. Answers to the question of their relationship with Jesus Christ brought even more interesting results. Most respondents (79%) agreed with the claim that Jesus Christ had brought the Gospel, valuable for life, and 71% of respondents agreed with the fact that Jesus Christ is the Saviour. Based on these outputs, we assume that the Gospel and its redemptive value could be a point of contact for interfaith dialogue with the respondents.

There is a question of who can be involved in religious traditions dialogue? As Cornille pointed out, this seemingly simple question firstly highlights the size of a sample of various possible participants in the dialogue and various worldviews and cultures that participants in interfaith dialogue may bring to this process. Secondly, this issue emphasises that some forms of interfaith dialogue may involve individuals and groups who share a commitment to organised religion, even if their particular religion or theology is different. They may also

seek to increase participation in the growing number of people with atheistic or agnostic worldviews or with more diverse or mixed forms of religious identity, affiliation and practice.⁵⁵ All these options should be counted on in the dialogue between religions.

Relevant findings also include the degree of agreement or disagreement with selected statements in the questionnaire. For example, 93% of respondents fully agreed with the claim that dialogue and communication between Christian and Muslim religious leaders would facilitate good relationships between members of both religions. Lack of knowledge regarding Christianity or Islam isn't considered harmful in relationships between members of both religions by 53.2% of respondents. According to Orton, it's important to draw attention to whether the intended participants in interfaith dialogue are primarily individuals or whether the intention is using interfaith dialogue as a means of facilitating interaction between groups and organisations. Inter-group or inter-organisational interactions may take many forms; for example, they may be between organised religious institutions (such as official denominational structures within specific religious traditions, often at national or supranational level) and/or between local assemblies. Participants in, partners or organisers of interfaith dialogue may or may not be part of local, national, state or non-governmental organisations within the dialogue.⁵⁶

The area of the *dialogue of life* is represented by the question regarding the coexistence of Muslim respondents with Christians. The results point to an optimistic reality – 87.3% of respondents often met Christians (once or twice a week) and 89.2% of respondents said they coexisted well with them. In our view, the results may not be significantly different from the actual state before the war that broke out in Syria in 2011 as both of these religious communities have historically been living in Syria since the 13th century. According to Verter, it's necessary to overcome the views that experts and policymakers consider to be 'neutral' in tackling these and similar complex issues as they connect people and involve them in the cooperation processes. All those who participate in the process of interfaith dialogue (including those who try to make it easier) bring their own opinions and values with them. They also bring their own different agendas and differences in opinion about power and status in society, as well as the memories and experiences of historical relationships with others. Therefore, it's important to recognise power relations and ethical issues that are internal aspects of practice in this area; this includes recognising the impact on the identity of policymakers and their views while trying to engage in interfaith dialogue. Building relationships with other members of different religious groups can also change the way others see the participants involved in their own religious community. Engaging in dialogue processes can sometimes lead to questions that cast doubt on the place or the status of participants within their own community, especially within specific conservative or fundamentalist religious organisations. This means that it's also important to be aware of the possible great personal load and pressure on those who are trying to build bridges to others through dialogue. According to the study's author, the question of effectiveness in the interfaith dialogue requires participants to be willing and able to reflect, critically and constructively engage in questions on the purposes, processes and dilemmas in the dialogue.⁵⁷

54 Lyck-Bowen, Majbritt and Mark Owen. "A multi-religious response to the migrant crisis in Europe: A preliminary examination of potential benefits of multi-religious cooperation on the integration of migrants". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. (Published Online February 15, 2018) DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jama.2009.1132> (accessed February 25, 2018).

55 Cornille, Catherine. "Multiple Religious Belonging". 324–340.

56 Orton, Andrew. "Interfaith dialogue: seven key questions for theory, policy and practice". 349–365.

57 Bradford Verter. "Spiritual Capital: Theorizing Religion with Bourdieu against Bourdieu". 150–174.

Regarding the *life expectation of migrants' in Europe*, the degree of their integration plays an important part. But this is only possible if the specific areas of integration interests of migrants are precisely defined. Our results point to 63.5% of the respondents who want to become full citizens of one of the European Union's destination countries. Only 12.5% of respondents wanted to integrate into their religious community in the destination country, and 10.4% of respondents wanted to promote the interests of their community. Religious communities or groups, according to Verter, particularly include individuals and movements that may have different ways of common worldview, identity (individual and collective), traditions, cultures and systems of values or ethics. All of these factors interact and may affect interfaith dialogue and integration to the extent that it will be difficult to accept all manifestations of a particular religion. Some beliefs and practices may be more fundamental than others in view of the main traditions within each religion – many of which have been understood differently in different times, places, and situations. For example, it's often impossible to share a 'definitely Christian' opinion on a particular social issue or even on a church practice, since (empirically and historically) some people and churches can claim different and even contradictory attitudes, with each of them being an 'authentic Christian'. Of course, this doesn't necessarily mean that all such claims will be accepted. It's strongly recommended discussing what should be the normative and correct interpretation and application of a particular faith or religion in the present context.⁵⁸

Our last research area was the area of *intercultural dialogue* and *the action dialogue*, whereby we were interested in the openness of respondents to these types of dialogues. The high numbers are surprising, caused by the optimism of migrants and their life expectations in the destination country, which they can affect. All respondents (100%) were open to the intercultural dialogue and 92 to 99% of respondents to the action dialogue, but up to 48% of respondents agreed that they wanted to convert Christians to Islam. Our results are partly confirmed by the British study by Lyck-Bowen and Owen⁵⁹, which includes results of the perceived benefits of multi-religious integration cooperation. From its data analysis, it's possible to distinguish three general areas (see Table 1) into which the potential benefits of integration can be divided: (a) the benefits of integration services and its process; (b) benefits for religious organisations and more involved association and communities; (c) the benefits of cohesion and security within the wider community:

58 Ibid.,150–174.

59 Lyck-Bowen, Majbritt and Mark Owen. "A multi-religious response to the migrant crisis in Europe: A preliminary examination of potential benefits of multi-religious cooperation on the integration of migrants". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. (Published Online February 15, 2018) DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jama.2009.1132> (accessed February 25, 2018).

Table 1: Final outcomes of perceived benefits of multi-religious cooperation in the integration process according to the study by Lyck-Bowen and Owen (2018)

(a) Benefits of integration process and services	(b) Benefits of organised and religious association/ community	(c) Wider community and social benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overcoming some of the legitimate integration 'obstacles' ● Improving the quality of available services ● Helping host communities meet, get to know and understand new immigrants from different religions and their needs ● Creating a balance between negative experiences and positive stories with members of another religion by pointing to the ability of religious groups to cooperate ● Religious leaders can encourage their communities and congregations to accept migrants cordially ● Helping migrants understand different aspects of host communities and pointing out how cooperation between religions can help build a more accepting and cohesive society ● Positive examples of greater importance of helping migrants of a particular religion than others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integration cooperation → cooperation in other areas of work ● Integration cooperation → long-term relationship ● Cooperation with one other religious organisation → promoting interest in working with other religions/ inspiring others to cooperate = building horizontal relationships/networks ● Leading to internal dialogue about the importance of people working together regardless of their religiosity ● Building relationships between people from different religions by working together on common good ● Bottom-up effect = local cooperation → creating multi-religious councils at local, regional and national level → building vertical relationships/networks ● Greater visibility ● Challenge for the dominant secular discourse prevailing in humanitarian work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changing views on the role of religion in society ● Mitigation of racism and radicalisation ● Expected cooperation will promote interfaith dialogue ● Work on the common good brings the opportunity to express humanity and love to all ● Work on the common good opens up space for interfaith dialogue and exchange of knowledge about religious beliefs, cultural specifics, and the lives of others

Source: Lyck-Bowen, Majbritt and Mark Owen. "A multi-religious response to the migrant crisis in Europe: A preliminary examination of potential benefits of multi-religious cooperation on the integration of migrants". Available from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jama.2009.1132>

These three areas are systematically investigated. Despite the frequent data categorisation and complexity of the examined issues, this categorisation was designed to simplify, not definitely classify. All classifications are open to change and revision; some factors cover more than one category. For example, the benefits for organisations are often reflected in improved integration services that have impact on wider community cohesion. The final part briefly reflects the contribution of multi-religious approaches to integration in the current debate on postsecularism in relation to humanitarian aid and its interventions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to contribute to a professional discussion on interfaith dialogue between two world monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam. The research aim was to identify key religious values and tolerance of Syrian Muslim migrants living in the refugee camp in Greece towards Christians and their perceptions of interfaith dialogue. In the article, we highlighted the key outcomes of interfaith dialogue research from migrants' viewpoint and which are grouped into four categories: religious experience, the dialogue of life, life expectations of Muslim migrants in Europe, and intercultural dialogue and action dialogue.

The research was limited by the number of respondents willing to participate in the research. For organisational reasons, it wasn't possible to do a pre-research, which could allow some distortion in the answers of some of the respondents, which could have occurred due to a lack of understanding in some questions within the questionnaire. However, the research team did everything possible to ensure that the validity and reliability of research is as high as possible, for example by training educated translators in Arabic from the ranks of migrants for research purposes, and research team members overseeing the collection and checking of data in the field.

The submitted outputs from the research, as discussed in detail in the respective part of the paper, can in practice be applied especially to the field of group and community work with refugees who are predominantly Muslim. It is a matter of course that it needs to be done with respect to the cultural and religious context from which they stem as well as their new reality of life which often means forced and desperate existence in a refugee camp. Their own view of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue in the process or expectation of integration can become a starting point for the effective methods of work in the field of the helping professions that currently also focus on work with refugees as part of their job description.

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SPECTRUM OF HUMANIARIAN ASSISTANCE INTERVENTIONS IN ACUTE PHYSIOTHERAPY AND NURSING REFUGEE HEALTH UNIT IN NORTHERN BOSNIA

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Abstract

Background: New refugee wave, however much less populated has been observed after major exodus of Syrian and Iraqi victims of war, reaching about 40 percent in 2017 of the original reports in 2016 – 2018. The aim of this short communication was to describe spectrum of required humanitarian assistance for migrants and refugees from middle East transitting Bosnia to Schengen space of Slovenia and Italy.

Methods: We have actively searched for „wild type“, refugee or migrant camps in north Bosnia and analyzed types and spectrum of interventions provided by our field team, which consisted of one doctor, two nurses and one social worker. We have served around 50 – 100 patients a day.

Results: Commonest nursing and physiotherapy diagnosis was known PTSD (posttraumatic stress syndrome) due to war events, loss of relatives, insecurity of travel results and asylum process procedures, and represented 80 percent and more of all presentations, in addition to other somatic disorder.

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Conclusion: Complex and quality health and social care is highly demanded in this populations, mainly due to the complex conditions and PTSD. From the aspect of implications for the practice in this field mutual cooperation and organised activities between the NGOs, Academia, health care students, social workers and local governance bodies in a divided state should be mandatory. However, achievement of positive results is not always easy.

Keywords: Refugees – Migrants – Nursing interventions – Humanitarian assistance – PTSD.

Introduction

New refugee wave, however much less populated, has been observed after major exodus of Syrian and Iraqi victims of war, reaching about 40% in 2017 of the original reports in 2016 –2018. Also the Mediterranean route from Turkey to Greece by boats has been ameliorated and only about 40 000 migrants (armed conflict refugees) has been detected on the inner border of Greece. Many of those migrants were hosted in EU (Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria) rushed via balkan borders, paradoxically out of EU, to Serbia and Bosnia, rushing again to EU and Schengen space in Croatia and Slovenia, Austria and Italy. From about 30 thousand of such double-migrants, about 10 thousand is still stuck in Bosnia in acute and very provisorial shelters organized as „wild“ refugee camps, moving with huge mobility within Bosnia and Herzegovina to escape from local authorities.

The aim of this short communication was to describe spectrum of required humanitarian assistance for migrants and armed conflict refugees from middle East transitting Bosnia to Schengen space of Slovenia and Italy.

Methods

Upon recommendation of Bosnian journalists and police officers we actively searched for „wild type“ refugee or migrant population based camps in north Bosnia near Croato-Slovenian border, which is also outer schengen border. Several camps were created and subsequently abandoned or destroyed by migrant themselves before escaping to woods and local pathways. One such mobile temporary camp has been discovered by our nursing and physiotherapy team transitting Bosnia on their return trip home from their Greek Base near Saloniki. Two nurses created the team joined later with one tropical doctor, one pharmacist and one social worker/auxiliary nurse), serving daily for 50 – 100 patients.

Spectrum of interventions was recorded and analyzed. Medications, transport of the staff food, supplies and logistics was organized via St Elisabeth Program for Refugees and Migrants, from the base in Veroia and Alexandria, about 60 km from borders.

Subsequently, the paper provides the results as well as a brief, yet relevant, discussion regarding a spectrum of interventions that is related to the spectrum of illnesses found among war refugees during a refugee crisis.

Selected research results and brief discussion

Spectrum of interventions related to spectrum of diseases in war victims of refugee crisis is in Table 1. Among 120 cases with respiratory symptomatology as nursing diagnosis of respiratory tract lower infection (LRTI). For example, from lower RTI complains and symptoms, majority were confirmed as pneumonia (in 25 cases, 8 severe), probably due to unprotected camping in wild nature. Scabies was commonest as far as skin and soft tissue infections are concerned, caused most probably by long travel, since some families walked over 500 km within a month. Commonest nursing and physiotherapy diagnosis

was PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) due to war events, loss of relatives, insecurity of travel results and asylum process procedures, and represented 80 percent and more of all presentations, in addition to other somatic disorder.⁷¹

Table 1 Spectrum of Major Health/Social Pathogens at presentation in Physiotherapy/Wound Unit at Temporary Refugee Camp in Northern Bosna

Total cases	522
Refugees	510
Auxil. Local Staff	12
Foreign humanit. Staff	3
Outpatient Dept. Presented	151
Respiratory Tract – upper	31 (20%)
Respiratory Tract – lower (pneumonia)	11 (6.7%)
Caries Dentis uncomplicated	12 (9%)
Caries Dentis complicated (osteomyelitis, gingivitis, abscess)	8 (8.5%)
Wound (SSTI/Scabies + SSTI)	71 (47%)
Scabies only	24 (18%)
Psychotrauma (PTSD)	150

Conclusion

In conclusion, analyzing the spectrum of nursing interventions in war related migrants and refugees before war conflicts from mainly Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Respiratory tract infections followed by skin and soft tissue infections and infected trauma (police dog related bite wounds, beating sequelae) in 80 percent accompanied with PTSD are a daily bread in a mobile health care unit in North Bosnia, searching for „double crossing“ migrants from Greece to Schengen space of central EU. Organized action and cooperation between NGO-s, Academia, health care students, social workers, NGO, like MSF SEUC etc and local governance bodies in a divided state is mandatory, however not always easy.

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71 Mollica, Richard F. et. al. *Mental health in complex emergencies*, 2058-67.; Steel, Zachary. et. al. *Association of torture and other potentially traumatic events with mental health outcomes among populations exposed to mass conflict and displacement: a systematic review and meta-analysis*, 537-49. For more details, see also: Tol Wietse A. et al. *Mental health and psychosocial support in humanitarian settings: linking practice and research*, 1581-91.; Ventevogel, Peter et al. *Improving mental health care in humanitarian emergencies*, 666.

DIALOGUE AS A FORM OF PROCLAMATION*



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Abstract

Background: The „double commitment“ (*Dialogue and Proclamation*⁷³) of the Catholic Church to dialogue and proclamation poses to Catholic believers a question of how to reconcile *proclamation* and *dialogue*, if they apparently contradict one another. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the discussion on the relation between proclamation and dialogue with the following thesis: *the dialogical model of existence represents a fundamental form of mission*. Furthermore, it seeks to make a case for understanding dialogue as an autonomous form of proclamation, based on the theological-anthropological interpretation of the human as being in „God's image“.

Conclusion: The thesis of the dialogical mode of existence representing a fundamental form of mission can be elaborated at the academic level with respect to further theoretical research, for instance, through discussions or reflections on the currently highly relevant inter-religious dialogue, especially between Christians and Muslim migrants. Furthermore, it can also be applied in practice with respect to the work with refugees, in the area of mission and the helping professions involved in this kind of work, because this thesis makes it clear, *inter alia*, that it accepts, respects, and values the life of another human being, including his or her inalienable dignity and unconditioned autonomy.

Keywords: Dialogue – Proclamation – Image of God – Human dignity – Dialogical model.

Introduction

The proclamation of the Gospel to Christians is not only a possibility but also a significant duty, which means that it is a religion of a missionary character.⁷⁴ However, this dialogue, to which the entire Church community is bound, is also advocated by a dialogue that poses the following question to Christians of all denominations: *How to bring proclamation and dialogue into compliance when it appears to be in direct opposition?* We can observe this opposition in models im-

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73 *Dialogue and Proclamation* (May 19, 1991) 89 (hereafter cited in text and footnotes as DP), (The Slovak translation of *Dialogue and Proclamation: Dialóg a ohlasovanie: spoločný dokument Pápežskej rady pre medzináboženský dialóg a Kongregácie pre evanjelizáciu národov*. [Dialogue and Proclamation: joint document of the Pontifical council for inter-religious dialogue and Congregations for the evangelization of nations], Bratislava: Ústav pre vzťahy štátu a cirkvi, 2001)

74 Pope Paul VI. *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975) 5 (hereafter cited in text as EN), (The Slovak translation of: *Evangelii nuntiandi*. Zvolen: Jas, 1978)

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portant for both premises. Evangelism, based on its content and focus, is based on an exclusive model of interreligious relationships, while dialogue is based on a dialogue model.⁷⁶ Theological consideration of the relationship between the above-mentioned models or proclamation and dialogue, is a topic of global focus reflected in the publications of many theologians as well as in the reflections of Christians engaged in missionary work and in interfaith dialogue. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to this theological discussion through a specific analysis, an *intermezzo* exclusively from the Roman Catholic environment from the period of the post-conciliar Church⁷⁷ for the purpose of relevance to the following crucial argument for this discussion: *the fundamental form of the mission is a dialogic manner of existence*. The presented argument to understand dialogue as an autonomous form of proclamation in the presented meaning is based on the theological and anthropological interpretation of humans as *made in "God's image"*.

The "Double Commitment" of the Church to Proclamation and Dialogue

Social and political developments in our times show how important a role dialogue plays in a Western-style pluralistic, democratic society. Last century there arose a new appreciation of dialogic thinking among issues in philosophy (e.g. philosophy of dialogue), education (e.g. creative humanist education), systematic and practical theology (e.g. ecumenical and interreligious dialogue). The Catholic Church signed entered dialogue when the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) addressed the Church's call for dialogue. In the *magisterium* dialogue resonates not only as a form of communication, but also as a tool for opening (tal. *aggiornamento*) of the Catholic Church announced by the Second Vatican Council. The opening of the Catholic Church inward and outward, according to the Council, should be performed primarily through dialogue.⁷⁸

The conciliar *aggiornamento* was too optimistic, but only indicative. The constitutions of the Second Vatican Council *Lumen gentium*, *Gaudium et spes* and *Dei verbum* are a faithfully binding theological reflection of the call of John XXIII: "Completely open the windows!" The *Declaration of Religious Freedom Dignitatis Humanae* and *Decree on the Lay Apostolate* represent the most prominent testimony of the conciliatory turn to openness.

76 Štampach, Ivan Odilo. *Náboženství v dialogu. Kritické studie na pomezí religionistiky a teologie*. [Religion in dialogue. Critical studies on the brink of religionistic and theology.] 191.

77 Mainly the document *Dialogue and Proclamation*, issued on May 19, 1991 by two dioceses of the Roman Church – the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Nations. The document was published on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the *Nostra Aetate* declaration, an unprecedented Declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the Church's relationship to non-Christian religions and directly follows the older document *The Attitude of the Church Toward Other Religions: Considerations and Guidelines on the Dialogue and Mission of the Church*, which in 1984 was issued by the Secretariat for Non-Christians (DP 2).

The Secretariat for Non-Christians was transformed into the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in 1988.

Both documents agree to present dialogue and proclamation as two components of one evangelical mission to the Church, while with the later document *Dialogue and Proclamation*, this relationship is further elaborated theologically in terms of possible doubts about the meaning of both dialogue and proclamation (DP 4c) and "develops in more detail the teaching of dialogue and its relation to the proclamation" contained in the encyclical of John Paul II. *Redemptoris missio* (December 7, 1990) 55–57 (hereafter cited in text and footnotes as RM), (The Slovak translation of: *Redemptoris missio*. Trnava: Spolok svätého Vojtecha, 1997); (DP 4c).

78 Lehman, Karl. "Dialóg jako forma komunikace v církvi dnes". [Dialogue as a form of communication in today's Church".] 2–3.

It is clear to Catholic Christians today that “the ability and willingness to conduct dialogue is a life issue for the Church and society”⁷⁹. “The Church must establish a dialogue with the world in which it lives,”⁸⁰ declared Pope Paul VI. in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* in 1964, because dialogue “is the purpose of God” (ES 45). For the Church to become “the sign of the brotherhood that enables and deepens dialogue” as requested by the pastoral constitution of the Second Vatican Council *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Current World (1965, Art. 92), it is necessary in the Church itself to deepen mutual respect and unity in respecting the legitimate diversity of the minds (GS 92).

In relation to non-Christian religions, the other council proclaimed the era of interreligious dialogue. In the council declaration *Nostra Aetate* (1965), for the first time in history, the Catholic Church has officially expressed its attitude to non-Christian religions, based on a positive assessment of religious traditions, which must be “sensitively viewed in the light of the spiritual and human values they hold” (DP 11).

The Second Vatican Council gave an example of such a positive assessment when pointing to the act of God’s grace in non-Christian religions.⁸¹ The council teaches that God’s grace is present in creation like “the rays of the Truth that enlighten all people” (NA 2), like “the seeds of the Word” and “the richness that the divine God divided among peoples” (AG 11), like good “sown in the minds and hearts of men” and “in the rites and customs of nations” (LG 17). God’s grace gives leads to all positive values, no matter where they occur. This Church understands the preparation for the proclamation of the Gospel – receiving, healing, and lifting (AG 9).

In this context, it is also necessary to understand the place and purpose of the dialogue. The Dialogue “is based on deep respect for everything that has created in humans the Spirit, which goes where it wants”, develops the council’s teachings on the dialogue of John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptoris missio*: “In it the Church seeks to discover the *Seeds of Words* and *the Rays of Truth*, which enlighten all people, seeds and rays that are present in the people and religious traditions of humankind” (RM 56).

As the bearers of positive values and manifestations of God’s grace, “other religions are a challenge to the Church, encouraging it to discover and acknowledge the signs of the presence of Christ and the action of the Spirit” (RM 56).

It is the dialogue, according to Pope Paul VI, to help humans discover

“the different paths that lead to the light and can lead to the same goal. And when they sometimes diverge, they can complement each other and encourage us to revise our usual thinking, deepen our research, and refine our manner of expression. A patient exercise in this dialectical thinking will result in the fact that even in the thumbnail of others we find the grain of truth” (ES 50).

79 Ibid., 3 – 5.

80 Pope Paul VI. *Ecclesiam Suam* (August 6, 1964) 43 (hereafter cited in text as ES), (The Slovak translation of: *Ecclesiam suam*. Rim: SÚSCM, 1968).

81 The symbolical axiologically appreciative assessment of non-Christian religious phenomena can also be indirectly based on non-religious exploration, as illustrated, for example, by Gálik, Slavomír, and Sabína Gáliková Tolnaiová. “A Comparison of Spiritual Traditions in the Context of the Universality of Mysticism.” *Spirituality Studies*.1, no.1, spring 2015: 97–112.

For these reasons,

“The Church supports and encourages interreligious dialogue, not only in its dialogue with other religious traditions but in the mutual dialogue between these traditions. This is one of the ways in which it fulfills its role as a sacrament, which is a sign and a tool of communion with God and unity among humans (Lumen Gentium 1).” (DP 80).

On the other hand, the evangelistic mission of the Church is not exhausted by dialogue – the dialogue does not replace the proclamation, but

“remains focused, because the dynamic process of the evangelical mission of the Church is reaching its peak and its fullness in the proclamation” (DP 82). *Conversely, the conversation is not meant to convert, nor does it usually lead to conversions. It may, however, be helped by another, deeper conversion – the “conversion of the heart”, which lies in the “humble and repentant return of the heart to God”* (DP 11).

In the council declaration *Nostra Aetate* the “double commitment” of the Church to the interfaith dialogue and the proclamation of Christ, who is the *Path, Truth, and Life* (NA 2). The document *Dialogue and Proclamation* confirms the conciliar appreciation of the dialogue, and at the same time the obligation to proclaim Christ, and thus “to bring people to a clear understanding of what God did in Jesus Christ for all people, and invite them to becoming Jesus’ disciples by becoming members of the Church” (DP 81). Dialogue and Proclamation are interpreted as two complementary components of the evangelistic mission: “They are closely related, but not unchangeable”, they are “separate” (DP 77) in the sense that the dialogue is “aimed at proclamation” (DP 82), but connected at the same time, since the notification is to be conducted in the form of a dialogue (DP 77).⁸²

Dialogue as a Form of Proclamation

The topic of dialogue as a form of proclamation offers several interpretation options. In the broadest sense, it can refer to dialogue as a form of communication, in the narrower sense it can point to the relationship dimension of dialogue as an interpersonal event. However, it can also refer to a dialogic manner of existence, as is in the case of the that premise: *the fundamental form of the mission is the dialogic manner of existence*.

In the broadest sense, therefore, the dialogue represents a *form of communication*, which assumes a plurality of opinions, or views of reality.⁸³ The basis of the dialogic method of communication is to understand reality as complex phenomena on the part of the cognitive object and the plurality of perspectives on the part of the cognitive subject. *In dialogic communication, there is consequently an appreciating confrontation of partial views of reality, provided that this confrontation can lead to a more complete view – to a fuller understanding of reality*. Authentic dialogue thus begins by recognizing the limitations of our own view, our own ideas and reality models. Dialogue offers each participant the same opportunities, the same rights and obligations. When there opens up a space of free exchange and a creative search for understanding, *dialogue reaffirms the legitimacy of others in their cultural, religious and personal autonomy*.

82 “The proclamation of Jesus Christ thus proceeds in the gospel spirit of dialogue.” (DP 77).

83 Štampach, Ivan Odilo. *Život, Duch a všechno. [Life, Spirit and everything.]* 13.

In the narrower sense *dialogue as an interpersonal event is a meeting of individuals on an equal basis for common interest in mutual understanding or cooperation*. The finality focused on the goal distinguishes dialogue from conversation, which may be self-serving or “inconclusive”, while dialogue without an aim does not exist.⁸⁴ The basic identifying feature of this form of dialogue is that it is *meeting* (Jolana Poláková), *reciprocity* (Martin Buber), in other words, it is *a relationship: participants in a dialogue meeting become partners in dialogue and enter into a mutual relationship in their autonomy*.

The interpersonal notion of dialogue has its origins in the philosophy of 20th century dialogue. From the early 1920's, thinkers such as Franz Rosenzweig, Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber, along with Emmanuel Lévinas after the end of the World War II, joined together to search for the roots of the crisis of European civilization in neglecting the relationship dimension of humans.⁸⁵ Against the backdrop of the two greatest tragedies of the twentieth century – the crisis of values caused by World War I, and the crisis of democracy triggered by the rule of totalitarian dictatorships – they have rediscovered the relationship of existence: *full human existence presupposes a relationship to one another!*

Thus, in the philosophy of dialogue, the interpersonal dimension of dialogue, with its emphasis on *relationship priority* and *autonomy of exteriority*.⁸⁶ For Martin Buber, the key to understanding others is not primary communication, but the relationship as an interpersonal encounter of “You and I”.⁸⁷ “Relationship is reciprocity”⁸⁸ by which humans are cast out from the space of human “experience,” because the “You” of the other escapes the blessing, the prevalence in experience like “It”.⁸⁹

Against the technocratism of science with its empiricism, thematic reduction, and methodical abstraction, Buber emphasizes the relationship as a value to the person when he writes:

*“We know that a melody is not just something that consists of tones, the verse is just something composed of words, and a decorative column is just something composed of lines. We know that we all have to tear up and unlearn everything if we are to transform unity into the multitude. It's the same in the case of a human I call You. I can focus on knowing the color of his/her hair or the color of his/her speech or the color of his/her goodness, and I have to do it over and over; but he stops being You.”*⁹⁰

This type of reductionism is a threat to an authentic encounter and ultimately leads to the denial of human dignity.⁹¹

84 Poláková, Jolana. “Několik poznámek ke smyslu dialogu. [“A couple of notes on the significance of dialogue”.] 465–66.

85 Ibid., 465–66.

86 Buber, Martin. *Problém člověka. [The human problem.]* 144.

87 Buber, Martin. *Já a ty. [Me and you.]* 38–39.

88 Ibid., 48.

89 Ibid., 39–42.

90 Ibid., 42.

91 Dancák, Pavol. *O symptómech nábožensky motivovanej xenofóbie v medziach tolerancie a nejasného pluralizmu. [On the symptoms of religiously-motivated xenophobia on the brink of tolerance and vague plurality.]* 43.

Unlike the scientific type of knowledge, “a dialogic meeting with the Other cannot be planned in advance”,⁹² its results cannot be anticipated because “I do not know who he is, I do not know in advance,” says Pavel Hošek.⁹³ The inaccuracy of the other is revealed only in the dialogue community, in reciprocal acceptance and recognition, based on the biblical “ethics of hospitality”.⁹⁴

From the moral and theological perspective, dialogue is protected by the Fifth Commandment – you shall not kill!

*“This commandment,” according to Hošek, “does not mean merely prohibiting the physical destruction of the other, but the prohibition of any act of violence, grasping, including the idea of annexation, absorption into the a priori system or assimilation of the same to the same.”*⁹⁵

Dialogue assumes this *personal meeting of autonomous and equivalent persons*, its starting point the non-reducible and unavailability of the other. For interreligious dialogue, as a specific type of dialogue, this is true in an unchanged form: “Dialogue is not to confront religious systems and traditions, but instead encounters of believers from different religions.”⁹⁶

The “unsettling experience of the unknown” (Bernhard Waldenfels⁹⁷) becomes a challenge in the dialogue to open up to the inaction of the other, the opportunity to meet, the beginning of a personal relationship that can and should result in understanding, communication and coexistence.

Dialogue as an interpersonal event has value itself, regardless of results. Even if it does not arrive with ready solutions, *the dialogue opens a meeting that allows us to accept the inaction of the other (autonomy) and thus confirms the value of the other unconditionally*.

Dialogue as an interpersonal event can result in a dialogical form of existence if there occurs a *way of life* based on a moral attitude based on the dialogue principle of relativity. The interpersonal dimension of the dialogue thus coalesces, inspires and develops a *dialogic ethos* – “the basic moral position of the individual, or community, formed by the principle of relativity.” In his study, the missiologist Pavol Bargár analyses the principle of relativity in an attractive manner through *looking out for the interest of others – living for others* in which we find important elements of the dialog.⁹⁸ *Vice versa*, the dialogic ethos arises in its two basic manifestations – as an interpersonal event and as a personal form of communication.

92 Hošek, Pavel. *Na cestě k dialogu: křesťanská víra v pluralitě náboženství. [On the path towards dialogue: Christian faith in religious plurality.]* 157.

93 Ibid., 158.

94 Ibid., 162.

95 Ibid., 157.

96 Bučko, Ladislav. *Na ceste k oslobodeniu. Základy misiológie. [On the path to liberation. The basics of missiology.]* 400.

97 For more details, see: Waldenfels, Bernhard. *Znepokojivá zkušenost cizího. [The unsettling experience of the unknown],* Praha: Oikoymenth, 1998.

98 Dojčár, Martin. *Problém globálneho spolužitia: antropologické východisko. [The problem of global coexistence: an anthropological solution.]* 65.

It is through looking out for the interest of others that it is possible to perceive

In an existential way the dialogic ethos affirms the autonomy of human as unconditional and his/her intrinsic value as inalienable and is offered as an existential approach to the solution of the xenological problem, when against the ignorance of another he/she builds his/she unconditional acceptance. In the dialogic “relationship”, which is a propensity for the other, a better understanding and appreciation is born than a person in his/her own personality and dignity. As such, the dialogic manner of existence (dialogic ethos) is also offered as the initial form of proclamation, preceding all forms of missionary activity, in which human rationality, affectivity and volunteering are applied in a variety of ways. It is the primitive form of the mission in its primordial – pre – conjugal and pre-verbal form – based on “being human”, which accepts, recognizes and appreciates the existence of another person as desired and created by God. The space of affirmation of the autonomy and dignity of the other is the space of the encounter, “relativity”, referring to the Christian model of each community, to the dynamics of the inner life of the Holy Trinity.

Theological and Anthropological Argument: Imago Dei

The initial form of the mission based on being human and manifested in the dialogic “relationship”, which we call the dialogic mode of existence or the dialogue ethos, presupposes the understanding of humans as the bearer of inalienable *intrinsic value – dignity*.

The *dignity of humans* (Lat. *dignitatis humanae*) is a *internal value*, which each person possesses in an unconditional manner and who does it through *the purpose itself*. Thus the *purpose itself*, humans are *autonomous* – able make a moral law (Gr. auto, “on my own”, *nomos*, “the law”). His/her intrinsic value does not come from social interaction, from social status, role, or from any activity, but from the very being of human.

The tradition of Judeo-Christian thinking derives *internal value* of humans as the creation of humans in “in the image of God” (Lat. *imago Dei*) and “according to the likeness of God” (Lat. *similitudo Dei*), as two biblical reports on the creation of human in the Bible interpreted through *Yahweh* (Gn 2, 7), and *priests* (Gn 1, 26-27).

In the *New Testament* it is through “the image of the invisible God” Christ (Col 1, 15). Humans are in “the image of God” because he/she is created “according to the likeness of God”, which is Christ. When Christ, as the *pre-image* of humans, humans reveal what it means to be human.

.....

“one of the core features from the following of Christianity: the true disciple of Jesus Christ should remain human among others – to stand by them and be there for them. Not rising above the rest, pointing out the mistakes of others and their alleged or real sins but rather willing to help carry their cross. For him the way of following means living for others.” (Bargár, Pavol. *“Transforming discipleship: Theological-anthropological explorations”*. 34)

Being other-oriented, or the way of living for others in the dialog also opens the door in “the environment where the hope of eternal life is unknown and where nobody believes in the Resurrection or in a personal and loving God.” (Caban, Peter. *“Historical and religious concepts of the spread of Christianity and missionary activities in the territory of present-day China”*. 44.) The dialog contained in the above-mentioned following of Christianity has the potential to play an important role in helping to revive the European culture and its Christian traditions, whereby Christianity must at the same time (Caban, Peter. *“Historical and religious concepts of the spread of Christianity and missionary activities in the territory of present-day China”*, 44.) “prove itself to be a path people can follow and where they will gradually receive certainty about the meaning and purpose of life”. (Caban, Peter. *“Historical and religious concepts of the spread of Christianity and missionary activities in the territory of present-day China”*. 44.)

The term “God’s image” (Gr. *eikon tou Theou*) expresses the exceptional character of the relationship that connects humans with his/her Creator, distinguishes him/her from non-human reality, and gives him/her a special *inner value – dignity*. Thus, the inalienable intrinsic value of humans as a purpose in the area of Euro-Atlantic civilization derives its origin from a cultural determinant from the anthropological paradigm *imago Dei*.⁹⁹

The dignity of humans finds his/her privileged expression in the ethos of human rights, which paradigmatically characterizes Western civilization. All people are equal, and equality between people is based on their unconditional autonomy and inalienable dignity and the rights that arise from it.

The dignity of a person requires recognition categorically, that is, unconditionally, i.e. no matter what the individual brings or can bring to others. It is guaranteed by the intercultural universal path of the *golden rule* morality: *Do not do onto others what you do not want them do to you!* (cf. Tob 4:15); *Do not do onto others what you do not want them do to you!* (cf. Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31).

The affirmation of the autonomy and dignity of humans in the context of social interaction occurs primarily in dialogue. The dialogue uniquely confirms the autonomy and inner value of the partner in the dialogue, and appreciates his/her existence as desirable and enriching. It occurs in all three forms of dialogue – in dialogue as a form of communication, in a dialogue as an interpersonal event, and lastly in a dialogue as a specific existential attitude, which we call the dialogic way of existence, or dialogic ethos.

The confirmation of the autonomy and dignity of humans in dialogue is an act of faith in the creation of man “in the image of God,” the recognition of humans as imago Dei, and is also a testimony of Christ, which is “God’s form” and the primary model of humans. In this sense, the dialogic way of existence is a fundamental form of proclamation.

Conclusion

Catholic Christians believe that the Church is *the seed and the beginning of the Kingdom of God on earth* (LG 5). Because the Church has *already* received the full revelation, but *has not* accepted the fullness of its understanding, *the Church is traveling* (LG 48) – it is God’s people, who are “directed toward the fullness of God’s truth” (DV 8). In this manner, he/she encounters other pilgrims, reveals the traces of one and the same Truth and, as an example, God enters the dialogue of salvation – that dialogue God has been leading humans toward from the beginning of time to open it for a fuller understanding of God’s truth. In this perspective, the theological value of the dialogue lies (DP 33–41).

The document *Dialogue and Proclamation* (53–54) states that the Church’s commitment to dialogue, based on the initiative of God entering dialogue with humanity and the example of Jesus Christ, “remains firm and unchangeable” even “despite many difficulties.”

.....

⁹⁹ The radial influence of the anthropological paradigm *imago Dei* has also interfered with empirical human-scientific research, as shown, for example, by Ivana Ryška Vajdová in her study of Jung’s psychological analysis *imago Dei*. Ivana Vajdová Ryška. *“Jung’s Psychological Analysis of Imago Dei.” Spirituality Studies*. 1, no. 2, spring 2016: 49–64.

The document simultaneously characterizes dialogue and proclamation as a “double commitment” of the Church (DP 89) and invites all Christians to “personally engage in these two ways of carrying out a single mission of the Church” (DP 82).

The presented study argues in favor of the thesis: *the fundamental form of the mission is the dialogic method of existence*. As the primary form of proclamation that receives, recognizes and values the likeness of another person as desired and created by God, the dialogic way of existence precedes all forms of missionary activity and expresses the “double commitment” of the Church in a personal manner – a manner of life based on the attitude of “relativity” recognizing the other in his/her *inalienable dignity and unconditional autonomy*, derived from the creation of humans in “God’s image” and “according to God’s form.”

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DIFFERENTIATED CONSENSUS IN ANTHROPOLOGY AS THE BASIS OF "ECUMENICAL ETHICS"?: CATHOLIC-LUTHERAN EXAMPLE*



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Abstract

Background: This paper explores the issues related to the dynamics between ecumenism and ethics. The author discusses the joint statement of the German Bishops' Conference and the Evangelical Church in Germany on human dignity, issued on the occasion of the Reformation's Anniversary in 2017. This document is first put into the context of the local ecumenical dialogue between German Catholics and Lutherans as well as the public discussion currently going on within German society. Special attention is dedicated to the method of differentiated consensus that was for the first time applied to the field of ethics when the text was drafted. This method enables a qualitatively new approach to the traditionally controversial points of departure for the confessional understandings of Catholic and Protestant moralities. The offered reading of the document provides a basis for the commonly-shared and biblically rooted pillars of an ecumenically envisioned Christian anthropology. In addition, the focus is also on the hot issues in bioethics on which there is disagreement between the two parties.

Conclusion: The paper has shown that the application of the method of differentiated consensus to the field of ethics represents a legitimate approach to the search for unity in reconciled diversity. Further theoretical research in this area should focus on the role played not only by agreement but also by the persisting „qualified disagreement“ as part of this dynamic.

Keywords: Ecumenical dialogue – Differentiated consensus – Catholics – Protestants – Christian ethics.

Introduction

“Doctrine divides, service unites.” This was the motto of the movement for practical Christianity (*Life and Work*), which has been one of the pillars of world ecumenism since the 1920's. Pioneers in this direction have been persuaded that, while individual articles of the teaching of faith have been in conflict for centuries between Christians, mutual engagement and service can be brought about by mutual convergence. In a period when the world was still shaken by the horrors of the great war, the churches, in spirit of this stance, were primary in promoting peace and instigating Christian positions in the political and social spheres. Since then, questions of human conduct and ethical practices have been questioned within efforts of bringing about undeniable meaning among Christians. One can doubtless think of a strong stream of so-called “secular ecumenism,” which has fundamentally commented on the history and activity of the World Council of Churches, which, for decades, has programmatically supported the development of the

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conciliatory process for justice, peace and the preservation of creations. But we can remember the emphasis of the current Pope Francis, who repeatedly invites the churches to stand in the “service of the world, which is suffering and in need of defense of human life and its inviolable dignity, care for creations and to fight the injustice that affects many people and nations”¹⁰².

On the other hand, we can intensively see how the area of ethics and questions related to the Christian anchor of moral conduct become a reason for division not only among Christian churches but within religious communities themselves. One example for everyone may still be the recent division in the Anglican community due to differing views of certain areas of sexual ethics. On the one hand there division and moving away from positions, on the other hand, we are also witnessing the convergence that leads to the formation of alliances we could hardly imagine in the past: for example, North American evangelicals have recently found a proximate opinion in ethical issues, both with regard to the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholics. Moscow's “minister of ecumenism,” Hilarion Alfeyev, who does not spare the criticisms of liberalism and relativism in the established Protestant churches, for example, in front of a forum of leaders of evangelical Christians, praises their biblically based morals.¹⁰³ The Jesuit Antonio Spadaro, in a similar context, warns against the “ecumenism of hatred” as the potential fruit of the link between fundamentalism and integralism, whose adherents, in addition to affirming certain aspects of Christian morality, programmatically report to intolerance, and they are neither simple nor power aspirations.¹⁰⁴

The Contribution of German Catholics and Lutherans to an Open Debate on the Dignity of a Person

With our Western neighbors, the common statements of the Evangelical Churches and the Conference of Catholic Bishops have traditionally been the expression of ecumenical cooperation, and are the expression of Christian testimonial in society. Thus, in the past, representatives of German Catholics and Evangelicals did not hesitate to speak about questions in the service of the announcement of the evangelical message, such as the protection of human life, organ transplantation, medical diagnosis, assisted dying, social justice, the right to education, Christian care for patients, or the phenomenon of refugees.¹⁰⁵ Events in German society over the past decade have led to the emergence of divergent opinions on selected issues between the Catholic and Evangelical Churches in the field of ethics. Particularly, we have a controversy over embryo import for stem cell for subsequent scientific research, as well as a question of medically assisted

102 *Lettera del Santo Padre ai partecipanti all'Assemblea Plenaria del Pontificio Consiglio per la Promozione dell'Unità dei Cristiani in occasione del 50° anniversario del Decreto Unitatis redintegratio* (20 November 2014). https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/letters/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20141120_lettera-plenaria-unita-cristiani.html (accessed August 3, 2017)

103 *Speech by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk at the Forum of Representatives of the Russia – USA forum of Christian leaders*. <https://mospat.ru/en/2014/11/08/news111079/> (accessed August 3, 2017)

104 Spadaro, Antonio, and Figueora, Marcelo. “*Fondamentalismo evangelicale e integralismo cattolico: Un sorprendente ecumenismo*”. 105–113.

105 This was the case, for example, in a joint statement by the Secretariat of the Conference of German Bishops and the Church Committee of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), which consists of twenty Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches, *Gott ist ein Freund des Lebens: Herausforderungen und Aufgaben beim Schutz des Lebens*. Trier: Paulinus Verlag, 1989, or in a series of so-called Gemeinsame Texte of German Catholic Bishops and the EKD: *Organtransplantationen*. Bonn – Hannover: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz – Kirchenamt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, 1990; *Wieviele Wissen tut uns gut?: Chancen und Risiken der voraussagenden Medizin*. Bonn – Hannover: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz – Kirchenamt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, 1997; *Sterbebegleitung statt aktiver Sterbehilfe*. Bonn – Hannover: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz – Kirchenamt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, 2003.

suicide or relationships between the same sex.¹⁰⁶ And so it seems that while in the area of *social* ethics it is not difficult for churches to express Christian responsibility together ecumenically, the area turns into *individual* ethics through the field of opinion fragmentation. Where does this non-agreement come from?

In the marked circumstances, it is highly urgent to examine whether different attitudes to specific ethical problems can be the source of differently contrived *anthropological* origins, and if it is possible and even desirable to try to formulate the foundations of the Christian perspective on people, which could be shared by the churches in ecumenism.¹⁰⁷ The task of answering this question fell on the bilateral working group of the Conference of German Bishops (DBK) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD), which brings together seven Lutheran churches in the country. After this ecumenical forum expressing itself in previous years on questions of the nature of the ecclesial community and ecclesiology,¹⁰⁸ in the third phase of joint work, the area of ethics was the subject of interest. Document entitled *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*,¹⁰⁹ presented to the public on February 15, the anniversary of the "Reformation Year" 2017, is the result of an eight-year work whose purpose was not to find solutions to individual ethical issues, but to focus on the interrelationship between ethics and anthropology. The key concept in the entire argument is the subject of the dignity of a person from whom the inalienable rights of each person unfold. The whole document can thus be seen as a valuable contribution of the churches to the public social debate about the notion of human dignity, which is in the center of attention in Germany, and whose interpretation is an example of wide-scale pluralism.¹¹⁰ So what image of a human being do Lutheran and Catholic Christians report?¹¹¹

106 In the last point, in 2013, a criticism was raised on the Catholic side, particularly an EKD document that made an effort to theologically evaluate positively the covenant created by the closure of a registered partnership. cf. *Zwischen Autonomie und Angewiesenheit: Familie als verlässliche Gemeinschaft stärken: Eine Orientierungshilfe des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2013.

107 Recently, the importance of this issue has been reflected, for example, Koch, Kurt. *Der Mensch als ökumenische Frage. Gibt es (noch) eine gemeinchristliche Anthropologie?* Stubenrauch, Bertram, and Seewald, Michael (ed.). *Das Menschenbild der Konfessionen: Achillesferse der Ökumene?* Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2015, p. 18–32; Seewald, Michael. *Der Mensch als Geschaffener und Gewordener. Herausforderungen und Risse einer christlichen Anthropologie in ökumenischer Verantwortung*. In *ibid.*, 316–340; Munteanu, Daniel. *Was ist der Mensch?: Grundzüge und gesellschaftliche Relevanz einer ökumenischen Anthropologie anhand der Theologien von K. Rahner, W. Pannenberg und J. Zizioulas*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. Within the context of the World Council of Churches, it is monitoring the debate on possible common origins of the theological anthropology of Kantyka, Przemysław. *Theological Anthropology at the Basis of Inter-Denominational Controversies: Dialogue within the World Council of Churches*. *Studia Oecumenica*, 6 (2016), p. 277–292. An important achievement here was the Commission for Faith and Order, which developed a reflection on Christian anthropology based on the theology of God' image, cf. *Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology: A Faith and Order Study Document* (Faith and Order Paper 99). Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005.

108 cf. BILATERALE ARBEITSGRUPPE DER DEUTSCHEN BISCHOFSKONFERENZ UND DER VEREINIGTEN EVANGELISCH-LUTHERISCHEN KIRCHE DEUTSCHLANDS. *Kirchengemeinschaft in Wort und Sakrament*. Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1984; *Communio sanctorum. Die Kirche als Gemeinschaft der Heiligen*. Paderborn – Frankfurt am Main: Bonifatius – Lembeck, 2000.

109 cf. BILATERALE ARBEITSGRUPPE DER VEREINIGTEN EVANGELISCH-LUTHERISCHEN KIRCHE DEUTSCHLANDS UND DER DEUTSCHEN BISCHOFSKONFERENZ. *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*. Leipzig – Paderborn: Evangelisches Verlagsanstalt – Bonifatius, 2017.

110 cf. Hilgendorf, Eric. Problemfelder der Menschenwürdedebatte in Deutschland und Europa und die Ensembletheorie der Menschenwürde. In *Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik*, 57/4 (2013), s. 258–271.

111 For the commentary of Roman Catholic theologians on the document cf. SÖDING, Thomas. Wider die Scharfmacher. In *Herder Korrespondenz*, 71/7 (2017): 27–30; Bormann, Franz-Josef. Wo steht die Ökumene in ethics? Moralthologische Anmerkungen zum Dokument „Gott und die Würde des Menschen“. In *Catholica*, 71/4 (2017): 245–260; from the evangelical side cf. Ulrich, Hans G. Ökumenischer Konsens in der Ethik - ein fälliges

Method of differentiated consensus

First of all, it is important to mention that this is a concept rooted in biblical theology, also reflected in systematic theology. Of particular importance in this reflection is the *Joint Declaration on the Teaching of Justification*, which the Catholic Church and the World Lutheran League ratified in Augsburg in the autumn of 1999 and which the Methodists (in 2006), the Reformists and the Anglicans (both confessional families in 2017), have joined to this day. As known, the declaration stated a consensus in the fundamental truths about the doctrine of the justification of the sinner, which represented the core of reformation theology and dogmatic article, with which entire Church stands or falls.¹¹²

"By pure grace, by faith in Christ's salvific work, and not by our merits, we are received by God, and we have received the Holy Ghost, who renews our hearts and recalls and calls us for good deeds."¹¹³

For almost twenty years now, the Lutheran and Catholic Christians all share the truth of the salvation of humans. Nevertheless, this consensus in the foundations does not mean that the unity found in the faith implies uniformity, and required from the churches a renunciation of what the Holy Spirit had seen in their environment. Thus, in the unity of religion, there is a multitude that permits even the diversity of the theological manner of expressing the only revealed truth. Different accents profiled within the confessional traditions are rid of the poison and outgrowth of the preceding polemic, and thus lose their effectiveness to persist as a reason for the division of the Church. The goal is unity within reconciled and legitimate diversity.

The Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, which resulted in both a statement of justification and a new document on the concept of people and their dignity, was based on the method of *differentiated consensus*.¹¹⁴ This method particularly takes into account two aspects: 1) on the one hand, it seeks consensus on the basic truths (Grundwahrheiten) of a particular article of faith; 2) on the one hand, the statements of both parties which have so far appeared to be contradictory, incompatible and divisive (most often mutual anathemas in the past), are examined in relation to this consistency.¹¹⁵ The task is to find out whether the two positions are still excluded in the new light, or whether they can be understood as mutually compatible. This is accompanied by an examination of whether certain faithful positions that were condemned, for example, at the time of the Reformation, still express the teachings of the churches today. During this process, one does not seek a common language to suppress individual confessional specificities, but various statements of Christian doctrine must not contradict each other. So if there is a difference in justification and in theological form between churches, it must never be done at the expense of unity in fundamental truths. In seeking consensus, it is important to ensure that the solution is not

Zeugnis. *Ibid*, 261–277.

112 cf. Luther, Martin. In XV Psalmos graduum (1532/1533). In WA 40/3, 352, 3 (...quia isto articulo stante stat Ecclesia, reunte ruit Ecclesia).

113 Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Association on the Exercise of Justification, 15 (Czech translation by Machul, Tomáš (ed.)). *Ospravedlnění a dědičný hřích v ekumenickém dialogu*. Praha: Krystal, 2000: 5–24.

114 cf. Thönissen, Wolfgang. *Dogma und Symbol: Eine ökumenische Hermeneutik*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2008, p. 245–252.

115 cf. Tentyž. *Stichwörter zur Ökumene: Ein kleines Nachschlagewerk zu den Grundbegriffen der Ökumene*. Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2003, p. 60–61.

to find a "middle path", but to properly understand the truth of the Word of God raises its claim. For it is true that "consensus does not establish the truth, but truth stands on the foundations of consensus"¹¹⁶.

While in the ecumenical study of controversial positions in the field of dogmatic theology, the method of differentiated consensus in the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue is already settled, in the field of ethics and anthropology this procedure was applied for the first time in our document.

Commonly shared foundations of the theological doctrine of a person and his/her dignity

The text we have before us examines the broad field of ethics solely from the perspective of theology. As pointed out, the core of this ecumenical study lies in the jointly formulated foundations of Christian anthropology and human dignity. Facing a social debate that raises questions about from where *human dignity* originates, the document insists that the very concept of human dignity does not itself have normative content and therefore requires justification.¹¹⁷ The most important reason for human dignity, according to Catholics and Lutherans, is its grounding in God. The endless value of a person expressing his/her dignity stems from the Christian Revelation of the fact that each person is created to the image of God (cf. Gn 1, 27). The fact that a human being was originally destined to communion with God and the other people did not even break the reality of sin and its power, from which one cannot escape by one's own efforts (cf. Ř 5, 23n). In Jesus Christ, from mere grace, however, every person in this life is offered the forgiveness of the wine and opens before him/her the horizon of the new life in the Holy Spirit, in the attitude of gratitude for the gift of redemption, bringing forth the fruit of good deeds (cf. Ga 5, 25).

From the Christian point of view, human dignity is based on four angles: in terms of theology *creation, christology, soteriology* (especially theology of justification) and *eschatology*. The very basis of the value of an individual human being and the equality of all people is God's relation to people as reflected in the act of creation. Since Christ has received all humanity, including their suffering, through his resurrection, human dignity remains inviolable even when one is humiliated and suffers. The doctrine of justification assures us that a person, despite his/her sin, can once again be accepted into communion with God, that everyone is given the opportunity to be converted and that human dignity is not lost even by the one who has been against it. The perspective of complete humanity in the end results in the hope that every life, despite its earthly fragmentality, will come to full development in God's kingdom, and that we are now called to seek its justification.

Such a theologically justified human dignity is something that, in spite of suppression or neglect, cannot be taken away under any circumstances and in any phase of human life. This is "always about the dignity God has conferred"¹¹⁸, about the gift of God's unconditional love, which one can neither deserve nor create on the basis of his/her own abilities. For this reason, "the Lutheran and Catholic Churches are jointly committed to ensuring that the dignity of each person is respected and protected in all circumstances"¹¹⁹.

116 Ratzinger, Jozeph. *Zur Lage der Ökumene* In Tentyž. *Weggemeinschaft des Glaubens: Kirche als Communio: Festgabe zur 75. Geburtstag*. Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2002, p. 224.

117 cf. *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*, čl. 176–178.

118 Ibid., Art. 191.

119 Ibid., Art. 233.

Traditionally controversial issues in the light of ecumenical dialogue

In 1904 Heinrich Denifle characterized Martin Luther as a morally perverted man who, for his own debauchery, invented the doctrine of justification that one is unable to fulfill the moral law and is free from any duty to perform repentance or good deeds. Just faith is enough.¹²⁰ For this reason, Catholic morality textbooks have also cited the main rule of Protestant ethics as saying: *Pecca fortiter, sed crede fortius*.¹²¹ In a traditionally controversial theological view, Catholic and Evangelical Confessional *propria* have been built against each other. And so in contrast to *hamartiology*, the pessimism of Reformation theology ("a person is completely corrupted by sin") exalted the Catholic optimistic doctrine of creations ("human nature is sin only wounded"), while the evangelicals praised the *freedom* of conscience as the decisive criterion of human action, which cannot be limited by any statements of the church institution. Instead a *relational* understanding of person in the reformed tradition served as a counterpart for the Catholic side of the concept of ethics based primarily on *natural law*.

If, on the basis of a differentiated consensus in our document, it is claimed that "the essential elements of the common theological anthropology are unquestionable"¹²², we can ask where the specific confessional specifics occurred. It can hardly be imagined that it would simply cease to exist. The differences that are typical on both sides of the dialogue are still clear, but solidly on a shared basis, which is, to a great extent, a consensus in the doctrine of justification that they are losing power to act as factors dividing the Church. Examples include: 1) the manner in which Catholics and Lutherans view the relationship between the action of grace and the conduct of good deeds, and 2) the ecumenical evaluation of the Lutheran concept *simul iustus et peccator* for the basis of a consensus in ethics.¹²³

The justification of a person before God by grace received in faith and notwithstanding human deeds belongs to the very essence of the message of the Reformation. The common belief that the sinner's justification is merely grace, for Lutheran Christians, implies "the renewal of life, which necessarily results in justification, and without which faith does not exist"¹²⁴. The Catholic suspicion that the reforming theology of grace deprives a person of any ethical responsibility is removed by the finding that although the Reformation, on the one hand, questioned the meritorious character of human deeds in the process of the justification of the sinner, today's evangelical party with the Catholics is sympathetic to the fact that the Holy Spirit, who restores the heart of

120 cf. Denifle, Heinrich. *Luther und Luthertum in ihrer erster Etwicklung*. I. Mainz: Franz Kirchheim, 1904, p. 798–799.

121 Brief Nr. 424 Luther and Melanchton, 1. August 1521. In WA, Briefwechsel 2, 372, 84. To explain the context: Luther writes the quoted sentence in accordance with the Apostle Paul (cf. *Rome* 8), expressing that nothing in the world can separate the Christian from God's love in Christ. Even when one has committed a sin again, but believes that God in his mercy is ready to forgive him/her, he/she does not have to despair. The fact that the German reformer likes to express himself in contradictions, which often leads to the very limit of the bearing capacity, is one of the essential features of his provocative statement.

122 *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*, Art. 259.

123 The document itself illustrates the transformation of the perception of traditionally characteristic confessional profiles in four examples: emphasizing the role of grace and the gravity of sin on the evangelical side, highlighting the responsibility of people and their obedience to God's law on the Catholic side. cf. *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*, čl. 210–230. For the specifics of evangelical ethics, including above all the justification of faith and the binomial of justification and sin, cf. Wenz, Gunther. *Der Mensch als Ebenbild Gottes und als Sünder. Wegmarken und Herausforderungen der Anthropologie aus der Sicht der evangelischen Anthropologie*. Stubenrauch – Seewald. *Das Menschenbild der Konfessionen*, 90–106.

124 Ibid., Art. 211; Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Association on the Exercise of Justification, Art. 26.

the righteous person, recalls and calls for good deeds.¹²⁵ The evangelical fear that Catholics want to make the work of grace dependent on previous human performance seems to be odd, because even in Catholic understanding, in preparing for justification, one must first perform the action of grace which, along with the Holy Spirit, allows the conduct of good deeds.¹²⁶ The primacy of the gracious act of God in the act of justification therefore not only does not exclude the full personal participation of a person in faith, but does not deny the subsequent creative work of grace, which is made concrete in the ethical consequences of Christian life.

The tension between being justified by Christ's justification before God, but still remaining under temptation and sin to his death, was summarized by Luther summed up in *simul iustus et peccator*.¹²⁷ In eschatological dynamics, he wanted to state that in the justified man, although Christ is dying in faith, but just as justifiable, he/she does not cease to carry the old Adam, the body of the person. To emphasize this, he did not even avoid the contradictory formulation that in the Christian, even after forgiveness and receiving baptism, is also his/her own sin. This sin, which resides in resistance against God, is completely passive in man, God is not attributed, and hence does not separate from God or control the heart of a Christian and lead to condemnation. This is a "controlled" sin by Christ, with which the justified is connected.¹²⁸ The purpose of Luther's formulation was not to decisively reduce the work salvation, but first to emphasize that the justifiable person remains constantly at God's mercy throughout his/her life. In terms of ecumenical hermeneutics, the term *simul iustus et peccator* should not be seen as a reason to deny the renewed and sanctifying dimension of justification, like the Joint Declaration of the 1999, in which both sides profess that "in baptism the Holy Spirit unites man with Christ, justifies and truly renews"¹²⁹. In the area of ecumenically conceived theological anthropology and ethics, this particularly leads to the realization that it is God's grace that allows a person to find him/herself again in his/her true humanity.¹³⁰

Agree and disagree at the same time? The problem of „limited dissensus“

The paradoxical feature of a common German Lutheran and Catholic document is the specific and seemingly paradoxical feature of the fact that the differentiated consensus in the anthropology reached by both sides does not imply that the two churches in each individual ethical issue hold identical positions. In spite of a number of intersections, there are still issues in the ethics area expressed in different ways by both parties. Nevertheless, the authors of our text are convinced that this so-called "defined disagreement" (*begrenzter Dissens*) is not evidence of contradiction in the very foundations of ecumenically formulated theological anthropology.

What do the topics primarily concern? In the field of bioethics, disagreement is evident in the areas mentioned earlier in the introduction. It is the research into embryonic stem cells and euthanasia. Both sides agree that before birth, from the beginning, a person is created in the

125 cf. Ibid, Art. 211; Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Association on the Exercise of Justification, Art. 15.

126 cf. Ibid, Art. 221; Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Association on the Exercise of Justification, Art. 20, 38.

127 cf. Luther, Martin. Ad Romanos epistola (1515). In WA 56, 344, 19. Overall, Luther's *simul iustus et peccator* is to be seen in the perspective of Paul's experience expressed in Romans 7, 15-24 (the apostle wants to do good, but the sin that dwells in him will not allow him to do so).

128 cf. *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*, čl. 210; Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Association on the Exercise of Justification, Art. 29.

129 221; Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Association on the Exercise of Justification, Art. 28.

130 cf. *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*, čl. 217.

image of God, which is reflected in the common rejection of cloning or manipulation of germline cells. However, while the Catholic Church fundamentally and without exception rejects any research on embryonic stem cells, it is predominantly believed by evangelical Christians that the examination of existing stem cell lines for medical purposes (and therefore, the human good) is not in conflict with Christian belief. The subject matter of the dispute is the "status of embryos from which embryonic stem cells are obtained"¹³¹. If the Catholic morality considers the connection of sexual cells to the beginning of a person and attaches to the human embryo the same rights and protection as a person who has been born,¹³² evangelical ethics are convinced that the embryo is still developing into a full being. The moment of the embryo's implantation in the mother's body is essential for this development. For this reason, the Lutheran party speaks only for the so-called graded embryo protection, which excludes the irresponsible handling of embryos, let alone their production for research purposes. It should be noted that noble scientific research can only use by embryos which, according to evangelical theologians, which are supposed to never be embedded.

Concerning the issue of the end of human life, the difference in positions lies in the question of assisted suicide. The Catholic side, as it is known, regards suicide and any aid to its implementation as morally unacceptable.¹³³ Although the Evangelicals do not deny this in the case of assisted suicide, the person is guilty of violating God's commandment, but they have come forth with an understanding of such a case, when dying before a terminal situation, such as an unexpected, long-lasting and unbearable suffering leading to death, asks another to hurry his/her departure from this world by administering to him/her the substance for it. In this emergency situation, a doctor or other person is authorized to provide assistance.

Conclusion

Finally, let us summarize some of the knowledge. The document we dealt with is firstly significant because it does not hesitate to speak about an urgent social theme, which is the value of a person and at the same time is not afraid to enter into the broad waters of ethics whose level of ecumenical relations is definitely not serene. The fact that under these circumstances Lutherans and Catholics are able to discover and acknowledge the common foundations of Christian anthropology and to present a shared vision of human dignity to the outside world is a doubtless benefit. Simultaneously, in the case of the Churches, they are committed to solidarity with those whose dignity is threatened, and advocate for their protection. Consensus does not have a goal in itself, but as the unity of Christians itself, it too is supposed to have the role of becoming a sign for the world (cf. J 17, 21).

The work of Catholic and Lutheran theologians brings to the ecumenical dialogue the consciousness of the connection between the doctrine of faith and the practice corresponding to this faith. It is clear that this is a connection of paramount importance. The document is a concrete expression of the effort to meet the wishes of the *Joint statement on Learning about Justification*, which was intended to provide a basis, among other things, for addressing the question of the relationship between justification and ethics.¹³⁴ In this case, the text

131 Ibid, Art. 246.

132 cf. *Katechismus katolické církve*, čl. 2274–2275.

133 cf. Ibid, Art. 2276–2279.

134 cf. 221; Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Association on the Exercise of Justification, Art. 43.

of the declaration has shown "the role of a certain leader in an ecumenical dialogue"¹³⁵, because the document on human dignity followed it in terms of content and method. It did not hesitate to return again to the questions that should continue to be subject to the joint study in the doctrine of justification, such as the relationship of grace and deeds or the formulation *simul iustus et peccator*.

The concluding document of the third phase of the bilateral dialogue recognizes that despite the consistency in anthropology and in many specific areas of ethics, open questions remain between the two sides. In many places, it is clear how far the two sides continue to understand the role of the Church *office* and its authority in relation to the *conscience* of the individual. Although the text rightly brings attention to the fact that differences in many ethical issues pass not between the churches but across the confessional spectrum, it would be necessary to clarify what is possible in the area of evangelical ethos only for "theologically legitimate pluralism"¹³⁶ and what, on the contrary, is a specific expression of the radicalness of following Christ and of the unmistakable manifestation of the newness of life according to his Spirit. Concealing the existence of differences or diminishing their meaning would be foolish as well as untrue and short-sighted. In short, as Catholics and Lutherans, together we cannot say now. The document is realistic about this. However, it seems unreasonable to question the achievement of the consensus in the practice of individual churches or in the statements of some of their representatives, when they often enter into the political or social arena, not primarily theological factors.¹³⁷

For several years many have been announcing the end of ecumenism of consensus. The presented text, which first applied this method to ethics, has demonstrated its legitimacy as part of the search for unity in reconciled diversity. In this dynamic, it is necessary to continue to reflect on the role played not only by consensus, but by the fact of continuous "disagreement." To criticize the differing views of the other party and to take them seriously into account when formulating one's own positions remains the specific task of ecumenical theology, which the document itself has set out.¹³⁸ One can only wish not to experience a similar fate as the previous text of the working group, *Communio Sanctorum*, which, despite the many stimuli it contained, was unfortunately almost forgotten. If the concurring agreement demonstrated that the conduct of Christians would become more a manifestation of genuine evangelical freedom, it would express the radical newness of faith in the crucified Christ and the life of grace according to his Spirit.

135 *Statement von Bischof Dr. Gerhard Feige (Magdeburg) anlässlich der Veröffentlichung der Studie "Gott und die Würde des Menschen"*. https://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/presse_2017/2017-028a-Vorstellung-Studie-BILAG_Statement-Bischof-Feige.pdf (accessed August 3, 2017)

136 cf. *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*, čl. 247.

137 In this relation, it would be worth considering if it is consistent that the Lutheran churches, also members of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), even though they agree with the Catholics regarding the foundations of the doctrine of a person made in God's image as man and woman, have spoken in an all-society debate about same-sex marriage in favor of same-sex marriage, which implies the right to adopting a child. cf. *Stellungnahme des Rates der EKD zur Debatte über die „Ehe für alle“*, <https://www.ekd.de/Stellungnahme-des-Rates-der-EKD-zur-Debatte-um-die-Ehe-fuer-alle-24373.htm> (accessed August 3, 2017) Similarly, the Catholic side should be subjected to a reflection on the extent to which it is still justified to say that among Lutherans and Catholics there still exists *ethische Grunddifferenz*, as Cologne Cardinal Woelki let himself be heard. cf. Woelki, Reiner Maria. Ehrlichkeit in der Ökumene. In *Herder Korrespondenz*, 10 (2017), p. 13.

138 cf. *Gott und die Würde des Menschen*, čl. 263.

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THE BIBLIODRAMA AND ITS SPIRITUAL POTENTIAL



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Abstract

Background: Bibliodrama is one of the creative approaches to the Bible connected with group work. It provides its participants with the possibility to find the message of a biblical text through being involved in it with their whole person, including their emotions, feelings, experience, body, and mind. There are various methods used in bibliodramatic work, including artistic, musical, dramatic, verbal, etc. Since scientific exegesis plays an important role in the preparation of Bibliodrama workshops, its leaders must be theologians or persons with a theological background, not only because of the need for exegetical preparation but also because of the possible questions and problems which may arise during a session.

Conclusion: The question about God and one's own faith is one of the most important existential questions, and, at the same time, one of the most intimate and deepest internal matters for a person. Therefore, this paper sought to explore the significance of the spiritual dimension and potential of this method. With respect to practical implications in this field, it can be asserted that Bibliodrama is one of the most important methods that can help its participants discover and experience that the message of biblical texts concerns them personally and that the word of God is real and effective.

Keywords: Bibliodrama – Exegeses – Spirituality – Creative methods – Therapy.

Introduction

Since the end of the 1970's, the bibliodrama, or bibliodramatic work, as a specific way of interpreting the biblical text, has acquired meaning. The stimulus to its development was both a renewed interest in the Bible after the Second Vatican Council in the Catholic Church, and at the same time (not only the Catholic Church, but also other churches) the need for actual contact with the message of the biblical texts. The exegesis of biblical texts as a science became too academic and incomprehensible throughout the 20th century for a wider circle of Bible readers. As a result, there has been some need for a balance or complement to the strict rationalism of scientific interpretation of biblical texts by greater contact with them, as they are primarily God's word for people as the current message for their life here and now. The bibliodramatic work was not the only reaction to the academic exegesis in the second half of the 20th century. A renewed interest in lectio divina and other creative and spiritual-oriented methods of work searching for the existential dimension of biblical texts can be attributed to the same stream.¹³⁹ The pioneers

139 The books of Anneliese Hecht belong among pioneering works. *Zugänge zur Bibel*, Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1993 and *Bibel erfahren. Methoden ganzheitlicher Bibelarbeit*. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2001 (The Czech translation of: *Přístupy k biblii*) Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství. 1997; *Tvořivá práce s biblickými postavami. [Working creatively with Biblical figures.]* Praha: České katolické biblické dílo, 2006).

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of the “new” methods did not go about denying the meaning of modern exegesis, because it is necessary for the correct interpretation of the texts, but to exploit its results to facilitate the personal encounter of a person as a multidimensional being with the message of biblical texts, or the one who stands behind their authority, with God himself. The bibliodrama seeks to enable this encounter in a specific manner. The focus on the spiritual (existential) human dimension and its development is increasingly important in working with biblical text. The following text also focuses more on this aspect due to this reason.

The bibliodrama as a specific method

The bibliodrama is one of the methods of working with biblical texts¹⁴¹ through creative techniques in the group led by a trained bibliodrama or bibliodramatics team. An essential stage of this work is the self-reflection of each participant as well as the group’s reflection of individual activities. The biblical grasp of the text works both by the biblical message of the text based on its literary text and its professional interpretation, as well as its deeper archetypal plane, whose grasping it is possible to get a reflection of the experiences and personal reactions of individual participants and the whole group on ongoing events) based on the interpretation of the text.

Based on experience with the bibliodramatic interpretation of biblical text, it may be noted that the difference is whether bibliodramatic work is about a homogeneous Christian group or group, some of whom are not Christians, since they, unlike the biblical text, for they, unlike the faithful biblical text, do not automatically receive sacred text as such, but this distinction does not have to play a large role, if the so-called faithless¹⁴² are willing to open the message of the text. It can also be enriched for both parts of the group. If it is a homogeneous group of believers, understanding the text as God’s message (Word of God) is almost certainly assumed, although it does not mean that it is always properly set. On the contrary. The bibliodramatic work is aimed at “overcoming” the automatic understanding of the text, the stereotypes in its understanding and the understanding of the contents of faith. This is the creative technique that works with deeper layers of the human personality than just rationality.¹⁴³

The bibliodramatic work, like other types of group work based on experience, has three basic phases: warming up, exercise, and reflection.¹⁴⁴ The warm-up is used to relax and concentrate the attention of the participants on the “here and now” and to launch the group dynamics. Exercises or the different types of activities that need to be alternated, permit participants to experience a certain aspect of the text, either directly in confrontation with the text, or in “confluence” in confronting the individual’s own experience based on situations or topics similar to those in the biblical text, but in a new context. Experience, of course, enters the process even in the first case, but less consciously. Self-reflection and group reflection are the culmination of the entire process. These three phases are supplemented by an introductory and final ritual.

141 This method can also be used for other literary texts.

142 I do not have experience with members of other monotheistic religions. The European bibliodramatic society is already working on a bibliodramatic program to work with immigrants. There are attempts at an interreligious bibliodrama, which works more easily with bearers of the Jewish tradition than with Muslims.

143 See: Brandhorst, Andrea und Herman, Fallner, Heinrich, Warns, and Else Natalie (Hg.). *Bibliodrama als Prozess. Leitung und Beratung*. 3 th. ed. Berlin: EBVerlag, 2012: 384 – 387.

144 For a more detailed description see: Rysková, Mireia, Zuzana, Pelechová, and Magdalena, Bodláková O’Brien: *Bibliodrama*. Brno: Tribun EU, 2012; Pitzele, Peter A. *Scripture Windows. Toward a Practice of Bibliodrama*. Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 1998.

The three phases of the bibliodramatic process are constant for all types of bibliodramatic work. From other types of group work it is distinguished from the starting point, which is the biblical text. Although bibliodramatic work includes therapeutic moments, it is not group therapy because it focuses on the biblical text and its interpretation. Therefore neither the selected participant nor the group is standing in the foreground, but the biblical text and its message.

In fact, there is no “bibliodrama”, but there are different approaches and schools to work creatively with biblical texts, so the definitions of bibliodrama and bibliodramatic work are different. E.N. Warns places an emphasis in his concept on the text as the space in which the meeting occurs,¹⁴⁵ P. Pitzele, based on Jewish tradition, the bibliodrama conceives as a kind of midrash,¹⁴⁶ M. Oeming classifies them into methods targeted at the recipient¹⁴⁷ and knows them primarily as entry into roles within the biblical text, Andriessen-Derksen emphasizes the bibliodrama as a meeting of a person in his/her integrity with the richness of the traditions of faith (the contents and relationships) contained in the texts,¹⁴⁸ G.M. Martin considers the bibliodrama as an open program of the interactive process between the text and the participants,¹⁴⁹ Pauler refers to the tradition of medieval games, which may be a bibliodrama of its kind as a continuation, and characterizes them as experience with and interpretation of the Bible within the game.¹⁵⁰ The enumeration could be continued since each bibliodramatic school places an emphasis on something else. However, apart from the three phases and the biblical texts, all of them are common: work in a group, work with the personal experience of individuals, the use of different creative methods (the emphasis on individual methods and the process of their use differs between schools and streams)¹⁵¹ and professional guidance. All approaches and schools also emphasize that it is not therapy, and underscore the importance of knowledge of exegesis, theology and spirituality, and the importance of working with the group.

The basic pillars of the bibliodramatic process

The bibliodramatic process in all types of bibliodramatic work is based on four basic pillars: the biblical text, the individual participant with his/her inner world, the group and the team leader.

Biblical text – a polysemantic structure that allows multi-layered work (the leader/team must select the text, choose the basic significant lines with which he/she wants to work with the group); from the perspective of the believer, it is the sacred text through which God’s word can be heard

145 Brandhorst, Andrea und Herman, Fallner, Heinrich, Warns, and Else Natalie (Hg.). *Bibliodrama als Prozess. Leitung und Beratung*. 29.

146 Pitzele, Peter A. *Scripture Windows. Toward a Practice of Bibliodrama*. 23n.

147 Oeming, Manfred. *Úvod do biblické hermeneutiky. Cesty k pochopení textu. [Introduction to Biblical hermeneutics. Ways of understanding the text.]* 197.

148 Andriessen, Hermann, and Derksen, Nicolaas. *Lebendige Glaubensvermittlung im Bibliodrama*. Mainz: Grünewald, 1989.

149 Martin, Gerhard Marcel. *Sachbuch Bibliodrama. Praxis und Theorie*. Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln: Kohlhammer, 1995.

150 Pauler, Norbert. *Bibliodrama. Glauben erfahren mit Hand, Kopf und Herz*. 13.

151 Some schools, e.g., work with a significant use of psychodrama procedures, others emphasize the dramatic component of work, others on the aesthetic level, working with the body, special procedures in the interpretation of a text; there is sufficient opportunity to enter the text in a creative way. Personally, in bibliodramatic work, I personally go about awakening or “unblocking” and then developing the spiritual dimension in participants.

(it is the word of God); it is the text that bears the message. For a believer, God is behind the text or through the text, the intense experience of meeting him may or may not succeed; it can not be planned.¹⁵²

The planning of the program is based on the biblical text, from the basic significant lines revealed by standard exegetic methods, but the entire process of text interpretation enters a certain subjective moment at this stage the leadership (team), which determines what aspects of the text will receive attention in the subsequent group interaction. The leader also chooses the types of activities through which the text will be updated, i.e. present for the “here and now”.

Individual – a specific person who enters the space of God’s Word with personal history, faith or unbelief, experience, knowledge, preferences, prejudices and emotions. The aim of the process is to facilitate the process of opening the message of the text in the current specific situation of the individual. On the other hand, the individual is responsible for the degree of his/her opening and self-sharing. The courage to self-share is anticipated and expected, but the depth of openness is left to the individual’s freedom; no one must be forced to reveal his/her own self beyond the limit that is safe for him/her. A shared truth is expected, but not “controlled”.

Group – in view of the nature of the process, it is obvious that group dynamics work in the group, mainly when it comes to longer-term bibliodramatic work (full-day or multi-day meetings) with a relatively stable group. This dynamic needs to be reflected and worked with. The bibliodramatic group behaves in this respect, in terms of the ongoing processes, like any other group, and here apply the general principles.¹⁵³ From a spiritual perspective, it is important to interact with the participants on all levels, to (internally) accept other opinions and attitudes and enrich them, gaining the opportunity to confront other attitudes and correct your position (at least by thinking) or confirming it. All this occurs in a safe place where all personal positions are allowed to be presented. Correction can occur directly through group interactions (confrontation with other views) or discussion within a reflection.

Leader/Team – Even the leader/team is part of the group dynamics, but he/she has a specific position because he/she has the choice of text and methods, conducting and moderating the process, conducting discussions and, above all, building a safe space for the participants. His/her theological competence and experience with working with the group and the use of creative techniques are assumed. He/she is responsible for the direction of interpreting the text, the safety of the participants, the open and friendly atmosphere and the quality of the program. In the first place, he/she must know his/her limits and the extent of his/her competences. On the other hand, he/she must be able not only to reflect his/she personal religious (church) attitudes but also to respect different attitudes and to ensure a sufficient degree of tolerance for all concerned. His/her personal preferences must be able to “keep up” so as not to restrict the freedom of expression of the participants. Simultaneously, he/she must be able to respond suitably to the questions and problems raised, including the theological, psychological and seminar management area.

152 In the preparation a bibliodramatic meeting the biblical text needs to be interpreted, for which the general rules of hermeneutics apply. The sanctity of the text lies in its overlapping plane. See: Pokorný, Petr. *Hermeneutika jako teorie porozumění od základních otázek jazyka k výkladu bible. [Hermeneutika as a theory of understanding from basic questions of language regarding the interpretation of the Bible.]* 23.

153 See: Yalom, Irvin. *Teorie a praxe skupinové dynamiky. [Theory and practice of group dynamics.]* Hradec Kralov: Konfrontace, 1999.

Methods of bibliodramatic work

Bibliodrama works with a variety of creative techniques, but it is not intended to create any artifacts, but personal expressions of participants as individuals and groups on the level of the biblical text. So it is possible to use art, musical, dramatic, gestural, verbal, meditative techniques, etc., but always in connection with the message of the text. These techniques permit participants to work with the text and its message on a not purely rational level, to involve the entire being, not just the rational component, seeking the message of the text or opening up to God’s message.

Bibliodramatic work involves standard art techniques (e.g. collage, free painting or work with plastic materials – individual and group, any type of work with paint, film strip creation, place-holders, work with paper, stones or other materials), musical and vocal (mostly “Orff” instrumentation, the use of one’s own body, own voice), dramatic (dramatization, dialogue, “hot” chair, pantomime, sociodrama, vignette¹⁵⁴), gestures (sculptures and statues, expressions of gesture of personal feelings, assessments, emotions from the text), verbal (diary entries, prayer, psalms, hymns or other texts, storytelling, character biographies, writing letters, messages, poems); meditative (control of the imagination based on text, personal meditation over the text, meditation in nature, common meditation-prayer), interpretation (Våsteras, Bludesch, text commenting, selection of the most important words, phases of the text, commentary work).

Preparation of a bibliodramatic meeting

The basis for the preparation of a bibliodramatic meeting is solid theological and exegetic work with the text. Since the biblical text is polysemantic, one of its basic theological levels, with which the group is to be confronted, must be chosen after its analysis and theological evaluation. Although they can support some other significant aspects of the text, but in principle the program should be directed in one basic direction. Willing to exhaust all the possibilities of the text means overburdening recipients in terms of emotions and content demands through a large number of differently focused activities.¹⁵⁵ It is necessary to plan the activities (including reflective summary), their sequence (gradation) and the timeframe (including breaks and rest periods). To do this, you need to provide the necessary aids and materials, the group familiarizing itself with the text and other circumstances of the meeting (what to take with them, whether they have something to prepare, study, etc.). Whether the group will know the text in advance and prepare for it, or whether it will learn what text in the course of the work, depends on the choice of the (team) leader and the monitored target. The leader of a bibliodramatic meeting (seminar, workshop) may not choose a text that would be emotionally negative for him/her (or someone from the preparatory team) at the time.

Bibliodrama and therapy

The primary aim of bibliodramatic work is not a therapeutic effect,¹⁵⁶ but the personal adoption of the message of the biblical text, its experience of its “own skin” as a text that concerns me, and it directly touches me. And this in a group offering the possibility of correcting or at least relativizing one’s own understanding as the only possible and proper one. The direct therapeutic moment of bibliodramatic work may or may not occur – it occurs when a topic or activity that

154 Some of these techniques are known mainly from psychodrama.

155 It should also be borne in mind that the participants themselves bring into play other meanings that will come to them in confronting the text and with the implementation of activities. Although such work with the text has the character of a game, it is demanding and tedious, so it is necessary to plan activities less and leave time for their experience and subsequent reflexive processing.

156 Gossmann, Hans-Christoph. “Die therapeutische Dimension. Bibliodrama und Gestalttherapie”. 63 – 70.

is being processed opens within an individual an important and unprepared moment for him/her that he/she has consciously or unknowingly pushed into the subconscious, or resonates with some current problem. In such a case, it is necessary to currently assist the person in the question and concluding (the situation) in the manner acceptable for him/her and for the group.¹⁵⁷ The possibility to excite the emotional response of an individual and a group must be counted on and able to be addressed (the bibliodramatic process offers some tools, especially in the field of reflection and the dynamics of activities), so as to emotionally calm and manage the situation.

An indirect therapeutic effect can manifest itself in a religious or spiritual area. Here it is useful, even if the aim of the bibliodramatic work in this field is not a direct therapeutic effect.¹⁵⁸ If such a need arises, it is useful to offer the person concerned a personal meeting, eventually spiritual accompaniment. Mainly when working with a group that does not know too much, it is necessary to select texts not burdened by negative emotions already in the subject area. An indirect therapeutic effect, if we understand it as a possibility of growth and maturation in the field of faith and the spiritual dimension of humans, is desirable, because it means that it has "opened the door" to the action of God's word, which is in itself effective and creative.

Beliefs and methods of experiencing it are one of the most intimate themes of human communication, and many people can speak about this dimension of their lives only with great difficulty, sometimes not at all. Creative techniques allow participants to enter the space of faith and spirituality (their own as well as others) and other than at the level of words, allow participants to surprise themselves, the depth of their experience and the experience of others to realize and eventually formulate without fear of judgment and criticizing their experiences and attitudes in the field of faith and the sacred. The creation of the "work", which may be an "artifact" permanent or a time-consuming (dramatization, gesture, musical, implementation of movement), allows an individual and a group to become distant from the self, confronting themselves in unexpected situations working with text. The "work" tells about the person but is not identical with him/her; such a work can of course also play a role. The person in role is and is not him/herself, the role allows him/her to distance him/herself, to attempt other positions and life attitudes (e.g. by playing a negative figure) and the following instruction, for at the same time it is he/she who gives the chosen role the content, who fills it with him/herself.¹⁵⁹

This in itself has a psychological and spiritual therapeutic effect: it can be abreaction and catharsis, strengthening and growth in faith as a relationship, joy, self-understanding and understanding of the world of others, awareness of the consequences of negative behavior based on experience, etc. However, this therapeutic moment is not the main aim, but the fruit of the work. The aim remains the Biblical text and its personal grasp, revealing its message to every participant here and now in the space of the joint work.

157 So it is useful to conduct the work in pairs at least. According to the seriousness, it is useful to recommend professional help.

158 Although religious therapy in the sense of Frielingsdorf's book *False Beliefs about God* uses similar creative methods, its aim and entire focus are different from bibliodramatic work. There is a targeted therapeutic effect in the sphere of religious life, a change of the paradigm of the relationship to God, to one's self and one's surroundings.

159 So for some scholars, the bibliodrama is just playing roles.

The spiritual dimension of bibliodramatic work

In view that the bibliodrama works with the biblical text, religious experience, ideas and knowledge of the participants, it is understandable that the spiritual dimension plays a significant role in the bibliodramatic process. Indeed, the mission of the bibliodrama is a personally (subjectively) focused interpretation of the biblical text, encounter or confrontation with its message, opening the path for the actual act of God's word.¹⁶⁰ In accessing participants and using imagination and imaginative techniques in working with biblical texts, the bibliodramatic work resembles Ignatian exercises.¹⁶¹ The role of the facilitator is the role of a facilitator who, without evaluation, permits different views, allows the expression of emotions and abreactions, cares for the atmosphere of safety, confidence and self-confidence of the participants, completing the thematic theological accompaniment. A non-valued approach is a basic requirement and a prerequisite for the entire work.

At the start it is always necessary to overcome the internal barrier of participants who are not used to this type of work, to assure and motivate them that they are not artistic expressions in terms of their art (playing, artwork, musical production, dance...) i.e. an artistic impression, but a free expression. The discovery of their own creative abilities (irrespective of the artistic aspect of the creation) and their implementation in the self bears spiritual potential i.e. ineffectiveness, moments of surrender, joy, inner fulfillment, touching the unexpected, intuitive insight beneath the surface of reality.

The biblical text has a religious, and hence a spiritual, dimension for the believer (Christian). The creative handling of biblical texts can lead to a deepening of the understanding of the text and of faith itself (also thanks to interaction with others), nevertheless it is not necessary in the first stage, because it unexpectedly confronts a person with his/her models or schemes of belief (one's own belief), which may mean their strong disruption and shaking of the present "problem-free" image of God or sacred realities (and also occasionally the meaning). That is why reflection is always needed to help overcome the experienced "shock".

For non-believers or non-Christians, creative work with the biblical text can be a spiritual dimension in the sense that it is confronted with itself and with the claim of exaltation, with existential themes, with his/her statements of various types, adopts an opinion (externally and internally).

160 The following publication by Andriessen, Herman, and Derksen, Nicolaas deals with the question of the bibliodramatic relationship and the mediation of religious content and experience: *Lebendige Glaubensvermittlung im Bibliodrama. Eine Einführung*. Mainz: Grünewald, 1989

161 The difference, of course, lies in the individuality of accompaniment (the group does not play a role in the exercises) and in the goal of individual personal growth, the organization of the life of the exerciser, not primarily understanding the text and mastering its message. Moreover, the length of the bibliodramatic process and exercise is different. However, there have been successful attempts to connect the exercises and the bibliodrama. See Radeck, Heike on the topic. *Ignazianische Exerzitien und Bibliodrama*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998.

The biblical text always bears an existential message, and its understanding through creative methods always means exceeding the limits of dry rationality, learned schemas, confrontation with the unknown – in the text, in one's self, in others.¹⁶² The courage to step into the unknown has a strong spiritual potential because it opens up to something that is not entirely predictable.

The fundamental moment of the entire process is reflection (self-reflection of participants and group reflection), because only on that basis does emotional experience turn into (or may become) a certain spiritual or religious experience.¹⁶³ Reflection¹⁶⁴ is led by the leader – not primarily focused on feelings, even though it begins with them for reasons of abreaction of individuals and groups and for obtaining “material” for reflection. It goes from “*how*” (how I see how I experienced it, how I feel) to “*what*” (what I've seen, what we've noticed, what appeals to me/what bothers me), then through “*why*” (exploration of the seen, experienced) to the final “*what to do*” (for what it is, what I take away from...what is “added value”, a bonus for me). Reflection can be longer than a previous activity, because it explains not only experiences and emotions (why), but also questions of faith and meaning. The leader of the reflection moderates and motivates participants to formulate findings and conclusions. He/she must always ensure that there is no “good advice for others” or the negative evaluation of one of the participants due to his/her opinions, attitudes, statements in the work.

One of the possibilities of reflection and self-reflection in writing is a short commentary or a question (which can be formulated orally) of others as they confront their own vision or view of themselves by seeing others outside. Its author wants to express something (he/she has his/her idea of what it is supposed to be), but others can see something else.¹⁶⁵ Comments and questions then make it possible for others to see new locations and contents in their own creation; after all, it applies to other implementations (dramatic, gestural, musical, etc.) through feedback from others in the group or the leader.

The question of God, which mostly arises in connection with the biblical text, is not an issue without a sign, but it is burdened with a strong emotional charge, even in the case of so-called non-believers (people without religious affiliation). It is precisely the confrontation of one's own relationship with God and the views and attitudes of others that can provoke tension and uncertainty. Simultaneously it can be very enriching and liberating, because it can help a person overcome their own narrow view of a relationship to God or liberate them by knowing that others have similar attitudes or questions and problems, so they are not “strange” or “heretical”. The bibliodrama can function as an effective correction in this area. However, it is necessary for the

162 Probable participants in bibliodramatic seminars or workshops are sometimes priests and theologians, when they do not want to leave their role and be available, leaving fixed positions and the role of “who knows best in the religious realm”.

163 So it is important to “force” the participants to a written reflection after the bibliodramatic workshop, sessions.

164 Reflection may adopt a variety of forms, not always verbal, but it is necessary after every meaningful activity.

165 An example of a technique permits written communication and verbal sharing is to paint one's own figure in actual size and its colorful paper: the participants draw each other on a large piece of paper and each one then does his/her own coloring. Then anonymous comments are written on the enclosed piece of paper (characters are not marked with names, so sometimes it is not clear when writing the comment). In conclusion, everyone can comment on their character or make a statement on what they want to comment on. If this technique is used in a multi-day seminar, it is possible to give participants time to adjust their character. Eventually, you can use your own character to talk imaginatively with yourself (type of “hot chair” technique) or write a message for yourself as a character or a character for another person.

leader (of the team) to create a sufficiently secure and open environment and to be qualified for theological answers and responses to the question of God.¹⁶⁶ Already taking God into a game (as one of the roles) can be difficult for someone.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, the figure of Jesus is similar. Very often, participants do not dare to enter these roles or are dissatisfied with their implementation by others. Nevertheless, these situations create the potential for communication, the expressing one's own opinion and confronting it with the opinions of others, verbalizing questions about God, and finding answers, thus allowing to find themselves a little in the circumstances of Job and his friends.

A special situation represents the inclusion of the results of bibliodramatic work in the liturgy. There is a sacral space in the safe space of the bibliodrama that requires a partially different approach. Within the liturgy, only a well-coordinated group of people can completely “improve”, otherwise it is not only an agreement but also some training, which sometimes reduces the immediate experience of the moment. On the other hand, this “loss” is compensated for by the knowledge that the bibliodramatic rendering is part of the liturgical process. Not for every participant is this connection easy, especially when it is necessary to leave the literal text (not its dramatized reading or implementation) and create a completely new interpretation of the text.

Biblical work can be combined with spiritual activities such as spiritual renewal or exercises. Individual activities can be used as a stimulus to the individual meditation of participants and subsequent sharing or directly to spiritual conversations within exercises. Working with a specific self-expression (a work of art is highly suitable) makes it very easy for the verbal expression of the accompanying individual (the exerciser) on the ground plan of an inappropriate interview above the work or over a dramatic, gesticulating...creation. Creative approaches involve the entire being in the process of creation, and can lead to expression and subsequent awareness of what one is not aware of at a rational level in the religious sphere (on the spiritual plane). Creative expression allows a dialogue to be established, it is possible to ask what things mean and why they are so or why the respondent expressed him/herself in a given way. They allow unexpected encounters with themselves and with an area of reality beyond the reaction of the other.

It is precisely because the bibliodrama works with various creative techniques that it offers not only the possibility of creative acceptance of the biblical message (in truth, simple familiarization with important biblical texts and their messages), but self-reflection in confrontations with basic existential questions and archetypal contents, and in consequence the possibility of changing their attitudes.

The question of God (which may be unthinkable) and of a person (who I am here and now) are the central issues with which one has to cope. The bibliodramatic work, as I understand it after nearly 20 years of practice, with an emphasis on its spiritual potential, enables a person to confront him/herself in a safe space (expressed psychodramatically in the protected space and in the protected space on the other) through biblical text and sharing with others yourself and to realize the importance of the spiritual dimension for your life. It allows the inspection of the richness of the images of God and to ask questions that God does not answer like Job from

166 While the bibliodrama is sometimes included in methods that do not require special theological education from the leader, this is not so because in the course of the bibliodramatic work (seminar, workshop) a variety of theological questions emerge, and this is very serious because it is on the level of the existential, not just thought.

167 In regards to this see the interesting experience of P.A. Pitzele, op. cit. (chapter God in the Drama), p. 221–224.

a thundering cloud, yet through mediation through other participants and through his/her own experiences he/she permits the finding of an answer or at least open the way to it. This is true regardless of the starting position of faith or “unbelief”. The only condition for “success” on the part of the participant is his/her openness. It is important to realize that what is happening in the bibliodramatic process is not an amusing, a non-binding game, although it may seem like that to an uninitiated observer, but to direct the participants to find the most basic relationships: to God, to him/herself and to others in the biblical text as the actual Word of God.

Finally, I present excerpts from the subsequent written reflections on the seminar¹⁶⁸ to the text of John 15, 1–12, which well documented the spiritual dimension of the bibliodramatic work. It was a multi-day seminar outside Prague (in the Jewish monastery) from Thursday afternoon to Sunday afternoon, attended by 14 participants (men and women aged 22–53) with two leaders. From the spiritual perspective, it was essentially a homogeneous group of believers (faculty students), although each of the participants was otherwise oriented in life (religious, single, fathers and mothers from family, students, workers ...).

Every day, a program was planned that included both voluntary participation in common prayers (breviary) and mass, as well as obligatory joint activities prepared in advance.¹⁶⁹ The group was together the entire time outside of their usual environment. Bad weather and cold in the areas where we worked was a negative aspect. Pairs were kept the same for the entire time, which the participants rated positively.

After the seminar, participants were provided with both the entire program of the seminar with brief descriptions of the activities performed, as well as the questions of reflection.

Samples from the reflections:

What was the most important thing for you throughout the seminar?

“It is a performance from my cycle, a performance from my common space and the dedication of those days to myself, to God, in a narrow community of the like-minded, similarly trying. It seems to me at that moment that it is indeed a bit of a Cenacle, something authentic from that community of apostles around Christ. In my opinion, the bibliodrama is really the “opening Scripture” to the fullest extent. Always surprising me again. As very important for me, I also appreciate the creative dimension of the seminar. This time it was more of individual creative things, very active and natural to meditate, and less dramatic together. I also constantly appreciate being in a pair the whole day, everyday. It was possible to develop some potential depth, while I did not have the stress of alternation. But it can also be the fact that my partner was sitting in a pair.

168 The participants then had to answer the following questions: 1. What was the most important thing for you throughout the seminar?; 2. What did not suit you? 3. Was the program well prepared? Was it safely conducted? Were the activities clear?; 4. How do you rate a group and why?; 5. What should have been different?; 6. What is left to this day?; 7. Should such seminars within more studies? Answers to questions that relate to the spiritual dimension of the bibliodrama have been selected as examples.

169 Imaginatively and creatively: meditation of image, collage (on the topic: I Am a Grape Bush, you are the Branch), painting a character (While I am in God's Eyes); gestural: expression of the text through gestures, free dancing, sculpture of people; verbal: Jesus' invitation to the feast – written, addressed to a partner in a pair; work with text: meditation: personal (what life gave and took – reflection on pairs), interpretation of the text according to the Bludesch method; Working with text – selection of important words and rationale for choice.

It is also very important to me that the conclusion of the seminar is always directed positively and specifically. I am aware of that more now, when it was repeated several times. It is a terribly good move that helps to mobilize strength and hope, to restore faith, and while that particularity and verbalization in the community strengthens it, and one can better follow the action of the Spirit. Personally, I'm not used to such an open expression of faith in the community, so it's an intimate and more intense experience for me.”

“For me, it was a very interesting experience and an opportunity to learn from myself – sometimes in situations that for me, as an introvert, are not quite simple and natural, but I know that they are very moving for me, learning new things. “

“The most important thing for me was the discovery that I am really enjoying and fulfilling the creation of artwork (creation of collage, painting). This is an activity I do not care about in my everyday world. That is what I enjoyed at the seminar. Thanks to these techniques, I was thinking from a different point of view over the Bible text, which was an unusual (but also challenging) experience for me. As an introvert, I appreciated the possibility of expressing myself differently than through verbal communication. And maybe it seems like something small, but one of the most important things for me was sitting and prayer before meals.”

“For me personally, it is always beneficial only when one listens to the opinions of others and forced to try to understand the Bible and look at the same text with another's eyes. The very nice community at the seminar was also a great plus.”

“To have the space to be with yourself, with God and others. A method to grasp biblical text that is different from ordinary meditation on spiritual exercises. Feedback and community view. The possibility of distancing yourself from the problems that you have to bear.”

What did not suit you?

“I concentrated hard. I was experiencing the problem of transitions from personal meditation to working with others. I am accustomed to having a lot of time to reflect on what happened during the day (for “ordinary” operation I dedicate an hour of morning meditation to the biblical text and an hour of evening reflection of the day and “being with God”) and I did not have it this time, I mainly missed a calming evening a little, but I did not want to be prepared for the possibility of being with others. I was also very tired and I would have welcomed more time to relax.

I am sorry that a text that causes positive emotions in others and is a testimony of God's love generates negative feelings in me. I'm sorry about it for the sake of the others, because I'm in the group with such a “negative” attitude and only for “myself.”

What is left to this day?

“A collage stuck to the wall. (It is a multi-faith reminder still open to new meanings... Actually, from my first bibliodrama, it has renewed my old love for collages and I often help with them now, when I feel a content that I cannot name, or just when I feel like creating and relaxing). A strong positive charge, the hope of a message, the power of the community, the creative spirit, the belief in the fruitfulness of my life, and the confidence that the vineyard knows very well what needs to be cleaned and when.”

“Poster with my character: Because at the moment my task is self-acceptance, this is an important activity for me, and I am glad I decided to take that drawing home, because though burning it would have been nice, it would not move me much.”

"The room in the soul as a result of the process of first not accepting the addressed text, and then through the distressful path through necessary inner humility, perhaps, grasping the meaning of the solved text. A close relationship with participants in the seminar and a slightly wider view of contemporary life through them."

"I am aware that us guys have some problems with our body. And we solve it by transforming things into humor and doing crunches. For women, some ways of expression are more natural. And that is good to realize. There is better understanding one's own "interpretive key" to oneself."

"I still have the final sculpture in my head to this day. When one looks at the photo, it will strengthen. It was very nice that some were taken back from the seminar also "on paper." And I still have paper on which others wrote me, and I'm very happy and enriched."

From the selected statements, it is clear that bibliodramatic work can be successfully used for a deeper understanding of the message of the biblical text. With good leadership in order to ensure a safe space for participants, participants can overcome their closed nature, fear and apprehension, and are able to reach the text through their experiences in different ways in the communities of other people, so that they can integrate their experience into their lives.

Conclusion

There can be no doubt about the importance of the professional interpretation of the biblical text and the meaningfulness of the scientific methods of exegesis, since without them the text – given the distance from the time, the environment, the culture, the religious concepts under which it was created – can draw conclusions that may be in direct contradiction with the intent of the author, and therefore also the message of God. However, the results of theological knowledge must be transposed into the situation of a contemporary person who is burdened with information and messages of all kinds, who often find it difficult to find access to him/herself, to others and to God (even though he/she may be a regular visitor of houses of worship) because he/she is often forced to reduce his/her access to the world on rationality, utilitarianism and pragmatism, even in spiritual matters. Bibliodramatic work offers a certain change in the paradigm in this respect, since it wants to enable the participants of the process to come into contact with the biblical text through their entire being, in association with other participants in group happenings. Biblical texts are sacred texts, as well as texts that conceal deep human experience, so they can reach out to everyone who is willing to open and allow themselves to be addressed. The task of the bibliodramatics leader is to offer a way to reveal the message of the biblical text, using various creative methods of working with it. In order to become a facilitator of spiritual experience on the basis of a biblical text, he/she must have practical experience with this work, knowledge of theology and exegesis, he/she must orient him/herself in the matter of spiritual life and be sufficiently anchored and open.

This article does not offer a detailed view of the bibliodrama as a method of textual interpretation, but focuses on the significance of the spiritual plane and the spiritual potential of this type of work. Seeking answers to the basic existential questions of life, including the question of God, the relationship to him, to him/herself and to others, including all of creation, belongs among people's tasks as in the image of God, and therefore it is necessary to offer the path. A bibliodrama is not a heal-all or clearly the best or most successful pastoral path, but it is a method of working with a biblical text that meets a contemporary person's desire for authentic spiritual experience and is able to convey it to him/her.

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POST-CHALCEDONIAN SOTERIOLOGICAL CHRISTOLOGY OF POPE LEO THE GREAT
IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL-CULTURAL DISCOURSES

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Abstract

Background: The presented study is dedicated to the post-Chalcedonian Christology of Pope Leo the Great, as portrayed in the sermons delivered after the end of the Council of Chalcedon. It is a continuing research project focused on the elaboration of the thoughts of this important Pope who significantly influenced the wording of the Confession of Faith at the Council of Chalcedon with his letter to Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople (Tomus ad Flavianum). The study offers an analysis of sermons in the context of the liturgical calendar, focusing on whether and how Leo the Great perceived the two natures of the incarnated Word of God in his sermons.

Conclusion: Experts focusing on the early Christian writings have recently paid more attention to the study of the sermons of the early Christian authors. In their letters and books, they used parts of sermons, which enables us to look at their spiritual way of thinking from the holistic point of view. This study is significant because of its essential importance concerning the research of early Christian spirituality as well as its contribution to the ongoing dialogue between the Catholic Church and the so-called non-Chalcedonian Churches.

Keywords: Leo the Great – Christology – Council of Chalcedon – Incarnation – Sermon.

Introduction

Pope Leo I, named by posterity as “the Great”, has significantly influenced the wording of the Confession of Faith accepted by the Council of Chalcedon and used by the Eastern and Western Christian Churches. The presented study analyses Leo's post-Chalcedonian soteriological Christology.¹⁷⁰ The research focuses on Leo's thinking related to two natures of the Incarnated Word of God after the end of the council. This work is extension of my previous studies analysing and presenting the pre-Chalcedonian Christology, the work *Tomus ad Flavianum*,¹⁷¹ as well as the teaching on the Sacrament of Baptism by Leo the Great. He perceives the Incarnation through its connection to the salvation act of death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is a unique event of salvation, spread throughout our history. The fallen human nature that Christ received, certainly without the consequences of Adam's sin, was related to divine nature and is united in the person of the Son of God who has redeemed us. In this performed redemption plan is the Incarnation according to Leo the Great salvific as well, and therefore he constantly warns against heresies.

170 The study is a methodical continuation of the already processed pre-Chalcedonian Christology of Pope Leo the Great, analysis of his work *Tomus ad Flavianum* and the baptismal Christology of Leo the Great.

171 More details in: Lichner, Miloš, and Katarína, Karabová. *K prameňom ranokresťanskej latinskej tradície. [To the Origins of the Early-Christian Latin Tradition.]* 371 - 372.

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Sermons of this important pope and theologian allow us not only to perceive many aspects of the cultural and educational skills of Church Teachers, but they can also provide methodological bases for the research of spirituality of everyday life at any time of the development of Christian culture in the European environment. The sermons of Pope Leo the Great are also important since several passages were later embedded in his well-known Christological letters.

Latin Christological tradition is not sufficiently represented in theological, historical and philological works. Because of these facts, the aim is, also through the research focused on Leo's Christology, to supplement the absent space of relevant source translation, especially in the Slovak language.¹⁷³

It can be summarized that the conclusive aim of the study is to elaborate Leo's homiletic post-Chalcedonian Christology as it is recorded in his collection of sermons from the period after the end of the Council of Chalcedon. It concerns his sermons (*sermones - tractatus*¹⁷⁴). Theologians M. B. De Soos,¹⁷⁵ B. Green¹⁷⁶, S. Tori¹⁷⁷ and J. Geldhof¹⁷⁸ also focus on Leo's sermons, but at the same time, they emphasize the soteriological aspect of his Christology in particular. Determining factor of the performed research or study is if and how Leo the Great perceived the two natures of the Incarnated Word of God in his sermons.

Leo the Great and his work

Leo the Great (around 400 - November 10, 462)¹⁷⁹ is the only Pope of the period before the reign of Gregory the Great (540 - 604), whose almost entire work has been preserved to this day.¹⁸⁰ Out of the two currently available editions, in this study I use *the Corpus Christianorum latinorum* (hereinafter CCL).¹⁸¹ They include two collections of sermons. The first one contains 59 sermons delivered between 440 and 445¹⁸² in the same order as preserved in the collection. The second collection contains additional 35 sermons from the period between 446 and 461. Creation of this collection resulted from the affair of Palestinian monks (452 - 454). Sermons which Leo included in his second collection were often supplemented and corrected by him and they

173 The heretofore absent translations of Church Fathers are necessary for creation of the Slovak theological dictionary.

174 Manuscripts preserve different naming and basically have the same meaning as what we call sermon today. Similarly, AMBROSIVS understands these terms synonymically: *Sermo noster atque tractatus* (St. Ambrose. Výklad Vyznania viery, O sviatostiach, o tajomstvách. [Interpretation of The Confession of Faith, about Sacraments, about Secrets.] Lichner, Miloš, and Róbert, Horka. Starokresťanská knižnica, 9. [The Old-Christian Library, 9.] 206 - 207). Also, AVGVSTINVS in exordium to *Retractationes* divides his texts into three parts: *libri, epistulae, tractatus* (retr. 1, prol. 1 CCL 57, 5) but in the epilogue, we find: *libri, epistulae, sermones ad populum* (retr. Epil. CCL 57, 142). See also: Mohrmann, Christianne. *Praedicare, tractare, sermo*, in La Maison-Dieu 39. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1954: 97 - 107.

175 Soos, De Maria Bernard. *Le mystère liturgique d'après saint Léon le Grand*. Münster, 1958.

176 Green, Bernard. *The Soteriology of Leo the Great*. Oxford University press, 2008.

177 Tori, Sebastiano. *Il mistero Pasquale nei Sermoni di Leone Magno. Passione, morte e risurrezione di Cristo. La dimensione soteriologica tra passibilità e impassibilità divina*. Bologna: Dehoniana Libri, 2012.

178 Geldhof, Joris. *Exploring Leo the Great's Theology of Christ Ascension into Heaven*. In Preaching after Easter: Mid-Pentecost, Ascension, and Pentecost in Late Antiquity. *Vigiliae Christianae* 136. Supplements. 2016: 386 - 404.

179 For a more detailed biography see, for example: Lichner, Miloš, and Katarína, Karabová. *K prameňom ranokresťanskej latinskej tradície. [To the Origins of the Early-Christian Latin Tradition.]* 371 - 372.; See also: James, N, W. *Leo the great and prosper of aqutainte: A fifth century pope and his adviser*. 554-584

180 Today, we acknowledge as authentic 97 sermons (*sermones*) and 173 letters (*epistulae*).

181 CCL 138, 138A from 1973.

182 Chavase, Antoine. *Leo Magnus [Leo the Great]: Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, 1973:193.

are identified accordingly (*recensio alpha and recensio beta*). Sermons from the first collection have Latin numbering, sermons from the second one have Arabic numbering. I comply with this identification. In the CCL Collection, A. Chavasse divided sermons according to the first preserved collection and added themes that allow their easier identification. We find them in an order that is in line with the liturgical year. Compared to sermons from the pre-Chalcedonian period, the text *corpus* from the post-Chalcedonian period does not include preserved sermons from the period of the Epiphany, the Transfiguration of the Lord, and from the period of Resurrection, Ascension and Descent of the Holy Spirit. In this study, I comply with the liturgical division, which I also respected in the study of the pre-Chalcedonian sermons. It is evident that during this period the liturgical year was already precisely divided into periods we know as well (Lent, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Descent of the Holy Spirit.) To accurately understand Leo's Christology, it is essential to recognize individual liturgical periods. Therefore, I will analyse his sermons in the same order in which they were presented during the liturgical year, respecting the chronology within these periods. Let us look first at the context of this period.

The post-Chalcedonian context of the era

After the end of the Council of Chalcedon (November 1, 451), Leo's sermons were mainly focused on explanation of his letter addressed to Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, which is known as *Tomus ad Flavianum*, and its defending.¹⁸³

Correspondence between Pope Leo and bishops - participants of the Council has been preserved. Shortly after the end of the Council, they addressed him a letter¹⁸⁴, in which they described the course¹⁸⁵ of the Council and at its end, they asked for the approval which included also the Canon 28 aiming to establish new privileges for the Constantinople Church. Several weeks later, Emperor Marcian and Constantinople Bishop Anatolius wrote a letter to Leo requesting approval of conclusions of the Council. On May 22, 452, Pope answered in three letters that were addressed to Marcian, Pulcheria, and Anatolius.¹⁸⁶

The Roman Pope expressed satisfaction with conclusions concerning Christology, but he also indicated some concern about the text of the Canon 28 which, according to him, was in contrary to conclusions of the Council of Nicaea.¹⁸⁷

On February 15, 453, Emperor Marcian wrote a new letter¹⁸⁸ to Leo, expressing concern about Leo not responding to Council Bishops and claiming that his silence was used by supporters of Eutyches. He asked him repeatedly for the final approval of the Council texts. The text of the letter clearly indicates that the Emperor showed understanding of Pope's silence, because he admitted that the Pope has the right to disapprove with what is against the old canons. On March 21, 453, Leo replied to Bishops, and in the letter, he approved only those

183 The letter to Flavian was written on June 13, 449 and read at the beginning of the second session of the Council, on October 10, 451. More in: Lichner, Miloš. *Lev Velký a jeho Tomus ad Flavianum*. [Leo the Great and his *Tomus ad Flavianum*.] Translation and text analysis. Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2014.

184 PL 54, 951-960.

185 See also: Sesboüé, Bernard. *Jésus-Christ dans la tradition de l'Église*. Édition revue, corrigé et mise à jour. Paris: Desclée, 1982, p. 109-128.

186 *Epistulae* 104, 105, 106, PL 54, 991-1009.

187 This canon grants privilege to Constantinople Church, which the canon calls the new Rome. It recognizes the rights of old Rome only as the former emperor's seat. That is why Constantinople should be listed in the Church documents on the second place, after Rome and before Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem. At the same time, it grants privilege to Constantinople over the dioceses of Ponto, Proconsular Asia and Thrace as well as the bishops of those parts of the already mentioned dioceses that are inhabited by barbarians. See in detail: Souarn, Romuald. *Le 28e Canon de Chalcedoine*. In *Échos d'Orient*, tome 1, n°2, 1897, p. 55 - 58.

188 PL 54, 1017 - 1019.

Council decrees related to faith.¹⁸⁹ Despite the fact that the Roman theologian had been silent for several months in his reply to Council Bishops, shortly after he wrote and sent his letter *Tomus ad Flavianum* to Chalcedon, he continued with his sermons with Christological themes.

Leo's Christology and Christmas

The chronologically oldest post-Chalcedonian Sermon 27, which was delivered during the Christmas period and includes several topics, dates A. Chavasse back to 451. In addition to the final warning against hidden Manichaeans in Rome and the deterministic superstitions (3-5), the sermon begins with Christological thoughts. In its exordium, Leo recalls that a true believer should orthodoxly understand the Incarnation of the Lord¹⁹⁰. Subsequently, he interprets it through several biblical quotations from the Prologue to John's Gospel, which he explains by the verse 2.7 of the letter to Philippians. The sermon clearly emphasizes the complementarity as well as the preservation of the original identity of both natures: what has never been possessed is accepted and what has been possessed is not lost. Both natures are united in the Son of God, and this act of salvation has caused the restoration and recovery of the wounded human nature. At the same time, Leo suggests the transformation of the human nature to divine, based on the act of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

*And so our Lord Jesus Christ, being at birth true man though He never ceased to be true God, made in Himself the beginning of a new creation, and in the form of His birth started the spiritual life of mankind afresh. (...) For the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil; (Compare 1 John 3:8), and has so united Himself with us and us with Him that the descent of God to man's estate became the exaltation of man to God's.*¹⁹¹

Although there is no reference to *Tomus ad Flavianum* in the sermon, the Christological line of the sermon is in accordance with the above-mentioned letter; especially because the differences of natures in the unity of a person are emphasized. Christology is repeatedly soteriological, whereas the Incarnation is focused on the salvation of a man; and the exaltation of man to God is closely linked with what this exaltation of man allows, and that is the descent of God's Word to man.

At the end of the year 452, the Roman theologian presented the Christmas sermon 28. This sermon is interesting not only because Leo warns us against several heresies, but at the same time he points out directly to the misconceptions of Nestorius and Eutyches. In the exordium, he reminds us about the union of God and man in Jesus Christ, which is "hence a perfect unity of two natures abiding in possession of their own properties and whatever of Godhead is inseparable from the manhood: and whatever of manhood, is indivisible from the Godhead."¹⁹² Following the theologian Augustine of Hippo, who was convinced that every heresy begins by

189 PL 114, PL 54, 1026 - 1031; See also: Halleux de, André. *La définition christologique à Chalcedoine (Première partie)*, *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 7c année., fasc. 1, 1976, p. 3 - 23; De Halleux André. *La définition christologique à Chalcedoine (suite)*. *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 7 c année, fasc. 2, 1976, p. 155 - 170; Grillmeier, Aloys. *Reception and Contradiction. The development of the discussion about Chalcedon from 451 to the beginning of the reign of Justinian*. *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Vol. 2, part 1, from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590 - 604). Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1987, p. 115-120.

190 *Sermo* 27, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 132

191 *Sermo* 27, 1-2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 132 - 134.

192 *Sermo* 28, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 139.

denying the Incarnation of the Son of God¹⁹³, Leo extends this claim since he believes that each heresy actually attacks the Chalcedonian Christology, thus it does not accept some part of the union of human and divine nature in one person of the Son of God.¹⁹⁴ The text clearly shows that Leo does not name specifically the followers of different teachings who have committed heresy, but he rather describes mistakes of these teachings: Docetism, Arianism, Adoptionism, Sabellianism, Manichaeism, Apollinarism.¹⁹⁵

In the next part of the sermon, however, he directly mentions Nestorius¹⁹⁶, as well as Eutyches. He warns us against Nestorius, who, according to him, taught that Virgin Mary was only the Mother of Jesus, not the mother of God “in such a way that no union might be believed to have taken place of the Word and the Flesh in the conception and birth”. In this case, the Son of God himself would not become a son of man but would link himself with an already created man. Leo claims in the traditional theological argumentation, which we also know from the works of St. Athanasius, that the act of linking only the Word of God with the already created man would endanger the possibility of salvation of a man. “There would be no hope of salvation for mankind unless He were Himself the Son of the Virgin who was His mother’s Creator.”¹⁹⁷

Subsequently, Leo tries to explain Eutyches’ mistake to the believers.¹⁹⁸ He accepted the unity of two natures in Christ, but in a way that was originally an orthodox formulation (i.e., of two natures). The Council, however, denied this text because of Eutyches and accepted a statement emphasizing the continuation of the existence of two natures even after their union in the person of the Word of God (i.e., in two natures). This means that by combining two natures, only one nature remains; statement that Leo considers to be heretic:

*For if the Incarnation of the Word is the uniting of the Divine and human natures, but by the very fact of their coming together that which was twofold became single, it was only the Godhead that was born of the Virgin’s womb, and went through the deceptive appearance of receiving nourishment and bodily growth: and to pass over all the changes of the human state, it was only the Godhead that was crucified, dead, and buried: so that according to those who thus think, there is no reason to hope for the resurrection, and Christ is not the first-begotten from the dead (Compare EX 15, 6); because He was not One who ought to have been raised again, if He had not been One who could be slain.*¹⁹⁹

193 Avgvstinvs: *Sermo* 183, 13, PL 38, 993; to the whole topic, see: Dodaro, Robert. *Omnes haeretici negant Christum in carne venisse*. (Aug., *Serm.* 183.9.13.) *Augustine on the Incarnation as Criterion for Orthodoxy. Augustinian Studies*, 38, 2007, p. 163 - 174.

194 *Sermo* 28, 4, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 141.

195 *Sermo* 28, 4, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 141 - 142.

196 On Nestorius in more detail: Amann, Emile. *L’Affaire Nestorius vue de Rome*. *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 23 / 1-2, 1949: 5 - 37; Amann, Emile. *L’Affaire Nestorius vue de Rome (suite)*. *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 23/3 - 4, 1949: 207 - 244; Amann, Emile. *L’Affaire Nestorius vue de Rome (suite)*. *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 24/1 - 2, 1950: 28 - 52; Amann, Emile. *L’Affaire Nestorius vue de Rome (fin)*. *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 24/3 - 4, 1950: 235 - 265.

197 *Sermo* 28, 5, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 143.

198 On Eutyches see: Lichner, Miloš. *Lev Vělký a jeho Tomus ad Flavianum*. [Leo the Great and his *Tomus ad Flavianum*.] Translation and text analysis. Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2014.

199 *Sermo* 28, 5, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 143 - 144.

In this sermon, Leo explains to the believers about two extreme solutions that are not only mistakes but also have an impact on soteriology and eschatology. The questioning of the unity of two natures results in a loss of hope for salvation of mankind and the reduction of two natures to one produces a loss of hope for resurrection.

In the Christmas sermon 30 delivered by Leo in 454, he tells the believers that “such an important Mystery, which was pre-established ages ago for the salvation of a man, and which was revealed at the end of times, cannot tolerate anything to be taken away from or added to its integrity.”²⁰⁰ Therefore he keeps mentioning heresies²⁰¹ so he can present the Confession of Faith (*confessio*) in the final part. It has a significant meaning because Leo uses a Greek word *homoousios* only once in order to denote the essential unity between the Father and the Son. To denote the unity of human nature between Christ and his mother, Leo uses the Latin term *consubstantialis*.²⁰² Actually, Leo understands this term as a twofold essentiality: The Father in the deity and mother, the Virgin Mary in mankind. Through this twofold essentiality, “the substantial help to people” is given. According to Leo, one cannot be saved only by one nature, but by the combination of these two natures, divine and human. For these reasons, Leo keeps inviting the believers in the next part of the sermon not to separate themselves from these natures; although they are ontologically different from one another, from the moment of their connection, neither their “separation nor termination” can occur. As he says, they are “connected to such a degree” that “...in the pursuit of almightiness and in the reception of abuse, what is divine in Christ has not been separated from what is human as well as what is human has not been separated from what is divine.”²⁰³

Leo’s Christology in the season of Lent

On March 1, 453, Leo introduced the Sermon 46 on Lent. Right at the beginning of the sermon, Leo warns against the heresy that denies the reality of the Incarnation of the Word of God, but at the same time he does not name anyone specifically; he can talk about Manicheans, but their presence was exposed and suppressed in Rome long time ago, as the older sermons from the first collection confirm. Since this heresy was a topic of the post-Chalcedonian sermon, it is presumably Eutyches’ heresy. His denial of human nature after the union with the divine one is perceived by the Roman theologian as a certain form of *Docetism (ipsam uere carnis in Domino negauere naturam)*²⁰⁴.

This time, the importance of the true belief in the Incarnation is justified by the fact that according to Leo, this teaching is food for the soul.²⁰⁵ This, however, becomes the basis of understanding the Eucharist, for it is always about the presence of the same Christ. Subsequently, he explains to

200 *Sermo* 30, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 152. The term *sacramentum* is translated as a sacrament in the article, because for Leo, the Passion of Christ is a sacrament (*sacramentum*) that deserved salvation for us, and it is also an example (*exemplum*) that the believers should follow.

201 *Sermo* 30, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 153 - 154.

202 Studer, Basil. *Consubstantialis Patri Consubstantialis Matri. Une antithèse christologique chez Léon le Grand*. *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 18, 1972, p. 87 - 115.

203 *Sermo* 30, 6, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138, p. 158.

204 *Sermo* 46, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 270. For more details on Docetism, see: Boulluc Le, Alain. *La question du „docétisme” et les formulations christologiques aux IIe et IIIe siècles*. Conférence de M. Alain Le Boulluc. In *École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses. Annuaire. Tome 91, 1982 - 1983*. 1982, p. 379 - 386; Boulluc Le, Alain. *La question du docétisme aux IIe et IIIe siècles et son incidence sur les débats christologiques ultérieurs*. Conférence de M. Alain Le Boulluc. *École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses. Annuaire. Tome 93, 1984 - 1985*. 1984: 375 - 381.

205 *Sermo* 46, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 269.

the believers about the nature of the heresy and we can also find here the indirect invocation of the Christological doctrine from *Tomus ad Flavianum*. He presents the Incarnation as a unique form of unity of “the non-suffering and unchangeable Word of God” and our human nature.

*And so in Christ, there is a twofold form but one person, and the Son of God, who is at the same time Son of Man, is one Lord, accepting the condition of a slave by the design of loving-kindness, not by the law of necessity, (...); that for the destruction of the tyranny of sin and death, the weak nature in Him might be capable of punishment, and the strong nature not lose anything of its glory.*²⁰⁶

In the spirit of traditional theology that we find in the anti-Arianistic parts of works written by Hilarius of Poitiers or Augustine, Leo claims that it is important to distinguish what is attributed to human nature and what is attributed to divine nature in the Gospels.²⁰⁷ Of course, we can find similar thoughts also in *Tomus ad Flavianum*; however, it is a sermon, and therefore Leo encourages listeners with the following words:

*And, therefore, must the Christian mind that would eschew lies and be the disciple of truth, use the Gospel-story confidently, and, as if still in company with the Apostles themselves, distinguish what is visibly done by the Lord, now by the spiritual understanding and now by the bodily organs of sight. Assign to the man that He is born a boy of a woman: assign to God that His mother's virginity is not harmed, either by conception or by bearing. Recognize the form of a slave enwrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, but acknowledge that it was the Lord's form that was announced by angels, proclaimed by the elements, adored by the wise men. Understand it of His humanity that he did not avoid the marriage feast: confess it Divine that he turned water into wine.*²⁰⁸

In the collection of Leo's homilies, we can also find sermons delivered on the occasion of Lent, whether during the Lenten season, Descent of the Holy Spirit or the seventh and tenth month of the year. One of them, Sermon 91, was presented in September 453 on the occasion of the fast of the seventh month. According to Leo, in addition to physical fasting, there exists also a soul fasting. In both cases, a person renounces something to maintain his purity. Rejection of heretical teachings is also a form of fasting.²⁰⁹ In the sermon, Leo reacts to the riots of Palestinian monks during the period from 452 to 454, and so he calls them “imperitus”²¹⁰ in correspondence as well as in sermon. It is interesting, that he used the same term twice in *Tomus ad Flavianum* 1 and 6 for Eutyches, meaning that he is “very incautious and too uneducated”.²¹¹ Leo therefore uses the situation and reaffirms his listeners about the teaching of the Church, which lies between the two extreme positions of Nestorius and Eutyches. This is why Leo emphasizes the unity of the Old and the New Testaments, which are both directed toward Christ:

206 *Sermo* 46, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 270.

207 *Sermo* 46, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 270.

208 *Sermo* 46, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 271.

209 *Sermo* 91, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 564 - 565.

210 *Sermo* 91, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 565.

211 Lichner, Miloš. *Lev Velký a jeho Tomus ad Flavianum [Leo the Great and his Tomus ad Flavianum]*. Translation and text analysis. Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2014: 46 and 74.

*... the true God, however, Son of True God, Himself True God, possessing unity and equality with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, has vouchsafed likewise to be true Man, and after the Virgin Mother's conception was not separated from her flesh and child-bearing, so uniting humanity to Himself as to remain immutably God; so imparting Godhead to man as not to destroy but enhance him by glorification. For He, Who became the form of a slave, ceased not to be the form of God, and He is not one joined with the other, but One in Both,*²¹²

The sermon clearly shows Leo's belief that Nestorius' mistake was that by trying to preserve both the divine and the human nature, as well as what belonged to them, he separated them so much that they appeared as if in the divine and human nature two persons were present. He also reminds Eutyches about the fact that both natures, even though they are unequal (divine is more than human), are still connected without mutual absorption.

During the Lenten season, on February 21, 454, Sermon 47 was delivered. In this sermon, Leo encourages the listeners to use the Cross of Christ, so it can help them to gain victory over temptations. But the most serious temptations, according to Leo, are those of faith. He therefore warns against two dogmatic errors: Apollinarism and Manichaeism. Both heresies are connected since they deny the twofold nature of Christ: “either because they do not accept the reality of the flesh or that divinity was made flesh. According to the Manichaeans, there is no resurrection when there is no death, or according to Apollinaris, the very divinity of the Word is changeable and was itself made capable of suffering.”²¹³ In the sermon, Leo, who disapproves with these views, offers to the listeners the theology of his work *Tomus ad Flavianum*, according to which there is only one person of God and man in Christ. Here Leo reminds them that the Gospel already contains the *communicatio idiomatum* principle, according to which what is said about Christ is attributed to the first or the second nature.²¹⁴

Leo continues in line with the Roman Synod, which was held during the reign of Pope Damasus in 382 and which clearly condemned Apollinaris' opinion about Christ:

*... we will excommunicate those who claim that (in Christ) the rational and spiritual soul has been replaced by the Word of God in the human body because the Son and the Word of God has not replaced the rational and spiritual soul in his body but received and saved our (i.e. rational and spiritual soul), truth without sin.*²¹⁵

212 *Sermo* 91, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 565 - 566.

213 *Sermo* 47, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 276. Apollinaris of Laodicea (315 - 392), also called the Younger, in contrast to his father, Apollinaris the Elder, is known for his contribution to the debate concerning the method of linking deity and mankind in Jesus Christ. At the beginning, the fervent advocate of the Nicene Creed later began to claim that the Word of God has linked in Christ only with the soul (the soul as the life principle) and the body, instead of spiritual reason, and therefore Christ was the ideal God, not the ideal man. Spiritual reason was replaced by the divine Word, and thus, according to him, the integrity and sinlessness of one person of God's Word was preserved. Christ, according to Apollinaris, did not have a real human spirit. He gained certain disciples, and several Church decisions were directed against him. On life and work see: Döpp, Siegmund, and Geerlings, Wilhelm (hrsg). *Lexicon des antiken christlichen Literatur* 41 - 42; Pospíšil, Václav Ctirad. *Ježíš z Nazareta. Pán a Spasitel. [Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord and the Saviour]*. 4th Edition. Krytal OP: Karmelitánske nakladatelství, 2010, p. 153 - 156. According to HIERONYMVS, Apollinaris was an amazing exegete in the first period of his life, who wrote several comments on the Holy Scripture: *De uiris illustribus* 104. In *Texte und Untersuchung zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur*, 14, 1a (ed. Richardson, Ernest Cushing, 1896, p. 49.

214 *Sermo* 47, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 277.

215 DamasiVs (= pseudo Ambrosius Mediolanensis). *Confessio fidei (Tomus seu fides Damasi)*. ed. Turner, Cuthbert Hamilton: *Ecclesiae occidentalis monumenta iuris antiquissima* I, II, 1, p. 284. On Confession of Faith (*Fides Damasi*), see: Lichner, Miloš, and Katarína, Karabová. *Vybrané pohľady na latinských autorov kresťanského*

Leo's Christology in Sermons on the Passion of the Lord

On Sunday, March 16, 452, Leo preached about the Lord's Passion (Sermon 62). In the exordium and as a bishop, he recalls his duty to meet the expectations of the believers by his speech.²¹⁶ And then he claims the following:

Ponder as we may upon His omnipotence, which is of one and equal substance with the Father, the humility in God is more stupendous than the power, and it is harder to grasp the complete emptying of the Divine Majesty than the infinite uplifting of the slave's form in Him.²¹⁷ But we are much aided in our understanding of it by the remembrance that though the Creator and the creature, the Inviolable God and the passible flesh, are absolutely different, yet the properties of both substances meet together in Christ's one Person in such a way that alike in His acts of weakness and of power the degradation belongs to the same Person as the glory.²¹⁸

The text of the sermon (*the attributes of both natures unite in one person*) clearly shows the relatedness with the letter to Flavian (*By preserving the attributes of both natures that unite in one person*).²¹⁹ In the following paragraph of this Easter sermon, Leo offers the Confession of Faith which has, according to him, the apostolic authority:

our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we call the only Son of God the Father Almighty, to be also born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost. Nor do we reject His Majesty when we express our belief in His crucifixion, death, and resurrection on the third day. For all that is God's and all that is Man's are simultaneously fulfilled by His Manhood and His Godhead, so that in virtue of the union of the Passible with the Impassible, His power cannot be affected by His weakness, nor His weakness overcome by His power.²²⁰

Correct Confession of Faith therefore announces that Jesus Christ is a true God and a true person at the same time. The diversity of natures results in the fact that Christ is

likewise the Virgin's Son, Who is His Mother's Creator: born also at the end of the ages, though He is the Creator of time: Lord of all power, and yet one of mortal stock.²²¹

.....
staroveku II. [Selected Views on Latin Authors of Christian Antiquity II.] Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2015, p. 177.

216 *Sermo 62, 1, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 376.* The text also shows that Leo still understands the word *sacerdos* as the word for a bishop.

217 Background of Leo's argument is the paraphrase of the quotation from Flp 2, 7.

218 *Sermo 62, 1, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 376 - 377.*

219 "Salva igitur proprietate utriusque naturae et in unam coeunte." (Lichner, Miloš. *Lev Velký a jeho Tomus ad Flavianum. [Leo the Great and his Tomus ad Flavianum.]* Translation and text analysis. Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2014, p. 54)

The sermon XXI has the same form: *Sermo XXI, 2 Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138, p. 87.* Of course, Leo uses various Latin verbs to express the same idea. In the Sermon 62, it is a verb *concurrit* (*Sermo 62, 1, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 377*) and in *Tomus ad Flavianum* he uses *coeunte*. On the influence of Tertullianus, see: Lichner, Miloš. *Lev Velký a jeho Tomus ad Flavianum. [Leo the Great and his Tomus ad Flavianum.]* Translation and text analysis. Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2014, p. 39.

220 *Sermo 62, 1, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 377 - 378.*

221 *Sermo 62, 1, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 378.*

Three days later, on March 19, 452, Leo the Great delivered the Sermon 63 in which he reminded the listeners of the fact that the Son of God without sharing in sin, felt the sensation of hunger and thirst and fatigue and grief.²²² The fullness of incarnation, including the acceptance of torture, is, according to Leo, an example of the mystery of humility (*mysterium humilitatis*). God was able to save the fallen man from devil's slavery by manifestation of his will. The Roman theologian emphasizes that "had it not better suited the Divine working to conquer the opposition of the foe's wickedness by that which had been conquered, and to restore our nature's liberty by that very nature by which bondage had come upon the whole race."²²³ The devil overthrew man in Adam, and therefore, according to Leo, God decided to overthrow the devil in man by accepting the full human nature.

This sermon is also theologically interesting because it links Christology with Ecclesiology. In this work, Leo connects three biblical quotations: first he quotes the verse of KOL 1:15, which talks about the primacy of Christ in creation with verse of 1 COR 15:28 reminding us of God's presence in everything. In the end, he quotes the verse from MT 28:20, which is the promise of the resurrected Christ to disciples that he will not forsake them. Leo's thinking thus deepens St Paul's theology about the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. According to the Roman Bishop, the same Christ is mystically present not only in the accepted human nature but also in all Saints with whom he forms the Church. The emphasis on Christ's presence in Saints is thus a certain outline of Leo's predestination thinking.²²⁴

According to Leo, dwelling of God's Word in human nature is a sign of how the Incarnated Word of God dwells in the limbs of his Church body. At the same time, it results in the fact that this presence in the Church is based on the Christological unity of two natures. Paul's vision of the mystical body, as described in the letter to Corinthians, therefore predicts the Chalcedonian Christology. The full acceptance of human nature thus enables Christ to dwell in Saints; and Christ does not dwell in human nature as in the temple but in the Church. As he mentioned 450 years ago in the Christmas Sermon 26, through Incarnation, we also remember the birth of the believers.²²⁵ Leo thus perceives the continual presence of the believers in Christ, starting with the Sacrament of Baptism.

On Sunday, April 5, 453, Leo delivered the Easter Sermon in which he again explains and refutes the view of those who still "deny the truth about the Lord's Incarnation," who believe that birth, death, and resurrection have taken place" in some form that is similar to ours, but not in the nature of our body."²²⁶ We can assume that Leo talks again not only about Manicheans but also the followers of Eutyches, who claims that only one divine nature has been created by the union of two natures. In this part of the sermon, Leo points out to the fact that the denial of the true humanity of Jesus Christ represents denial of the reality of salvation of a man. If Christ hadn't had the real human nature, he couldn't have really died and poured out the blood for us. Moreover, Leo realized that it was not so much about Christ's death as about the fact that at the moment of death he had both divine and human (our) nature, and in this way, he could save the mankind.

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222 *Sermo 63, 4, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 384.*

223 *Sermo 63, 1, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 384.* We can find similar expressions also in *Sermo XLII, 3, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, recensio alpha, p. 244.* Leo has later re-worked the sermon and in *recensio beta* (p. 244) the argument is already adjusted.

224 *Sermo 63, 3, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 383 - 384.*

225 *Sermo 26, 2, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138, p. 126.*

226 *Sermo 64, 1, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 389.*

Therefore, he recalls that such people are losing hope in the Mystery of Easter because they “deny that the reality of our human nature is in the Body of our Saviour.”²²⁷ The words which Leo uses for the Confession of Faith resemble the *Tomus ad Flavianum* teaching:

... We therefore confess that in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the true Son of God and man, both natures, the divine nature which He has received from His Father, and the human nature that He has received from His mother - though God's Word and body only form one person in him - have common action (...). The Catholic faith accepts one and the other, protects one and the other, what is true for divine nature and what is true for human nature, and believes that the only Son of God is human being and Word at the same time.²²⁸

Three days later, on Wednesday, April 8, 453, the Easter Sermon 65 was delivered. The forthcoming feast of the Passion of Christ is being used by Leo to remind us that the denial of the reality of Christ's human nature ultimately means the denial of the reality of Christ's Passion. For Leo, these are basically the forms of Docetism in the teaching of *Manicheans (hominem falsum)* or Apollinarists (*Deum passibilem*).²²⁹ Everything that has happened in the life of Christ from the very beginning is the work of one person, and unity does not mean blending. Leo rejects Eutyches' reasoning by stating that the indivisibility of the two natures linked in the unity of one person does not mean their mutual blending and therefore

divine operations do not prejudice human ones, nor do human operations prejudice divine ones. Both join together without the deletion of any proper characteristic or a doubling of the Person.²³⁰

In the middle of the Holy Week, on March 31, 454, the Sermon 68 was delivered. The Roman theologian explains to believers the Psalm 21:1, which can be found in Matthew's Gospel 27, 46 (“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”), as the expression of Jesus' situation on the cross. But the unity of the two natures in the person of Jesus Christ, according Leo, was so strong that it could not be affected by the divine nature moving away from the human, suffering on the cross. Both natures were present on the cross, but only the human nature suffered (“God neither held aloof from the suffering of His body nor was made passible by the flesh, because the Godhead which was in the Sufferer did not actually suffer.”). The sermon also indicates the Trinitarian dimension of Leo's soteriology. The inseparable Trinity remains unchanged, and the Father and the Son are not separated in this difficult hour of suffering.²³¹ The first verse of the Psalm 21 is, rather, the expression of mercy and the decision to die.²³²

Few days later, on Saturday, April 4, 454, Leo spoke to the believers again and delivered the Sermon 69. He keeps repeating the basic ideas, because in the case of the Lord's Passion, not only is it a great Mystery, so it is not a waste of time to repeat the same preaching again, but also the apostle Paul's desire of 1 Cor 1, 10 should be fulfilled (“You died, and your life

227 *Sermo* 64, 3, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 391.

228 *Sermo* 64, 4, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 392 - 393. The third and fourth paragraphs of this sermon were incorporated by Leo first in the Letter 124 addressed to Palestinian monks on June 15, 453, and later, on August 17, in the Letter 165 to Emperor Leo against the disciples of Eutyches.

229 *Sermo* 65, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 395.

230 *Sermo* 65, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 395.

231 *Sermo* 68, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 414 - 415.

232 *Sermo* 68, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 415.

is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ appears in your life, then also you will appear with him in glory”).²³³ The believers should truly believe that Christ had the true deity and true humanity.²³⁴ Leo did not forget to add the traditional theological belief that the true faith has an impact on the true life of the believer.²³⁵

According to the Roman theologian, the Mystery of Incarnation is directed to the lives of believers who have been revived in the Sacrament of Baptism, as he has emphasized again in the final part of the sermon:

... if the Godhead of the Word did not accept this nature in the unity of his person, there would be neither rebirth in the water of baptism nor redemption in the blood of his torture, but because we do not accept anything that is false, pretended in the sacrament of the Incarnation of Christ, it is not for nothing that we believe, that we have died with the one who dies, and that we have risen from the dead with the one who rises from the dead, he who remains in us and does everything in us (Compare 1 Cor 12:6) and he lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen²³⁶

Leo's last sermon

Chronologically, the last text is the Sermon 96, which is directed against Eutyches and was delivered in Basilica of St. Anastasia.²³⁷ According to A. Chavasse, it was delivered on September 25, 457. Exordium to the sermon clearly shows that the reason for its presentation was not a liturgical celebration, as it is the case with other sermons, but the arrival of merchants from Alexandria in Egypt who began to spread the Monophysite attitudes of heretic Eutyches in Rome.²³⁸ Leo claims his duty to defeat the true faith that results from his “wakeful love”. He perceives their theology as a hidden Docetism, according to which the Christ had only one divine nature, whereby the human body “was not real” but only “delusory”.²³⁹

What “Holy Fathers” have condemned in the doctrines of Photinus, Mani and Apollinaris cannot be perceived as Catholic.²⁴⁰ Leo is convinced that what the Apostles taught and what can be found in the whole Gospel is identical to what he himself presents to the listeners. Leo thus indirectly reminds of the continuing uninterrupted tradition, of which he himself is the representative and announcer. In the spirit of the Orthodox Christology, Leo therefore emphasizes that the reason for Incarnation is God's mercy, which caused that the only Son of God “equal with the Father” became a man without any change in his divine nature. At the same time, we can notice the indicated pneumatological aspect of Leo's theology, because the sinless acceptance of hu-

233 *Sermo* 69, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 419. Unlike the wording of Vulgate, where the second person plural is used, Leo read the text of Paul's letter to Corinthians in the first person plural.

234 *Sermo* 69, 3, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 421.

235 *Sermo* 69, 4, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 423.

236 *Sermo* 69, 5, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 424.

237 Translation of the whole sermon is published in: Lichner, Miloš, and, Katarína Karabová. *K prameňom rano-kresťanskej latinskej tradície. [To the Origins of the Early-Christian Latin Tradition.]* Dobrá kniha: Trnava, 2018, p. 386 - 391; see also: Grillmeier, Aloys. *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Vol. 2. *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590 - 604)*. Part one: Reception and Contradiction. The development of the discussion about Chalcedon from 451 to the beginning of the reign of Justinian. Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1987, p. 116.

238 In Latin texts, the word *Vrbs* - City always means Rome.

239 *Sermo* 96, 1, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 592.

240 *Sermo* 96, 2, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. CCL 138A, p. 594.

man nature (“without the shadow of blemish”) has occurred through the influence of the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ’s action is full of clear evidence that two natures are united in him, each of them possessing a particular activity:

... as a man he was hungry and thirsty, he was asleep, he was afraid, cried and mourned. He was crucified, died and was buried. As God, he walked on the sea, he changed the water into wine, resurrected from the dead, scared the world with his own death, and ascended with his living body into the highest heavens.

Despite these facts, individual expressions of each nature are connected in the unity of the Son of God.²⁴¹

Conclusion

In the presented study, I focus on the post-Chalcedonian Christology of the Pope Leo the Great. I have emphasized that this study is part of the ongoing research of the original texts in the context of contemporary theological and cultural discourses. Their aim is to make the thoughts of the early-Christian theologian, who has significantly influenced the wording of the Chalcedonian Confession of Faith, available to the Slovak theological, historical and philological society. I have taken into account only Leo’s sermons because I am planning to focus on his letters in a different study.

Research has shown that Leo does not offer systematic homiletic discourses, but uses the exerted liturgical periods, so he can constantly remind the believers of the essential truth of the Confession of Faith. The analysis of Leo’s sermons is also significant because it does not include abstract scientific discourse but appeals to believers in Rome. It also shows that even though his well-known Christological letters contain excellent theology which often embraces longer adapted passages, it is still based on Leo’s sermons.

In his sermons, Leo is constantly reluctant to two streams of heretical views, whether we speak about sermons written before or after the Council of Chalcedon. He perceives the theology he preaches as the compromise in Heterodoxy.²⁴² This is why Leo often presents the true Christology as a certain form of fasting.

The study of sermons points out to the fact that Leo leaves large space to the Manichean movement. Especially sermons from the first collection are devoted to the presence of Manicheans in Rome (443 - 444) and to the disproof of their teaching. However, Leo used essential parts from some sermons and placed them to sermons from the second collection. It is possible that in some way, Manichaeism remained present in some parts of Europe at that time. I assume, however, that Leo understood the resemblance of Manichean teaching to Eutyches’ theology and used theological arguments against the opponents of the Chalcedonian dogma. Manicheans as well as Eutyches are being blamed for the hidden form of Docetism, which means that Manicheans as well as Apollinarism refused Christ’s full human nature. In this sense, Leo’s theology is Augustinian, because even the theologian from Hippo claimed that each heresy begins with denial of the true human nature of Jesus Christ. That is why Leo, as Athanasius of Alexandria emphasized against Arius, constantly reminds us of the soteriological consequences of the correct (Chalcedonian, according to Leo) Christology.

241 *Sermo 96, 2, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138A, p. 594 - 595.*

242 *Sermo 28, 4, Tractatus septem et nonaginta. CCL 138, p. 142.*

Both collections of sermons, which include texts of the pre and post-Chalcedonian period, emphasize unity of two natures in one person of the Son of God, whereby especially the presence of certain heresies pushed the Roman theologian to be more persistent about the fact that the Son of God accepted the full human nature. Here we are witnessing the deepening of his thinking regarding the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria, whom Eutychus vehemently invoked. Leo’s sermons also point out to a unique balance in theological language, emphasizing the wholeness of two natures in the person of the Son of God.²⁴³ The exceptionality of the unity of two natures thus becomes the only way to save humanity. According to Leo, everything what concerns the person has an impact on all his actions, and therefore his sermons emphasize the redemption value of the Incarnation; this value, however, does not arise from itself, but it is always understood with the reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Incarnation is not necessary as such; Leo often mentions that God could have chosen another way of salvation (*Sermones* XX, 3; 63.1 or XLII, 3). Leo rather chooses historical and contextual thinking, which means that he thinks of the necessity of Incarnation after God has chosen and has performed it. In this sense is the path of salvation chosen by God and initiated by Incarnation essential for salvation.

Leo’s thinking has influenced the text of the Confession of Faith at the Council of Chalcedon, whose acceptance or rejection has become a measure of authority. Nowadays, we are witnessing theological talks between representatives of the Catholic Church and the so-called non-Chalcedonian Churches which, for various reasons, did not accept the final formulation of the Confession of Faith at the Council of Chalcedon. Today we know that many of the non-Chalcedonian Churches were not familiar enough with the texts of the Council of Chalcedon, or the thinking of Leo the Great. Therefore, the crucial importance of this study lies in specification of Leo’s thinking in the context of Chalcedon. An accurate knowledge of Leo the Great’s Christology will help to enhance the ecumenical dialogue with these Churches.

The study has also clearly demonstrated that, according to Leo, the true Christology has a significant impact on the spirituality of believers. Therefore, the exact knowledge of Leo’s Christological thinking is a contribution to spirituality research concerning the early-Christian period and possible impulses for the present time. The history of theology clearly confirms that the revival of theological and spiritual thinking has always come together with the rediscovery of thinking of the Church Fathers. Nowadays, spirituality without relation to the content of faith is often emphasized. Therefore, we can consider the study of Leo’s reasoning to be an important contribution to this context.

243 These findings are also highlighted by Armitage, J. M. as part of his research in: *The economy of mercy: the liturgical preaching of Saint Leo the Great*. Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/993/>, p. 10), in works of this author, Leo’s sermons are strongly dogmatic.

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SELECTED VALUE INDICATORS OF SLOVAK FAMILIES*

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Abstract**Background:** The research project empirically identified select family values and religious aspects. This research is unique as it creates a mosaic of Slovak families with unprovided-for children from the perspective of the marital status of parents and with respect to family coexistence and support.**Methods:** A nation-wide data collection in Slovakia was conducted by the Social Analysis Agency in the first half of May 2018 by way of 1,031 personal interviews with adult members of households with unprovided-for children. The respondent sample was chosen based on quota selection with the 2011 census data representing the statistical support.**Results:** Out of the overall data, the study cites and interprets the indicators regarding the opportunities of the parents to provide for the needs of their family members as well as the opportunities for intra-family activities. The results also include some aspects of religious beliefs and their impact on the declared values of the household adult members.**Conclusion:** This paper found the points of departure for intervention at the macro-level, especially with respect to constructing adequate family policies. Similarly, there are implications for the regional level through social and pastoral work. From the perspective of practical implications for social and pastoral work, it is first and foremost crucial to adequately understand the changes in the family, so that the provided help can be adequate, intelligible, and effective.**Keywords:** Family – Values – Stabilizers – Interests – Spirituality.**Introduction**

More than 5.4 million inhabitants live in Slovakia. From the total, four out of ten inhabitants live in households where there are adults with dependent children. So the cohabitation of adults with children involves a total of 2.28 million people. For 83% of adults of this assembly, coexistence is based on marriage, 8% live in cohabitation, and 9% of adults in households live in single-parent families where one parent takes care of a child or more children.²⁴⁵ It is also clear from these numbers that marriages are the dominant institution in Slovakia in existing households.

* The presented study is part of the APVV-15-0189 project solution **Selected Factors for Family Strategy and Support of a Stable Family in a Multicultural Environment.**

²⁴⁵ Conversion data from Podmanická, Zuzana ed. et al. *Rodinné správanie populácie Slovenska. [The familial behaviour of the population in Slovakia.]* ŠÚ SR: Bratislava, 2015.

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Family presents a value world for its members. At the same time, family has a material, cultural, ethical, personal and spiritual potential that is permanently formed and transferred to its members.

The development of families reflects significant changes in society. The combination of traditional and postmodern value attitudes creates a continuity of life for families as well as ways of life that we have not been used to. The empirical research attempts to capture the “reality of families.” However, the issue is so extensive, offering many interpretative options for social changes of family, long-term and current demographic behavior of the population, partnership and family cohabitation, financial background, etc. The areas of family change represent a set of aspects that cannot be analyzed at all due to their scope at once and depth. From the analyzes²⁴⁸ it is possible to expect a gradual diagnosis of the current situation of families, with the expectations for their functions and the contradictions the family is confronted with today.

The research performed was a verified background of what the family provides to its members in the fulfillment of their interests and in the development of internal life.²⁴⁹ From the entire set of relevant conditions and activities, in the context of the adult research the respondents expressed, among other things, the possibilities ensuring interest activities for children, activities for adults as well as family weekend stays and family holidays. They also mainly discussed the opportunities for joint activities with children, factors for strengthening partnerships and devotion to their own interests. The starting points and selected aspects of spiritual values have also been studied²⁵⁰ in parents, as well as in which areas these values are passed on to children.

Methods

The objective of the research was to gather empirical data from all Slovakia in order to create a representative picture of the views of the parents of small and adolescent children on family cohabitation and family support. The all-Slovakia data collection was conducted by the Agency for Social Analysis in the first half of May 2018 in the form of 1031 personal interviews with adult members of households with dependent children. The sample of respondents was created on the principles of quota selection, where the statistics from the Census of People, Houses and Flats from 2011 were the statistical support. The selection characteristics used were age, gender, education, the size of the respondent’s residence and region. The questionnaire included 39 questions, including the respondent’s identifying characteristics.

248 Cf. Mortelmans, Dimitri, Koenraad Matthijs, Elisabeth Alofs, and Barbara Segaeert, eds. *Changing Family Dynamics and Demographic Evolution: The Family Kaleidoscope*. Cheltenham, UK, Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2016.

For more details, see also: Pew Research Center, *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe. National and religious identities converge in a region once dominated by atheist regimes*.

<http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/05/15120244/CEUP-FULL-REPORT.pdf>
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249 Cf. Bednárík, Rastislav. *Stav sociálnej ochrany na Slovensku. (Situácia k 1. Januáru 2017)*. [The status of social protection in Slovakia. (Situation as of 1st of January 2017).] IVPR: Bratislava, 2017.

250 *In comparison: https://ifstudies.org (data from 2015) and http://www.ggp-i.org (data from 2016)*

The research is unique in creating a picture of Slovak households with dependent children in terms of the family status of the parents. According to the results, seven out of ten parents live in their first marriage. One in ten is single and lives with a partner without being married and one in ten is divorced and lives without a partner. The remaining 10% of parents are comprised of a group living a the second or subsequent marriage (5%), divorced living with a partner without being married (3%) and widowed living without a partner (2%).

Afterwards, the paper provides an interpretation of the results of select questionnaires, divided into three thematic areas, while also briefly discussing them with respect to the themes under review.

Results and discussion

As the first area, we report on the ability of parents to respond to the needs of their members.

Table 1 Assess the family's possibility of meeting important needs (in % of respondents)

Possibility of fulfillment	Not at all	With great problems	With occasional problems	Without problems	No response	Total
Interesting activities for children	3.8	11.9	37.4	36.5	10.4	100.0
Interesting activities for adults	11.9	18.9	37.6	21.0	10.6	100.0
Family weekend stays	19.0	21.6	28.4	12.6	18.4	100.0
Family holidays	17.9	26.4	32.6	10.9	12.2	100.0

Essentially in all cases, it is a great effort for the family to support the interests of their individual members, as well as a shared family experience regarding time, whether on weekends or holidays. In terms of hierarchy, the European cultural phenomenon of preference for children before adults is confirmed. So it is more important for Slovak families to satisfy the interests of children than the interests of adults. While negative responses (together with “not at all” and “great problems”) were reported by 16% of respondents, the negative possibilities of satisfying the interests of adults were stated by every third parent of a dependent child – twice as many. At the other end of the scale, there is an assessment that, with more than a third of families, their background allows children to ensure their interests “without problems”, while the same thing applies to adults in only one fifth of families. While support for the satisfaction of the interests of family members encounters a greatly positive assessment, it is already more troublesome to ensure family-weekend stays or family vacations.

Overall, it appears that even in the case of ensuring the interests of individual members of the family, and even in the case of more expensive shared events, the decisive factor is the income situation of the family. Lower income limits the possibility of ensuring activities. It is more pronounced in the ensuring of shared family events – weekend or holiday family stays. While in the family's shared earnings of €850 a month respondents see a family holiday as

problem-free or “with occasional problems,” in only 14% of cases (for 63% in not at all or even without great problems), in shared income over €1750 it is up to 79% of cases (only 15% of the more affluent respondents see this negatively). Families with lower earnings, however, do not resign themselves when it comes to satisfying the interests of their children. Respondents from households with low total earnings (up to €850 per month) declare disablement or major problems in interesting activities for children in 37% of cases, but for half of them to ensure the interesting activity of their children there are only occasional problems or even no problems. However, low earnings are limited regarding interesting activities for adults. For households with combined earnings of up to €850 per month, interesting activities for adults cannot be done at all (27%) or only with great problems (23.8%); on the other hand, for households with a combined earnings of more than EUR 1750, interesting activities for adults are ensured without problems (84%).

Aside from the financial situation of the family, there are other factors that support or, on the contrary, weaken the possibilities of ensuring the interesting activities of family members as individuals or as a whole. Such factors include education – with increasing education, both for male and female adults, the potential of the family is increased to ensure the interests of both children and adults. There is also such a positive correlation between adult education and the possibility of family weekends or family vacations. Another factor supporting the satisfaction of family members' interests is stability of the partnership relationship. There is a better assessment of the ability to ensure the interests of the respondents' children from first-marriage families (78% without problems or with only minor problems) than for unmarried respondents with a partner and children (63%). Similarly, the possibilities of ensuring the interests of adults are higher in married households (64%) than in cohabiting households (50%). Such a relation also applies to the case of family weekend stays or holidays. Even here, there is better ensuring in first-marriage households than in cohabitation-based households. For example, almost half of marriage households (49%) will be able to ensure family holidays with no problems or just minor problems, while for cohabiting households it is not that easy (31%).

It is interesting that in relation with the satisfaction of individual and group interests of family members we do not register the more significant influence of locations. There is practically no difference in terms of the need to ensure such activities in the countryside and in the city.

Another area is the assessment of time options for inter-familial activities

Table 2 assessment of MEN – possibilities of using time for inter-familial activities (in % of respondents)

Possibilities of time usage:	Insufficient time	Occasionally	Sufficient time	No response	Total
Education and shared eating time spent with children	21.3	39.0	26.9	12.8	100.0
Forging of marriage / partnership relationships	13.5	44.2	29.0	13.3	100.0
Devotion to one's own hobby	26.6	44.1	16.6	12.8	100.0

Table 3 assessment of WOMEN – possibilities of using time for inter-familial activities (in % of respondents)

Possibilities of time usage:	Insufficient time	Occasionally	Sufficient time	No response	Total
Education and shared eating time spent with children	9.6	22.4	60.8	7.2	100.0
Forging of marriage / partnership relationships	10.4	38.3	38.1	13.2	100.0
Devotion to one's own hobby	26.5	44.4	21.2	7.8	100.0

Research has confirmed the closer ties of women than men to inter-familial activities when they find more time than men to educate and share activities with children, as well as strengthen relationships with a partner. Only in the case of assessing the possibility of time to devote to one's own hobby is the view of men and women virtually balanced.

Men's time possibilities for different family activities are more unfavorable in relation to children than in relation to their spouse or partner. However, there is no special abysmal difference, with 27% of men seeing enough time to devote to educating and sharing time with their children, while 29% of men see enough time to forge marital/partner relationships). It is interesting to note that Slovak men see more time for children than for their own hobbies.

Women have significantly more time for children than for their partners, with six out of ten women seeing enough time in relation to children, while it is four out of ten women in relation to partners. Similarly to men, women assess time possibilities for devoting themselves to a hobby as the least realistic of the three more compared activities.

The assessment of time possibilities for inter-familial activities is also partly dependent on the family's income situation as in the case of assessing the possibilities of meeting the needs of family members. Women assessing enough time to educate and shared time with children have higher assessments in the better financial situation of the household. In common earnings of up to €850 per month, half the women declare "sufficient time", while in better earning households with 1,750 Euros and more per month it is seven out of ten women; for

men, this indicator is 23% versus 30%. Similarly, when enough time to strengthen female partner relationships in lower income households, up to € 850 per month, they show lower opportunities - 25% than those in higher-income households, above € 1,750 per month, which is almost twice as high as 45%. The range of difference in this indicator in males ranges from 21% to 31%. It turns out that men, even in better conditions, do not declare much more time for forging their partnerships. The financial situation of the family on the time possibilities of dedication to one's own hobbies has relatively little influence. The amount of time spent in this area is between 13% and 19%, depending on the financial situation of the household, while women are between 18% and 25%.

In the area of time possibilities for inter-familial activities, other factors are also visible. The age factor specifically plays a role in assessing time options for educating and sharing times with children in the case of women, with "sufficient time" declining slightly with age increase for this activity (64% for women younger than 30, 60 for women aged 40-50). For men, this age factor does not play a role when the time for children is equally assessed by those under the age of 30 and those aged 40 – 50 years ("sufficient time" is declared by 28% of them in both age categories). The age factor is still noticeable in women when assessing time possibilities for dedication to one's own hobbies (younger than 30 years at 16%, those aged 40-50 subsequently 22%).

The positive impact on inter-familial activity is also increasing the education of spouses/partners. When assessing the time on educating and time spent with children, the increase in "sufficient time" for women increases from 59% with primary education, to 65% with university education, and for men from 24% to 36%. Regarding the time to forge marital/partnership relationships, women with primary education declare that there is "sufficient time" in 39% of cases, whereas women with university education in 43% of cases; in men this increase is from 30% to 35%. Women assessing enough time to devote to hobbies with an increase in education increases from 15% (primary school) to 24% (universities), with men increasing from 13% (primary school) to 19% (universities).

The effect of employment on the time possibilities of inter-familial activities are logically rather negative – less time for those who are employed. For example, 82% of women on maternal or parental leave declare sufficient time for children, but only 59% of them are employed full-time. Men employed full time declare "sufficient time" for children in 29% of cases, but self-employed men in only 22% of cases. This factor is also negative in assessing enough time to forge matrimonial/partnership relationships, but this effect is relatively weak in relation to the time possibilities for one's own hobbies. For example, women declare "sufficient time" for hobbies in the case of full-time employment in 21% of cases while women on maternity or parental leave in 22% of cases.

The factor of the legitimacy of a partnership when assessing time possibilities for inter-familial activities is manifested separately, i.e., differently than satisfying the need for interests. In this area, more data on "sufficient time" are declared by cohabiting households than married families – in all three monitored activities. Sufficient time spent on educating and spending time with children was declared by 72% of single women living with a partner without a marriage, but less in 65% of women living in a first marriage; in men this ratio is 42% to 29%. The time to forge relationships with a partner was presented by 49% of unmarried women living with a partner compared to 43% of the women living in their first marriage; for men, this

indicator is at the level of 37% and 34%. Sufficient time for one's own hobbies was mentioned by a few more unmarried women living with a partner (25%) than married women living in their first marriage (23%); also, unmarried males living with a partner declared a higher share of sufficient time for their own hobbies (22%) than married men in their first marriage (19%).

An interesting phenomenon has been the factor of locations, where the highest data on sufficient time for inter-familial relations were shown in cities with 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants. Usually, less time for children, whether men or women, reported less time for children, a partner or their own interests in smaller towns. A smaller amount of time was also reported by the inhabitants of our two major cities.

The third thematic area is the issue of the role of religion in the home. It is interesting to note that religious issues are not a significant source of disagreement between partners. When determining the reason for the respondent's disagreements with his/her spouse, partner, money is the first. The second reason is domestic work, followed by leisure time, parenting, weddings, childbirth, sex education, relationships with friends, the decision to have children, the use of addictive substances. Religious issues are in last place.

Also remarkable is the sorting of characteristics a child should adopt from the parent's point of view. In the first place is reported labor and perseverance (76%), the second responsibility (69%), tolerance and respect for others (47%), independence (38%), obedience (25%), religious belief (20%).

Regularly or occasionally, 36% of households attend church worship, 27% talk about faith, 19% pray before or after a meal, and 13% of the families read the Bible or other religious literature.

Forty percent of parents declare that religious belief, according to their experience, has a positive impact on their family, a third said that belief is a private matter and does not affect the family, a quarter says it does not have special experience with the influence of faith on the family. Two percent answered that faith brings more negative elements to the family.

Reporting on religion strongly correlates with the parent's attitude toward marriage. E.g. nearly half of the questioned of those who do not declare a faith agree with the statement, "It is fine when two people live without marriage," so only every fifth Roman or Greek Catholic will agree with the same statement. The difference is also in the agreement to the statement: "It is OK if spouses divorce even if they have children." More than half of those who do not declare any faith agree, the 10 percent smaller agreeing group comprised of Greek and Roman Catholics.

Conclusion

The analysis confirmed the high value of children for the life and functioning of families. Parents are willing to spend more money and time with their children than themselves. It turned out that the value of the matrimonial/partnership relationship is highly accepted not only by women but men. The phenomenon has been confirmed, in particular, by two factors in inter-familial life, i.e. family financial resources and the parents educating their children. In both cases, higher earnings and higher education make it easier to satisfy the interests of family members and devote more time to each other. The factor of the legitimacy of the

partnership relationship is interesting. According to the opinion of the respondents - while marriage is better in terms of ensuring the conditions for interesting activities, it is relatively better in cohabiting relationship regarding sufficient time for inter-familial relationships. Research also confirms the convergence of the differences between the values of families living in the cities and the countryside.

The objective of the study was not only a description of the status of Slovak households, but the creation of backgrounds for intervention at the macro-level, especially in the development of an adequate family policy; also at regional level through social and pastoral work. For social and pastoral work, a key change in families is to first understand well that the assistance provided can be adequate, understandable and functional.

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CHALLENGES OF EARLY CHILD INTERVENTION IN SLOVAKIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC²⁵¹



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Abstract

Background: The early child intervention (ECI) systems have been developing for many years very heterogeneously in time as well as in content. The main aim of this article is to present particularities of this development in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, as well as to discuss the current challenges related to ECI in these countries, based on a phenomenological analysis of experiences in the countries with developed ECI, research findings, and current legislation. The core of the analysis in question is represented by five key elements – availability, proximity, affordability, interdisciplinary working, and diversity, as defined by Jack Shonkoff and Samuel Meisels.²⁵²

Conclusion: Based on this analysis of the current ECI situation in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and according to the ECI report focused on the progress and development of ECI, the conclusion of this article defines a number of priorities that may significantly contribute to achieving the goals regarding the ECI services in Slovakia. Some of the priorities are implied in nature and are, therefore, of importance for further theoretical and empirical research; for example, in the field of the social work for the sake of children with special needs and their families.

Keywords: Early Intervention – Social Services – Slovakia – Czech Republic – Challenges.²⁵³

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252 Contemporary ECI has evolved from multiple sources. Shonkoff and Meisels define four main domains: early childhood education, maternal and child health services, special education and child development research. Graduate closing and integration of these domains brought contemporary understanding of ECI as a system of coordinated services that promotes the child's age-appropriate growth and development and supports families during critical early years. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. 2010. *Early Childhood Intervention – Progress and Developments 2005–2010*) defines ECI as a composite of services/provisions for very young children and their families, provided at their request at certain time in a child's life, covering any action undertaken when a child needs special support to: ensure an enhance her/his personal development; strengthen the family's own competences, and promote the social inclusion of the family and the child. (Shonkoff, Jack P., and Samuel, J. Meisels eds. *Handbook of early childhood intervention*. 2nd ed. Cambridge university press, 2000.)

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Introduction: Brief history of development of the early child intervention (ECI) in Slovakia a Czech Republic

Concepts of ECI could be still perceive as quite new approaches. First concepts of contemporary ECI were introduced in United States in 1970s and in Europe in 1980s. Despite of that, its origins could be observed much sooner, particularly in early childhood education, maternal and child health services and special education.²⁵⁴ Already in 17th century Comenius characterized the “School of Mother” as the best way of education of a child in the first six years. John Lock also stressed the importance of early education by his notion *tabula rasa*, challenging commonly held concept of genetically predetermined behaviour and competence.²⁵⁵

Despite of these progressive ideas, children with impairments were mostly excluded from standard systems of education and care was provided by families or special institutions and charity. In early 1800s “kindergartens” were established to provide of learning through supervised play, based on religious values like respect, protect and support the dignity of an individual as well as self-satisfaction through *caritas*²⁵⁶. Most of the institutions for children with impairments in area of former Czechoslovakia were based in Prague (Asylum home for abandoned and impaired girls – 1888, first school for children with special needs – 1896). In area of Slovakia we would like to mention Home for mentally impaired children, established in 1898 in Plešivec.²⁵⁷ Formation of Czechoslovakia as an independent state in 1918 brought only partial changes in care for children with impairments. Most of the activities in this area were run by enthusiastic physicians, teachers and social workers and were characterized by spontaneous and non-systematic establishing of various schools and homes for children with impairments with dominantly social a charity bases.²⁵⁸ Voluntarism played important role in this period even though voluntarism was not at the focus of society.²⁵⁹

Substantial changes appear after 1948, with the change of political situation and beginning of socialism period in Czechoslovakia. This period was characterized by nationalization of private property and transition to paternalistic forms of social policy. Whole system could be defined as a complex, state financed custody of employed and their families, where many of social problems were ideologically abolished, as well as social education. These changes had a massive influence on non-governmental initiatives that were suppressed and politically indoctrinated. Social security passes through significant changes from progressive European social security system to Soviet type of social security, supplemented by paternalistic type of Social Care.²⁶⁰ This results to fact that state became the only one provider of social services for children with impairments. Based on Act n. 95/1948 on general education all schools were nationalised and state took over the education

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259 Šmidová, Mária. “Preparation of volunteers engaged in helping professions nd working with families in difficult situations”. 89 – 91

260 Botek, Ondrej. “20 Years of Transformation of Social Policy in Slovakia-Current State and Main Challenges”. 852 – 56

and care for children “in need of special care”.²⁶¹ Unfortunately, the act does not specify this term. Legislation from 1960 defined seven types of schools for children “in need of special care”, based on type of impairment, but the system remains being segregating despite of some positives tendencies towards improving quality of care.²⁶² Important shift appears after 1989 with the political changes and transition from socialism to democracy that brought massive changes in social policy and social services. This includes integration, education and care for children with impairments, following the principles of transformation of social policy, like humanisation, reconfigurations to needs, modification of object, professionalisation, etc.²⁶³

After separation of Czechoslovakia in 1993, development of ECI starts to differ. First concepts of ECI programs in Czech Republic were introduced in early 1990s and first six ECI centres were established (1990 Prague and Brno, 1993 Liberec and Olomouc, 1994 České Budějovice and 1995 Ostrava).²⁶⁴ Financing of centres was covered by donations from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, later from Ministry of Social Affairs, local donors and (especially in early 1990s) from foreign sources. Staff requirements were mostly covered mainly voluntarily by physicians, special pedagogues, social workers and other professionals, but multidisciplinary approach was becoming more and more visible. Different situation was observed in Slovakia, where ECI was still divided to health professionals and professionals from social field. Even in Slovakia we could observe important benefits from voluntary activities, which could be caused by strong religious bases in our region.²⁶⁵

Current state of ECI

Millennium break through brought in Czech Republic substantial move towards standardisation of ECI and activities to ensure systematic assistance to families and children with state guaranty. Shift of orientation to the whole family became very important part progress, not only in meaning of social and educational support, but as well in meaning of spiritual support.²⁶⁶ First draft standards of ECI services were introduced in 2000 and establishment of Association of professionals in ECI in 2003 contributes to formation of standards of ECI. ECI became officially a part of social services in Czech Republic in 2006 by introducing new Act on social services.²⁶⁷ ECI is defined as

261 Slaná, Miriam. et al. *Včasná intervencija. Vývoj, súčasný stav a teoretické východiská. [Early intervention. Development, current status and theoretical basis.]* Trnava: Trnavská univerzita v Trnave: 2017.

262 It can also be seen from the example of the mentioned facts that even today “a social group of people with disabilities does not have the strength to prevent social exclusion” (Cintulová Ludvigh Lucia, and Daniela Baková. *Dimenzie kvality života ľudí s mentálnym postihnutím v zariadeniach sociálnych služieb a v prirodzenej komunite. [Dimensions of quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities in the social services establishments and in the natural community.]* 78.) In order to eliminate the total fateful exclusion from social life, it is necessary to continuously improve the active strategies that form part of the micro societies (family, colleagues, community) and the macro societies (social policy, public opinion, legislation). (Cintulová Ludvigh Lucia, and Daniela Baková. *Dimenzie kvality života ľudí s mentálnym postihnutím v zariadeniach sociálnych služieb a v prirodzenej komunite. [Dimensions of quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities in the social services establishments and in the natural community.]* 78.)

263 Botek, Ondrej. “20 Years of Transformation of Social Policy in Slovakia-Current State and Main Challenges”. 852 – 56

264 Hradilková, Terezie. *Historie rané péče v Čechách. [The history of early intervention in Bohemia. Association for Early Intervention.]* [online] <http://www.ranapece.cz/historie/> (accessed June 29, 2018).

265 Schreiter, Robert. “The distinctive characteristics of christian reconciliation relevant for current mission activities”. 8 – 22.

266 Tomiczek, Václav, and Jaroslav, Slaný. “Spiritual support for families in the context of early childhood care”. 100 – 106.

267 Hradilková, Terezie. *Historie rané péče v Čechách. [The history of early intervention in Bohemia. Association for Early Intervention.]* [online] <http://www.ranapece.cz/historie/> (accessed June 29, 2018).

“field service, eventually supplemented by ambulant form, providing services to family and child up to 7 years of age, who is impaired, or who’s development is in risk due to unfavourable health conditions. Service focus on family support and support of child development with consideration of her/his individual needs”.²⁶⁸

This legal definition allows to realize the ECI on its basic principles: support to the whole family, professional services in specialised centres, providing of services on time, financially covered by public sources.

The process of institutionalisation of ECI in Slovakia shows many similarities with the process in Czech Republic, but with nearly 10 years delay. ECI became officially a part of social services from 1st of January 2014. Novelisation of Act No. 448/2008 in 2013 defines ECI

“as a social service provided to a child up to 7 years of age, if her/his development is at risk due to impairment as well as to her/his family. ECI consist of providing of specialised social counselling and social rehabilitation, providing of complex stimulation of development of the child with impairment, providing of preventive activities. ECI service could be provided both ambulant form as well as a field service”.²⁶⁹

Foundation “SOCIA” started a project “Development of ECI in Slovakia in 2014, with financial support of Danish foundation “VELUS”, which results to foundation of first three ECI centres in Bratislava, Prešov and Žilina. Three more centres in Košice, Banská Bystrica and Trenčín followed soon. There are currently 22 centres providing of ECI in Slovakia, comparing to 47 centres in Czech Republic²⁷⁰ (figures 1 and 2).

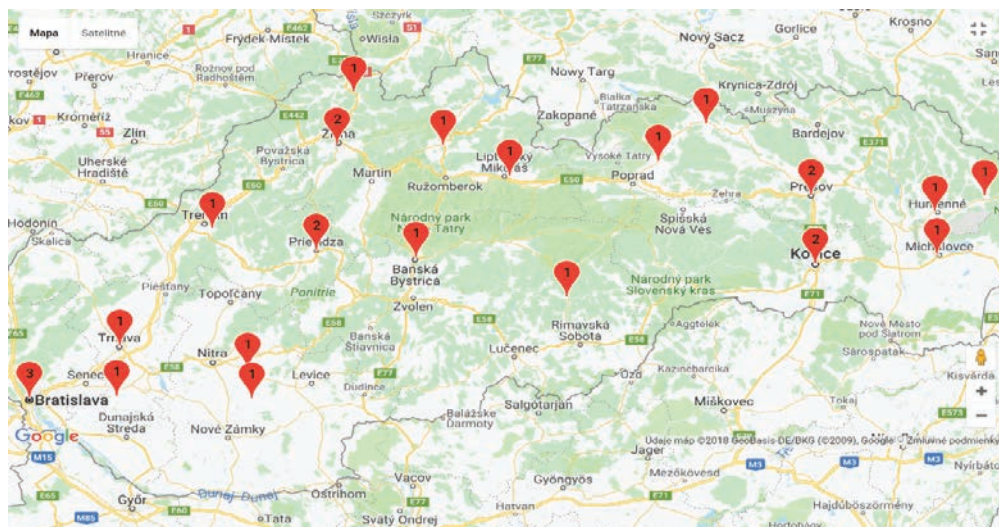
268 Act No.108/2006 on Social Services (Czech Republic)

As the example the substantial approach of the Czech Republic to the ECI principles clearly shows, the more similar supporting factors applied, the greater the chance that children living with disabilities will as adults have a better opportunity to live a life as full-valued as possible on every level, of course with respect to the aspects of their disability. (Cintulová Ludvigh Lucia, and Daniela Baková. *Dimenzie kvality života ľudí s mentálnym postihnutím v zariadeniach sociálnych služieb a v prirodzenej komunite. [Dimensions of quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities in the social services establishments and in the natural community.]* 78.) It results in the elimination of the feeling of a lack of respect they receive from society or in the elimination of self-doubt. (Cintulová Ludvigh Lucia, and Baval Beňo. “Implementation of the Code of Ethics in Social Services”.16) Many people living with disabilities depend on their experiences with other people which influences how they will further perceive or appreciate themselves. (Cintulová Ludvigh Lucia, and Baval Beňo. “Implementation of the Code of Ethics in Social Services”.16) As demonstrated by the research conducted by Blom and Moren in 2012 on quality of work within the social work practice, – in terms of the dignity support and promotion of the value of people living with disabilities – “it is very important to deepen the knowledge and to acknowledge the differences regarding the quality of social services and clients’ life” (Cintulová Ludvigh Lucia, and Baval Beňo. “Implementation of the Code of Ethics in Social Services”.18) and to use the best efforts to improve the aspects within the quality of social services as well as the quality of life of the people living with disabilities where it is possible.

269 Act No. 448/2008 on Social Services (Slovak Republic)

270 Slaná, Miriam. et al. *Včasná intervencija. Vývoj, súčasný stav a teoretické východiská. [Early intervention. Development, current status and theoretical basis.]* Trnava: Trnavská univerzita v Trnave: 2017.

Figure 1 ECI centres in Slovakia



Source: Asociácia poskytovateľov a podporovateľov včasnej intervencie. [The Association of Early Childhood Intervention Providers and Supporters.] Available from <https://asociaciavi.sk>

Figure 2 ECI centres in Czech Republic



Source: Nadace rozvoje občanské společnosti. [The Foundation for Civil Society Development.] Available from <https://ranapece.vcasnapomocdetem.cz>

Similarities could be observed in complicated coordination of ECI services, as their activities are legally covered by three Ministries – Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Education. This heterogeneity results in lower coordination and thus lower level of development of efficient multidisciplinary work. Another similarity could be observed in focusing on as early intervention as possible, as many research has shown the importance of first three years of age for future development as well as importance of relationship bonds.²⁷¹

Challenges of ECI in Slovakia and Czech Republic

Despite the fact, that ECI delayed by start in both countries (even more than 10 years later in Slovakia), both countries tend to follow the development of ECI in EU countries and to gain the European standards. Late start of ECI could be more visibly observed in Slovakia not only at the number of providers of ECI, but also at legal level and policy measures. We would like to present main challenges in both countries using of five key elements, as defined by European agency for development in special needs education.²⁷²

Availability is the first key element, aiming to reach all children and families in need of support as early as possible. This is a general priority aiming to compensate for regional differences with respect to the availability of resources and to ensure same quality of services. This challenge is closely connected to the fact, that financing of ECI services was decentralised from national level to regional authorities and thus created different models of financing. There are also not yet defined quality standards for ECI in Slovakia, what is decreasing availability of the service.

Proximity as a key element should ensure that services are made available as close as possible to children and families and the services are family-focused. Pictures 1 and 2 shows the difference in current spatial proximity of ECI in Slovakia and Czech Republic. Even the numbers of ECI providers seem to be not low, many of providers do not provide of all ECI services (as defined in the act on Social Services), even not for wide spectrum of impairments, and nearly no services for children abused and/or neglected.

Affordability stress the financial side of providing of services that should be free of charge or at minimal cost to families. Financial coverage of ECI remains a challenge in both countries, as ECI services are provided through public funds from health, social and education authorities as well as private and non-governmental sources. As already mentioned, financing frameworks also varies in different regions of the country.

Interdisciplinary working is closely connected to previous element, as different professionals are involved in providing of services and thus they are obliged to follow different legal frameworks. Efficiency of provided services require intensive exchange of information among all participating professionals, which is thus very complicated.

271 Dávidová, Michaela, Mária Hardy, and Mariana Hamarová. "Perception of meaningfulness and a safe type of relationship bond as an important means of assistance for helping professions". 60 – 82

272 European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. 2010. *Early Childhood Intervention – Progress and Developments 2005–2010*.

Diversity of services as the last key element, following previous element, stressing the need of close collaboration of professionals in their activities in all three mentioned areas: health, social and education.

Conclusion

Following the analysis of current situation of ECI in Slovakia and Czech Republic as well as ECI report on ECI progress and development²⁷³ we could define the main priorities:

- The need to reach all population requiring ECI and make the services to be reached as soon as possible for those in need of the ECI. This requires intensive information sharing and collaboration of professionals in all participating sectors: health, education and social as well as clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Common legislation of all three ministries could be helpful to reach well organised transition process among services to ensure the continuity, when children move from one provision to another. Interdisciplinary base of ECI could be also strengthened by identifying of key worker, or ECI coordinator.
- The need to ensure quality and equal standards of provision of ECI as well as their monitoring and evaluation nationwide, despite geographical development differences. Main recommendation for Slovakia is the need of defining of quality standards for ECI, and in both countries to elaborate systems for evaluation of effectiveness and quality. Standards should be established across health, education and social services and involve families in process of evaluation. Monitoring of continuity until adulthood is another challenge ahead. Ensuring of quality and equality of the services require development of professional education and training, with particular focus on interdisciplinary collaboration.
- The need to respect the rights and the needs of children and their families by creating family focused and responsive services, involving parents at all levels of planning and developing services.²⁷⁴ These includes continuity in relationships between families and professionals (especially key-workers/coordinators of ECI), holistic nature of ECI service, child-rights focus, clear and appropriate information of families, as well as support of families to recognise the needs and to understand the process of provided services.

Both countries have undertaken a significant development in ECI services, but there is still a room for improvements. Ultimately, it can be concluded that the analysis results may significantly contribute to achieving the ECI services' goals in Slovakia, thanks to which the quality of life will improve for all children with special needs and their families.

273 European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. 2010. *Early Childhood Intervention – Progress and Developments 2005–2010*.

274 In support of this area, for instance, the social workers who “strongly defend knowledge, skills and values designated for the real change of the people’s lives” can be very helpful” (Cintulová Ludvigh Lucia, and Baval Beňo. “Implementation of the Code of Ethics in Social Services”.19), which is particularly important regarding the aforementioned needs of children with disabilities and their families.

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- Act No.108/2006 on Social Services (Czech Republic)
- Act No. 448/2008 on Social Services (Slovak Republic)

SEVERAL RISKS RELATED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF AN EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC*Jana Levická ^{1,2} Katarína Levická ^{1,3}, Andrea Bánovčinová ¹, Nadežda Kovalčíková ¹¹ Trnava university, Faculty of Health Sciences and Social Work (Trnava, SK)² University of Hradec Králové, Institute of Social Work and Phylisophical faculty (Hradec Králové, CZ)³ Pablo de Olavide University (Sevilla, ES)**Submitted: 6 July 2017****Accepted of publication: 30 August 2018****First published: 15 October 2018 © Acta Missiologica |No. 2|Vol. 12|2018|****Abstract****Background:** The article first and foremost aims to point out some risks related to the implementation of the early childhood intervention service in Slovakia. The more intense development of the early childhood intervention service in Slovakia began after 2014. The purpose of this service is not only to develop a child's potential but also to strengthen the family as a whole. The paper briefly discusses the historical contexts of this service as well as the contemporary understanding of early childhood intervention in international and local contexts.**Methods:** A qualitative research strategy, particularly the method of content analysis, was used to identify the risks related to the implementation of this service.**Results:** The most significant risks we discovered concern the fields of the funding and methodology of the early childhood intervention service. We perceive these risks as endangering the provision of the early childhood intervention service in the future.**Conclusion:** We currently regard it to be crucial that the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic shows a more robust commitment to creating the basal frameworks for the methodology of the early childhood intervention service so that the latter's development will be ensured pursuant to the EAECI requirements and principles. From the perspective of the implications at the level of further theoretical and empirical research as well as of the applications in the field of the early childhood intervention service, we also deem it important to strengthen social work in the organizations providing this service. In this respect, room emerges, inter alia, for professional discussions and reflections with the experts and practitioners involved in this discipline.**Keywords:** Early intervention – Risks – Interdisciplinary team – Social Work – Principles EAECI.

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It is assumed that more than 2000 children born in the Slovak Republic each year are required to receive specialized care. These are children with different types and degrees of disability, or children with serious congenital illnesses (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, etc.). The number of these children is also increasing due to always improving prenatal and neonatal care, new medical knowledge and, last but not least, the development of special health technologies. With the increasing number of these children in society, the issue of further care for these children also comes to the forefront.

In Slovakia²⁸⁰ there is a long-term practice focused on the care of children with disabilities or children with an unfavorable health prognosis. The development of care for these children occurred around the 1950's in line with the global trend. Already in the 20th century, some pediatricians and educators demonstrated a professional interest in children with disabilities. This trend has been gradually expanding and supported by research that has been used in practice. As a direct response to high infant and baby mortality, counseling for mothers emerged in the 1930's. They were advised to have a health-preventive function, focused on the basic medical examination of infants, the instruction of pregnant women and mothers in the care of newborns and children under 6 years of age, also directed by a social worker alongside the doctor. Besides these counseling services in Czechoslovakia, there were counseling centers for "vulnerable children" and local social counselors²⁸¹.

In our territory, the issue of the pre-school education of children with severe disabilities began to attract attention, especially after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic. During this period, the first kindergartens for children with sensory disabilities were created. Not only was the establishment of these institutions important, but the emphasis was also on training teachers to work in schools and institutions for children with disabilities. The preparation of pedagogues for working with children and youth, as well as the adult population with disabilities, began in the 19th century with short courses²⁸². The relationship with children with disabilities in our country was significantly affected by one of the greatest pedagogical personalities of Czech origin: Ján Amos Comenius. This effect has continued to this day.

The 1950's were particularly significant for pedagogy, when special pedagogy developed, but it was more focused on school-age children, i.e. children aged 6-15 years. Despite this, we developed interesting methodologies and didactics for individual areas of work with disabled children, as well as those at the ages of 3-6 years. This care was provided on a weekly basis, but if necessary, special boarding schools also provided year-round care. Right during this period isolationist tendencies deepened, leading to the strengthening of year-round institutional care especially recommended as a solution for children with moderate and severe disability. Although a relatively large share of children remained in domestic care, there was a strong segregation trend

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280 In relation to the naming of the Slovak Republic in the past, we consider it necessary to draw attention to several changes of the official names of the country. From 1918-1938, Slovakia was a part of the Czechoslovak Republic. From 1939 to 1945 it was the Slovak Republic and after 1945 Slovakia again became part of Czechoslovakia. Between 1948 and 1990, the common state was called the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In the short period between 1990 and 1992 it was called the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. Finally, from 1.1.1993, after the division of the common state, the official name of Slovakia is the Slovak Republic. So in an effort to facilitate the reader's orientation in the text, we will use the terms Slovakia and, eventually, Czechoslovakia.

281 GAŇO 1961 *Materiály k dejinám špeciálnych škôl na Slovensku do roku 1945*. Bratislava, VÚP 1961, LEVICKÁ, J 1999. *Náčrt dejín sociálnej práce*. Trnava: FZASP TU, FIALOVÁ, I., TVRDOŇOVÁ, D. 2013. *Od špitála k nemocnici. Zdravotníctvo, sociálna starostlivosť a osveta v dejinách Slovenska*. Bratislava: Slovenský národný archív, 2013. 555.

282 ZEMAN, J. 1939. *Dejiny péče o slabomyslné*. Praha: Spolek pro péči o slabomyslné

in education from the early 1970's, with the result that children with a lesser degree of disability were definitively excluded from the mainstream. Another consequence of this trend was that social and other services at the community level were not developed to alleviate the segregation pressure²⁸³. In the 1980's, in the social sphere, the concept of comprehensive coordinated care was definitely enforced, according to which²⁸⁴ a unified care system for disabled children was built in the state, which would be created across multiple professions and coordinated through social departments as part of local state administration. MUDr. Karol Matulay significantly contributed to supporting the idea of comprehensive coordinated child care, who was intensively devoted to introducing early diagnosis and intervention from the late 1970's. Matulay's concept was primarily medical-psychological. In addition to this trend, similar trends emerged in the area of special pedagogy and social care. However, the concept adopted by the The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic has never been fully implemented, for two reasons. The first was the lack of readiness of the professional public and the second reason was the socio-political changes that occurred in the country after November 1989. Despite the fact that the idea of comprehensive coordinated care has not been consistently resolved in the Slovak Republic, there began a change especially in the approach of society to people with disabilities²⁸⁵.

The individual areas of practice focused on children with disabilities developed in isolation, which subsequently reflected on the quality of life of these children and their families. Moreover, until the end of the last millennium, in Slovakia there was a noticeable trend of placing children with disabilities in specialized schools, in the case of more severe disability in special boarding schools. Children with severe disabilities were placed in specialized facilities: into social care institutions specializing in individual types of disability. Although related to year-long care, the practice was that the placing of a child in "year-round" state care was decided on their lifelong placement in institutional care. This practice was also strengthened at the level of the state's social and political measures. Social services that would have supported the development of community care for children with disabilities and their families in Czechoslovakia were lacking²⁸⁶. With specialized care for children with disabilities focused on the pre-school age, we encountered only children with visual or auditory disorders, implemented within the school system.

The transformation process that began shortly after 1990 also affected the area of care for children with disabilities. If the transformation process at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family clearly meant the introduction and strengthening of community care forms, two approaches to the education of children and youth continued to develop in the Ministry of Education. Education focused on the majority of the population, which was conducted and performed in regular schools. Within this current, the ideas of integrated and later inclusive education were gradually being promoted, and in conjunction with this special-pedagogical education focused on children with disabilities. This trend was also retained for pre-primary education, which is

283 ŠÁNDOROVÁ, Z. 2005. *The basics of the multicultural and integrative special pedagogy of early age*. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus, 97, ŠÁNDOROVÁ, Z. 2015. *(Re)socializace v rané péči*. Pardubice: Univerzita Pardubice, 140. s., HORNÁK, L., KOLLÁROVÁ, E., MATUŠKA, O. 2002. *Dejiny špeciálnej pedagogiky*. Prešov, PdF PU, LEVICKÁ, J. 1999. *Náčrt dejín sociálnej práce*. Trnava: FZaSP TU 104 s.

284 At that time, the SR was part of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR).

285 LEVICKÁ, J. 2002. *Sociálna rehabilitácia*. In: *Rehabilitácia*. ISSN 0375-0922. - Vol. 35 (39), no. 3 (2002), s. 188-191, LEVICKÁ In GÚTH, A. a kol. 2004. *Vyšetrovacie metodiky v rehabilitácii pre fyzioterapeutov*. Bratislava: LIEČREH, 749.

286 LEVICKÁ, J. 1999. *Náčrt dejín sociálnej práce*. Trnava: FZaSP TU

designated for the age category of 3-6 years. The Slovak Republic also has serious problems in the implementation of inclusive education, which are very important in the field of pre-primary and primary education.

Despite the quality of care for these children in individual segments of practice, this kind of care cannot be considered to be a system-wide and coordinated approach to caring for children with disabilities, such as early care. The care provided in this manner was not systemically linked, it did not target the support of the family, and there was no care for children aged 0-3 years restricted to professional health care.

Early Intervention Service (EIS)

Early intervention is aimed at supporting and empowering the child and his/her family through related services. This approach helps to create an inclusive and cohesive society aware of the rights of all children and their families²⁸⁷. In the US, from which this approach originated, it is a timely intervention based on the common approach of *health, social and educational services*²⁸⁸. It is also similar in the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands²⁸⁹. Although in Portugal, early intervention was first developed as *social-health* care, the intervention team was expanded quite rapidly by pedagogues and psychologists. Early care reacts to the fact that it is significantly important for newborns with developmental issues or disability to be given the most comprehensive comprehensive care or early intervention, which significantly influences the quality of their state of health and thus the quality of life²⁹⁰. Although there are several differences in definitions of early care resulting from the economic, political, and cultural differences of local environments in which individual creators live, a generally accepted understanding of early intervention is a service that has the potential to reduce dependence on social institutions by focusing on increasing the ability of the family to cope with the presence of the affected child as well as increase the development of the child's potential for his/her future employment²⁹¹. In this meaning, early care can be understood as a range of strategic procedures that can be used to achieve better results for children and their families who are threatened. This approach is based on the belief that all children should have access to general early childhood education, health care and sufficient social assistance²⁹². Pretis²⁹³, for the purpose of early intervention, identified safety for the development of the child's personality and strengthening the family and parental competencies needed for the social inclusion of the family. This simply formulated objective assumes that this service will help:

- to improve the developmental, social and educational possibilities and results of the child;
- to improve parenting skills;
- to strengthen the family;

287 EADSNE In CARPENTER, B. SCHLOESSER, J. EGERTON, J. (Eds.) 2009. *European Developments*

288 MRÁZEK, P. J., HAGGERTY, R. J. 1994. *Reducing Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventive Intervention Research*.

289 SORIANO, V. (Ed.) 2005. *Early Childhood Intervention. Analysis of Situations in Europe*

290 WERNER, E.E. 2000. *Protective factors and individual resilience*

291 HARVEY, B. 2014. *The Case for Prevention and Early Intervention*, DUNST, C.J. 2000. Revisiting "rethinking early intervention"

292 MURANICK, M. J. 2005. *Early intervention for children with disabilities: Current knowledge and future prospects*, PRETIS, M. 2005. *A Developmental Communications Model Within the Early Intervention System in Austria*. PRETIS, M. 2010. *Early Childhood Intervention in Austria*

293 PRETIS, M. 2010. *Early Childhood Intervention*, PRETIS, M. 2005. *A Developmental Communications Model Within the Early Intervention System in Austria*.

- to reduce feelings of isolation, stress and frustration about the issue, that families with a similar story may encounter;
- to mitigate or reduce undesirable forms of behavior of members of the family system;
- to seek help to develop positive behavioral strategies;
- to prevent child maltreatment and neglect;
- to mitigate the consequences of child neglect and abuse;
- to encourage children with disabilities to develop as productive and independent individuals.²⁹⁴

Thus experts point to the need to develop coping strategies aimed at guiding the child toward independent living; the role of advising and educating family members; as well as e.g. help in obtaining technological assistance (e.g. mobile walker, positioning bed, oxygen concentrator, etc.).

In Slovakia, early care in terms of comprehensive coordinated care was not developed until 2014. Experts with different areas of the so-called assisting professions along with parents of children with special needs have long demanded that care be taken in Slovakia to provide professional and comprehensive assistance to these families as soon as possible and that they be available to families.

Changes occurred from 1.1.2014, when the amendment to Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services, under which early-time care is understood as one of the services to support families with children. Section 33 states: “An early intervention service is provided to a child up to the age of seven if his/her development is threatened for reasons of a disability and the family of that child.” The law states that within the early intervention service, it provides specialized social counseling and social rehabilitation and performs the stimulation of the complex development of a child with disabilities as well as preventive activity. The other legislative amendment to this law (in force since 1.1.2018) expands the service of early intervention as well as community rehabilitation. It is not rare that when creating legislation, all the factors that will prove to be of use in practice are not known, so it is important that, in the first years, adequate attention is paid to the impact of legislation on practical implementation in the given area. Taking this fact into consideration, in the framework of our research we have set the goal of *identifying risks in the development of an early intervention service in the Slovak Republic*.

Methods

To achieve our aim, we used a qualitative research strategy, specifically a content analysis method²⁹⁵. The subject of the analysis was the following text documents: Act No. 448/2008 and its two other amendments, the basic documents of EAECI²⁹⁶ regulating the rules and principles of timely intervention, information on each of the providers of early intervention services, as well

294 WALKER, M. 2005. *The Statutory Social Worker's Role..* PRETIS, M. 2005. *A Developmental Communications Model Within the Early Intervention System in Austria..* PRETIS, M. 2010. *Early Childhood Intervention in Austria*, SORIANO, V. (Ed.) 2005. *Early Childhood Intervention. Analysis of Situations Europe* KNIGHT, B.A. 1999. *Towards inclusion of students with special educational needs in the regular classroom*, HARDIKER, P., EXTON, K., BARKER, M. 1991. *Policies and practices in preventive child care*. WALKER, S.P. et al. 2007. *The Statutory Social Worker's Role..*

295 GULOVÁ, L., ŠÍP, R. 2013. *Výzkumné metody v pedagogické praxi*. Praha: Grada

296 EAECI is the abbreviation of The European Association on Early Childhood Intervention

as APPSVI published on their websites, contracts for the provision of financial assistance between providers and self-governing regions. Based on the goal, we have identified the following research questions:

- 1) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the early intervention service in the context of the current legislative regulation of the Slovak Republic?
- 2) Is the development trend of the early intervention service in accordance with the European trend represented by the EAECI? Is it built as an interdisciplinary service?
- 3) What place is interested in the practice of social work early intervention services?

The main selective criteria²⁹⁷ for content analysis purposes were *goals, clientele, principles, rules, content, scope, implementers and funding* of early intervention. We then processed the obtained data using the summation and comparison technique. For the purpose of this paper, the obtained knowledge is processed not only to correspond with our research questions, but to be readable.

Unauthorized and Unsecured Funding for Early Intervention Services

The main principle of early intervention is to support and strengthen a family with a child with disabilities. This principle is declared for all providers. This is also the case with the other principles that the EAECI regards as the most important. If we reflect on how long a similar service has been absent in Slovak society, then we must admit that the mere introduction of the service has a positive effect on affected families. In relation to the first question, it is an *undisputed fact* that the actual anchoring of the early intervention service in the context of social services appears in Act No. 448/2008²⁹⁸ and in particular the legislative anchoring of this service. This also makes early intervention available to economically weaker families. If the service is to be provided to families free of charge, then it is necessary to secure its financial coverage.

Early Intervention Centers have emerged as non-profit organizations providing social services. The Socia Foundation, which has received funding from the Danish Velux Foundation to implement timely intervention in Slovakia, and which has obtained additional funds from private sources, contributed significantly to the development of this service. The undisputed contribution of the Socia organization also includes that with the financial support of the foundation, 7 centers for early intervention gradually opened in Slovakia and the emergence of others has been supported methodically. Besides direct financial support, the Socia also provided training and retraining for future professional staff of early intervention centers. Besides these centers, other organizations providing this service gradually emerged. The issue of the financial security of this service is considered a perpetual problem. The organization that decides to provide this service must receive sufficient funds to cover:

- Operating costs. Besides usual items such as rent, material and technical equipment for the workplace, it is necessary to calculate the cost of buying and operating a vehicle in this service, as the service should function mainly as field work.
- Personnel costs: wages and salaries for employees involved in the implementation of the early intervention service.

297 See, for example, MAYRING, P. *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*

298 ACT NO. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services...

Pursuant to current Slovak legislation, the financing of social services is generally understood by the state as a *contributory activity*, which means that the state does not cover all social services but only provides a contribution for the service. The funding of early intervention services should be implemented through self-governing regions. The amount of the contribution has been left to the decision of the individual self-governing regions. The contribution for 1 hour of professional care associated with the implementation of this service thus ranged from the lowest amount in 2017 at €3.90 € to the sum of €12.40. These amounts have been identified by all providers as insufficient, not covering the real costs. The Association of Providers and Supporters of Early Intervention Service (APSEIS) put forth a proposal so that minimum amount of the hourly rate for the provision of the social service of early intervention would be €16.70. The amendment to Act 448/2008 Coll. involving this requirement did not prevail, so the differences in funding for the service continue to persist. For us it is inadequate that the amendment explicitly states that towns and municipalities can provide a contribution to support this service only if the organization does not provide a financial contribution to the self-governing region for this service. Such a legal dictation may in the future create an obstacle for municipalities and towns, since MP's do not have to approve planned funds for EIS.

The open question remains, from where organizations providing this service will receive funding for its operation. At the same time next year (2018), the SOCIA Foundation will also significantly reduce its financial support. This can seriously jeopardize the existence of an early intervention service.

Evaluation of the Professional Orientation of EIS in Slovakia

Around the world, early intervention has been evolving for more than half a century. During this period, it has undergone a number of changes, until finally, at the turn of the millennium, its basic principles and rules were established to ensure the fulfillment of the mission of this service, and this is the early and comprehensive support of a family with a disabled child. Despite the absence of EIS, the service's creators in Slovakia have long pointed to the need for comprehensive family care that not only stimulates the development of a child with disabilities, but promotes family functioning and is the prevention of various family crises.²⁹⁹ It is precisely because, through the service thus conceived it positively supported families as a whole,³⁰⁰ we find it necessary to monitor the implementation of the EIS as far as the most basic and early intervention principles are applied in domestic practice.

Under current Slovak legislation, early intervention is understood as a social service in support of a family with children (Section 12b of the aforementioned Act) and, as stated by law, social service is performed mainly through social work, with procedures corresponding to the knowledge of social sciences and knowledge of the state and development of the provision of social services (Section 2, Par. 6). The other amendment to the Act also provided a substantive specification of the concept of stimulating the complex development of a disabled child, and Section 84, Paragraph 20 at the same time clearly defines the circle of professional staff competent

299 See e.g. ŠMIDOVÁ, M. 2016. *Príprava dobrovoľníkov pôsobiacich....* or TOMICZEK, V., SLANÝ, J. 2017. *Spirituálny podpora rodiny v kontextu ranní péče.*

300 See e.g. DUNST, C.J. 2000. *Revisiting "rethinking early intervention...."*, as well as GURALNICK, M. 2001. *A Developmental Systems Model for Early Intervention*, GURALNICK, M. 1997. *The Effectiveness of Early Intervention*, PINTO, A.I. et al. 2012. *Early Childhood Intervention....*, SIMEONSSON, R.J. 1994. *Risk, Resilience and Prevention Promoting the Well-Being of AI Children*, VARGAS-BARÓN, E., JANSON, U, MUFEL, U. 2009. *Early Childhood Intervention...*

for stimulating the development of a child. The law does not further specify how the early intervention service should be implemented. In the effort to legislatively anchor EIS, the argument for the introduction of the service was based mainly on several scientific studies carried out by EAECI and UNESCO³⁰¹. We therefore assumed that, when introducing this service into Slovak practice, we will encounter at least those principles that are globally valid. These are mainly the following principles: *family empowerment, interdisciplinary approach, team work, complexity*. These principles, as the main ones, are presented by all the providers on their websites. We assume that the first principle is actually fulfilled in practice. We start from the fact that any work with a family can contribute to its fulfillment. So we focused on the fulfillment of other principles and, on the basis of the analysis, we state the following.

The actual process of implementation, use of methods or techniques is left to the service provider in full, which led to them gradually appearing in the Slovak Republic in the form of *two concepts*. The first is the Association of Providers and Supporters of Early Intervention Service (APSEIS) and logically, with a second approach, we encounter providers that are not members of APSEIS. The emergence of APSEIS is the result of a joint effort between the Parent Platform and the SOCIA Foundation. APSEIS brings together approximately 50% of early intervention service providers. Other providers have refused to join the association just due to the persistent differences in understanding how to implement the service.

One model also promotes the understanding of EIS, according to which all members of the expert team are competent to provide families with children with disabilities with *the same professional assistance, especially through specialized social counseling*. This model, for example, advocates that a special pedagogue, as a member of the early intervention team, will not conduct extensive pedagogical interventions directly in the family. This should be continued to be provided only by centers of special pedagogical counseling. Paradoxically, special pedagogues are the largest group of experts involved in the implementation of EIS. They equally refuse to include early intervention services, for example, family therapy, etc. Such an understanding of the early intervention service loses the sense of an interdisciplinary team to ensure the service.

Such an understanding of early intervention services contradicts not only our expert opinion, which is based on the context of social work, but the standards of early intervention, e.g. EAECI or UNESCO³⁰². Standards assume that each member of the interdisciplinary team will help a child with specific needs and his/her family mainly *within their own expertise*, ensuring that the child and his/her family receive effective *interprofessional assistance*. Current developments suggest that the Slovak environment is reducing the service of early intervention in the area of specialized social counseling, or only social counseling, which is unacceptable. Our rejection of this trend is based on two facts. The first is that families will not receive the scale and the level of support an interdisciplinary team ensures. As emphasized. Soriano:³⁰³ the strongest argument in favor of early intervention is that this service is *built as an integrated inter-disciplinary collaboration implemented within an interdisciplinary team overcoming fragmented mono-disciplinary intervention, which was implemented in the past in the form of isolated therapies provided by non-cooperating professionals*. We note that this approach is absent within the first model. The

301 E.g. UNESCO Policy Brief on Early Childhood Inclusion of Children with Disabilities... 2009

302 UNESCO. 1994. *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*, UNESCO Policy Brief on Early Childhood. Inclusion of Children with Disabilities...:

303 SORIANO, V. (Ed.) 2005. *Early Childhood Intervention. Analysis of Situations in Europe*

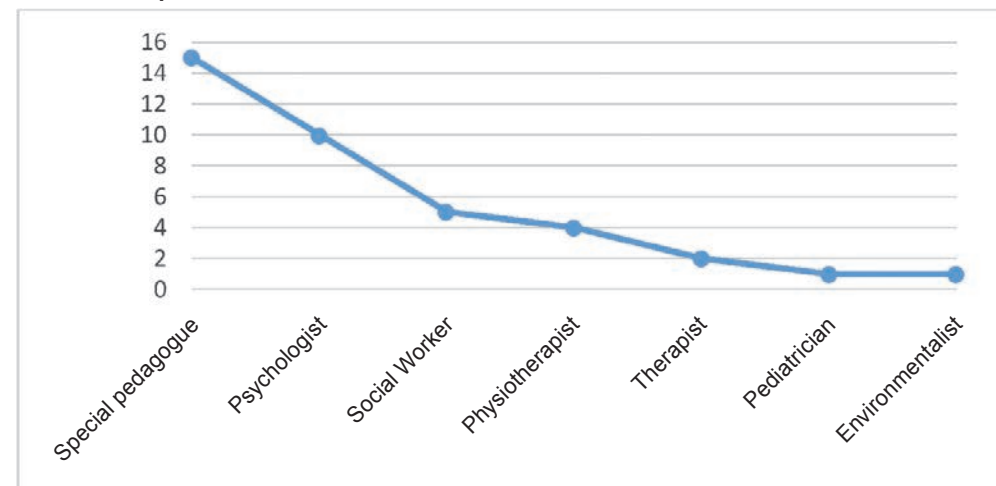
second fact is that Act No. 219/2014 Coll. on social work³⁰⁴ clearly states that a social worker is a graduate with a master's degree in social work. The aforementioned Act No. 448/2008 clearly stipulates that specialized social counseling can only be performed by a social worker. Counseling performed in the context of social work is perceived, in terms of process, as identical to psychological or special pedagogical counseling, etc. But there is no need to underestimate the fact that there are different content and some principles within individual counseling. In those organizations where the social worker is not a member of the team, only social counseling is provided. Social counseling, according to valid Slovak legislation, is basically only information advice: i.e. providing basic information about where the family can actually find professional help. Such an approach is contrary to the basic principles of early intervention, which is a service that comes to the family and provides professional (not informative) intervention in the home environment.

The second model is based on the fact that qualified professional assistance can be provided to the family by experts and that the individual members of the EIS team will be the most useful to the family in the context of their own profession. The advocates of this approach are gradually publishing methodologies only focused on a certain area of early intervention (e.g. in the field of therapeutic pedagogy). These are presented under the designation "Early Intervention Service Methodology". These are methodologies that are deeper and have higher quality elaboration, but do not have early intervention as a social service to respond to a wider range of issues faced by families with a disabled child. Paradoxically, in spite of certain circumstances necessarily associated with this approach, in terms of helping a child and his/her family it *seems to be more effective*, since it brings professional assistance directly to the family in at least one of the necessary areas. However, this approach is reinforced through *persistent fragmented mono-disciplinary intervention*.

The Site of Social Work in the Context of EIS

Most of the personnel on the websites of the individual organizations providing EIS³⁰⁵ also reported. As can be seen from the chart below, two professions are dominated by employees, namely special pedagogy (including 2 clinical logopedists) and psychology. The information indicates that there are 5 social workers in the organizations, but in 3 cases it is only part-time. There are also 4 physiotherapists, 2 therapeutic pedagogues in the personnel. We appreciate that a pediatrician is also working on a team.

Chart 1 Composition of Personnel



Source: Authors

On their websites the organizations also provide information on external collaborators whose services they use ad hoc in case of need.

Of the concluded agreements on the funding of EIS, which have been organized by individual self-governing regions, we know that the funds were mainly provided to the organizations mainly for one, maximum two employees providing social counseling. Looking at the personnel make-up of the team, we return to the question of the financial security of the service as a whole, and the need for the methodical guidance of this service to meet the requirements of practice. We understand that the funding of the whole EIS through "social counseling" is a consequence of current legislation. Such funding, however, supports a model in which all professionals are competent to provide equal assistance to families.

In view of our professional orientation, we also focused on identifying the site of social work in the area of EIS. Based on the available resources, we conclude that in just one case is it possible to consider the equivalent position of this profession in an EIS team. We did not just arrive from the absolute number of 5 social workers, but from the fact that social workers are part of the team only in 4 organizations. There are 2 social workers in one organization and their work corresponds to their undergraduate training. In the other 2 organizations, social workers work only part-time and according to information from the websites, their main activity is the management of the team and not the performance of professional activities connected to social work with the family. Similarly, there is an organization that employs a full-time social worker.

We note that social work is now perceived as a "complementary" activity within EIS organizations, more focused on supporting the team than working with a child and his/her family. We do not want to discuss the causes of this situation because we lack the relevant facts with which we could have debated.

304 Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 219/2014 Coll. on Social Work and on the Conditions for Performance of Certain Professional Activities in the Area of Social Affairs and Family and on Amendments to Certain Acts

305 Not all organizations that offer EIS are called an Early Intervention Center

Insufficient Attention on the Part of the Ministry

The competence for early intervention service is under the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and the Family of the Slovak Republic. The successful establishment and development of this service requires that the ministry, at least on a vertical level, that is at the government level, cooperate with at least two other ministries, namely the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. It is also necessary to conduct talks with the Ministry of Finance to ensure sufficient financial resources for this service. If the Slovak Republic legislates early intervention service as free of charge, then it is the responsibility of the state to provide financial coverage of the total costs of this service. At the horizontal level, the ministry should be the organizer of professional, public debates on the form of the early intervention service. It should also be interested in creating its own (Slovak) methodology or applying some oversight methodology abroad to this service, considering the specificities of Slovak practice as well as Slovak public policy. Since the Socia Foundation has announced that it will not have enough funding this year for further massive support for open centers, the current legislative situation may also lead to the collapse of the service that is still developing. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic should legally oblige the self-governing regions to financially support the performance of the various experts working in these centers and provide financial coverage of this service.

In our opinion, it is right at the level of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic that an initiative aimed at establishing basic frameworks of the methodology of this service should be launched in order to ensure its development in accordance with the requirements and principles of the EAECI. Moreover, current legislation does not allow the provision of EIS to children who live in an environmentally unsuitable environment, or live in families that are economically weakened. In the abovementioned cases, it is possible to assume that the conditions in which a child's family is found can negatively affect the child's development not only in the psychosocial area but can seriously damage the child's health.

Conclusion

Three years after the existence of the early intervention service, it is soon to bring generalizing claims about early intervention service in Slovakia. However, we consider three years to be sufficient to assess the current situation in the area of EIS and identify certain risks associated with the introduction of the service into practice.

A positive aspect we perceive is that despite its short duration, EIS has become an actual part of Slovak practice in the field of social services, and the fact that some organizations are striving to implement the service in the context of EAECI standards. The greatest deficiency is the lack of financial security and the methodical inaccuracy of the service.

The spontaneity of introducing an early intervention service that is reflected in Slovakia's conditions is not only negative. Without the enthusiasm of, in particular, parents and a small group of experts, this service would not have been included in Act 448/2008 Coll. and the legislative conditions for its implementation would not be created. This "spontaneity" has also played a positive role in its practical implementation, when these enthusiasts were the first to provide the early intervention service. But it is true that in introducing it, they offered families only the area of assistance they themselves had prepared from their previous practice. The undeniable fact is that they offered it to families with children aged 0-7 years, i.e., for families to which professional help (besides medical assistance) was rarely provided. We mainly see the contribution of this period in the fact that early intervention service is gradually entering Slovak society, also evidence of

changes in the area of legislation. An indirect product of this period is also the gradually stronger interest of service operators and the professional public interested in its creation so that early intervention service is developed in accordance with international standards.

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SOCIAL AND MISSION WORK WITH PREGNANT ROMA GIRLS AT AGE OF NEARLY 18



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Abstract

Background: This article analyses the significance of the interconnecting of social and mission work in Roma communities. It argues that social and mission work must be in constant dialogue when eliminating social problems, including, for example, the early pregnancies of Roma girls. The article is based on a theoretical analysis of the reasons for the early pregnancies of Roma girls under 18. Furthermore, it empirically surveys the active sexual life and the behaviour in pregnancy of Roma girls as well as their attitudes toward motherhood and parenthood.

Methods: With respect to the specific topic of the article, a qualitative analysis of open-coded primary data is especially employed, based on the testimonies of 21 Roma girls.

Results: The results of the research have shown a direct relationship between the way of life, sexual literacy, and early pregnancies of Roma girls.

Conclusion: Based on the concept under research here, the article, in its conclusion, proposes concrete implications that can also be applied to social work, especially at the level of the education of Roma girls on a safe sexual life.

Keywords: Early Pregnancy – Roma Women – Maternity – Community Work – Missionary. activities.

Introduction

The study is based on the premise that the early pregnancies of Roma girls are the result of their later life failure, low standard of living, low health literacy and inability to integrate. It points to the necessity of linking missionary work and social work in Roma communities as a powerful tool for increasing quality of life, preventing risk behaviors, forming good moral values, and understanding a specific way of life based on love, understanding and tolerance.

We situate our finding within intersectionality theory which recognises the multiple intersections in a woman's life, including race, gender, lifestyle, education level, poverty and other life situations³⁰⁶.

In the Roma settlements situated outside of the villages, the standard of life is distinctly different than in the towns. The people usually live in the poorly built houses often with illegally wired electricity, no infrastructure of a sanitary system or flowing water. Public transportation to the slums is poor, and access to public services is thus even more difficult. Parents and children in

306 Gyesaw, Nyk, and Ankomah, A. "Experiences of pregnancy and motherhood among teenage mothers in a suburb of Accra, Ghana: a qualitative study". 80.

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these settlements often have unusually long distances to walk to schools, to the health facilities and for day to day shopping. The poverty of the Roma people in these slums is visible to anyone who would come closer to these settlements.³⁰⁹

Approximately 10% of all births occur to teenage mothers worldwide. This phenomenon is of concern because teenage mothers are reported to be disadvantaged financially, educationally, and cognitively in both the short and long term.³¹⁰ The women who are pregnant early and they are not ready for maternity are more likely to get deeper into poverty and break down.³¹¹ The relevant research about unplanned pregnancy of Roma girls before 18 are missing in Slovakia, that's our study brings a unique view of the problem.

Poverty, a different value orientation and a specific way of life predetermines Roma communities to create a broad spectrum of social problems that affect all age groups, including children.³¹² It is undeniable that life in these communities is difficult. The children in the Roma culture of poverty have much more different orientation in their life. They miss real childhood and they begin their sexual life very early.³¹³ But it is not a kind of situation poverty that can be overcome with simple and short-term solutions. It is a deeply rooted generational poverty.³¹⁴

The existence of factors that determine unplanned parenting are often associated with lifestyle,³¹⁵ value preferences, poverty and low education, which are the subjects of many research³¹⁶. The aim of the paper is to map the social problems of the Roma community in the context of the value of sexual life and motherhood in the effort to understand the deep roots of generational poverty and to analyse the theoretical background. Linking community social work and missionary activities in Roma communities can help improve their life situation and achieve a common goal in the future.

Social and mission activities with Roma in Plavecký Štvrtok

It is undeniable that the conflicts between the Roma community and the majority society are intergenerational and persist to this day creating a great chasm among these groups, which is constantly deepened by the very low quality of life and the bad economic and ecological situation in the country. The majority of society has strong prejudice against the Roma. They do not understand their thinking, and the way of their lifestyle, they regard as anti-social and inappropriate. A deep chasm between the Roma and the majority of the population reinforces discrimination, xenophobia and racism against the Roma. We have learned to ignore the problem of the Roma, alternatively to blame the Roma for all the wrong. On the other hand, if individual minorities and cultures share a common environment, it is not possible to ignore this group of people. Projects directly targeted at the needs of the Roma community, terrain social work, the development of

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309 Radková, Libuša, and Lucia Ludvigh-Cintulová. "Positive Influence of Volunteer and Organized Leisure Activities on Roma Children Living in Generation Poverty in Slovakia". 68 –72.

310 Hanna, Barbara. "Negotiating motherhood: the struggles of teenage mothers". 464.

311 MK, Shah, Gee RE, and Theall KP. "Partner support and impact on birth outcomes among teen pregnancies in the United States". 9 –14.

312 Drummond PD, A. Mizan, K. Brocx, and B. Wright. "Using peer education to increase sexual knowledge among West African refugees in Western Australia". 190.

313 Bartošovič, Ivan, and Ladislav, Hegyi. "Health Problems of Roma Ethnic". 12.

314 Braubach, Matthias, and Jon Fairburn. "Social inequalities in environmental risks associated with housing and residential location". 36 – 42.

315 Belton, Suzane. "Burmese women and unwanted pregnancy: 'I thought my blood was stuck inside me'". P. Liamputtong ed. *Reproduction, childbearing and motherhood: a cross-cultural perspective*. 47–62.

316 McMichael, Celia. "Unplanned but not unwanted? Teen pregnancy and parenthood among young people with refugee backgrounds". 78.

community centers in towns and cities where Roma settlements exist, as well as the promotion of missiology and evangelism right in the center of the Roma communities are strong tools for achieving change.

The aim of missiology is to explore and develop ways in which we can present the gospel in other cultures and in the awareness of minorities. There are several concepts that the Church in Slovakia needs in order to help them. First, we must understand the Roma. It will not happen if we read books, but by going out to their environment. We have to spend time with them. That means to be with them, to observe the way of their lives and to participate in it. They must feel that we care about them and that this interest is sincere. This opens the door to understanding their worldview. To what their beliefs about life are, what their values are based on, and what they are devoted to. Secondly, we must be willing to let the Roma into our lives. They have to see what our worldview, our beliefs, values and devotion are. Most people look for love and acceptance. We must be willing to offer them freely. Thirdly, when we enter their world, we really understand what they believe in. We need to look for ways to present them the gospel without insulting them, but on the other hand, to reveal sin.³¹⁷

We are often tempted to give a negative judgment to those who are discarded by the rules or our ideas, but only the Supreme may judge. In order to effectively implement the missiology in the Roma communities, we need to know their culture, environment, temperament and thinking more closely. There are a few NGOs and churches that try to change this situation. Yet many times people burn out when they do not see any results after many years of hard work. Our research shows that it is very difficult to change thinking of Roma people. It does happen. For example, we can see some signs of a different future for those young people who attend community centers and participate in well purposed programs for children.³¹⁸

The municipality of Plavecký Štvrtok is characterized by a high proportion of the Roma population and can be divided according to the degree of integration and socialization to: 1. fully integrated, this includes the Roma who are integrated into the open labour market; 2. partially integrated – we include the Roma who work partially or are involved in activation work in the municipality, and 3. segregated, who are long-term unemployed – these are predominantly Roma who do not want or cannot find a job, most of them have signs of alcohol addiction, they live poor lives, they are poor and they cannot manage social benefits economically.

The Roma community in Western Slovakia, Plavecký Štvrtok, with three to five types of Roma, has different family structures. Approximately half of Roma people live in families with a patriarchal structure, the remaining part with a matriarchal structure. This variety of structures causes many tensions in the community. If you want to resolve the crisis in Plavecký Štvrtok, you have to imprison all the women from the settlement. Every one of them should go to jail for at least half a year because they are the cause of all the problems! They are complicated and make a lot of conflicts.³¹⁹

The Bible, in connection with this subject, clearly states that "a man is the head of a woman, as well as Christ, the Savior of the body is the head of the church." (Eph. 5:25). So, in the Christian context, the position of a man as an authority is acceptable and preferred. However, the understanding of this arrangement is distorted among the Roma, because most of them think that

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317 Šoltéssová, Viktória, and Randolph G. Robertson. *Misiológia so zameraním na rómske komunity*. 84.

318 Radková, Libuša, and Lucia Ludvigh-Cintulová. "Positive Influence of Volunteer and Organized Leisure Activities on Roma Children Living in Generation Poverty in Slovakia". 68 – 72.

319 Šoltéssová, Viktória, and Randolph G. Robertson. *Misiológia so zameraním na rómske komunity*. 86

“hitting women and children is normal.”³²⁰ This view is contrary to the biblical concept of authority in the family. Biblical authority is based on love. “Men, love your women just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for Himself.” (Eph 5:25).

The Roma community is remarkably heterogeneous, characterized by the fact that it is dominated by men, while Roma women are considered to be conflict personalities that cause disagreements with the majority society or directly in the Roma community among themselves. Many Roma women compare themselves to devil’s helpers; they make strivings and often cause blood quarrels. The Roma woman always says her opinion and it can be heard over the whole settlement.³²¹

Roma children complete compulsory school attendance, especially primary level, the lower secondary stage is accepted as a necessary duty, but here comes the first problem with school attendance. In general, formal education is not attached greater value to it; it is also confirmed by our findings.³²²

The vast majority of the Roma are unemployed, with a smaller proportion of the Roma involved in activation work in Plavecký Štvrtok, the Roma women confirm the importance of these works. Roma need to do something and earn something, otherwise they stay at home and get pregnant every second year. The typical situation in the Roma family is that few of members are employed and rests of them are depended on the state support and social services. Young Roma people do not see a good perspective in the future and after time they stick with the rules of the family and copy the living standard of their parents. The most of them do not care about the future, especially if they do not have a proper childhood.

As Christians, we must come to realize that the Roma need more than an isolated gospel. They need love, acceptance, Christian embrace that affects their lives. To do so, we must come out among them and serve them in the spirit of Christ’s love in the field of all their needs. Where spiritual principles need to be confronted, it is necessary to do so by proclaiming the biblical message. When they are in need and need basic help, we must respond appropriately.³²³

Working with the Roma is very demanding, because of the specificity and the different perceptions of life by the Roma. It requires patience, determination and the most important is sustainability and long-term work in the Roma community, only then we can achieve positive changes in the behavior of the Roma. It is not possible to see the effect of community work and missiology after a short time, but it must be done regularly and systematically, which is sometimes very difficult to prove in European projects that require measurability and demonstration of results.

When you ask the Roma about their religion, most of them, as well as the non-Roma, say they are Catholics. Many of their religious ideas, however, are at odds with Christianity. It appears that their declared religion is very superficial. The Roma attend church roughly twice, at most four times a year – on great holidays.³²⁴ Their concept of the Triple God includes the Father, and Mary. Typical Roma homes are full of various saints, religious gobelines, sculptures, pendants, amulets, and the like. These objects are usually concentrated in one corner or one wall of a room that represents a sacral ward within the dwelling. Many religious ideas of the Roma are in direct conflict with the Bible.³²⁵

320 *Ibid.*, 86

321 Šoltéssová, Viktória, and Randolph G. Robertson. *Misiológia so zameraním na rómske komunity*. 86 – 87.

322 *Ibid.*, 89

323 Šoltéssová, Viktória, and Randolph G. Robertson. *Misiológia so zameraním na rómske komunity*. 91

324 Kováč, Milan, and Milan Jurík. *Religiozita Rómov a aktivity cirkvi vo vzťahu k Rómom*, [Religiosity of the Roma people and activities of the Churches concerning the Roma population.] 137.

325 *Ibid.*, 131 – 132.

In Roma communities, missionary work is carried out primarily on two levels:

1. The mission is also focused on the social sphere, so it is about organizing leisure activities of Roma youth, club activities for children, helping children in fulfilling school duties, organizing summer camps for children.³²⁶
2. Pastoral – Spiritual action, in particular, of priests or brothers of the Franciscans of the religious order who perform pastoral activities in the Roma settlement.³²⁷

A person, who accepts this message by faith, forms a life philosophy, changes ranks of values, moral norms, and principles. As a result, there is a change in a person’s life and behavior.³²⁸

Social and missionary work in the Roma community Plavecký Štvrtok is implemented mainly through social activities in the Community Center, organization of meaningful leisure activities, sport activities, tutoring, accompanying by writing of homework, summer camps and evangelistic activities directly in the settlement under the leadership of a local priest.

According to Zoltan Barany, there are significant negative socio-economic impacts of the change of the regime in post-communist countries on members of the Roma ethnic group as they cannot adapt to these changes and respond to the rationalization of work in the market economy by completing the versatile education necessary for new job opportunities.³²⁹

Methods

The research study is based on the analysing of reasons of early pregnancy of Roma women before 18 and the analyzing linked aspects of this problem. We used qualitative methods of individual interviews with a specific sample and observation³³⁰. The research data were collected from March to May 2017. We conducted in-depth interviews with 21 Roma women living in a settlement in the village called Plavecký Štvrtok. The research aims are based on:

- knowing their perception of sex and child birth, family situation, dating and partnership,
- analysing the most common causes of early pregnancy of Roma girls before 18,
- knowing the views toward childbearing and maternity care among young Roma women who are approaching the age of 18,
- analysing behaviour of Roma girls in pregnancy in connection to unhealthy life style.

At that stage, we analysed the codes to find the similarities and grouped them into categories based on their common properties. We also considered dimensions of the codes that represent the research problem.

Research questions

After formulating the research problem, we identified the following research questions:

- Q1 How do young Roma girls view dating and partnership?
 Q2 What are the most common causes of pregnancy of young Roma girls before 18?
 Q4 What are health habits of Roma girls in pregnancy?
 Q3 What do young Roma girls think about pregnancy and maternity?

326 Lenczová, Mária, et al. *Slovensko-Projekty pre Rómov*, [Projects for the Roma people in Slovakia.] 41.

327 Liguš, Ján. *Božie atribúty v misionárskej činnosti cirkvi. Teologické princípy misie*. [Godly attributes in the missionary activities of the Churches. Theological principals of mission.] 57

328 Vašečka, Michal. *ČAČIPEN PAL O ROMA. Súhrnná správa o Rómoch na Slovensku*. [ČAČIPEN PAL O ROMA. Summary report concerning the Roma people in Slovakia.] 914.

329 Barany, Zoltan. *Roma in Eastern Europe*. 171.

330 Liamputtong, Pranee. *Qualitative research methods*. 13.

Research sample

The sample consisted of 21 pregnant Roma women at the age between 15-18 years. All were on maternity leave and gave birth in 2017. Nine of them had given birth by the time of the interviews. The other 12 were pregnant at the time of the interviews. To integrate Roma girls to the research sample required specific attitude based on gaining trust and honesty that are important matters in an interview with a pregnant girl. There were several levels to gaining trust of Roma women included in the research sample. We participated with the local NGOs which served as a gateway to the Roma community.

We relied also on our own skills and personal experience to reach out to the Roma women on maternity leave. Thus, when we made the interviews there had already been a relationship established. They were more open and willing to speak about their lives and private topics. In fact, this approach helped us to open the door to women and created the basis of confidential atmosphere between Roma and non-Roma people.

Table 1 Sample characteristics

Status	The sample of	Roma girls	Number
Pregnancy	First pregnancy 16	Second pregnancy 18	8 / 7
Pregnancy	First pregnancy after 16	No other pregnancy	13 / 6
Family	Living with parents and siblings	Intergenerational coexistence	13 / 8
Sexual life	Active (actually in partnership)	Active (actually alone)	17 / 4
Attitude to abortion	Not thinking at all	In consideration	19 / 2
Partnership and future marriage	Not married yet	Planning marriage in the future	12 / 9
Religion	Believing in God, not practicing	Believing in God, practicing	16 / 5

Research results

To focus on such a Roma topic, we need to consider Roma culture and tradition versus the western world's attempts to assimilate them. If we accept poverty in a Roma community as a normal fact due to their history and tradition, then the Roma people are the ones who live according to the stereotypes about them. In that case, then poverty is a way of life that comes with their habits in their settlement. It would not be the obstacles and racism that society puts up against them, which keeps them poor. They are poor because it is all that they know about life. If we consider these ideas about Roma lifestyles and therefore allow oversimplified understandings of their culture, then teen marriage isn't only about poverty and discrimination. It is just Roma culture. We tried to figure out some facts about giving birth of Roma women before 18 years of age.

Dating and partnership

The research findings said: They do not believe in the notion of partnership of men with women. They are persuaded that dating without sex is not dating at all. To be in love is fun and young women are proud of it.

Roma girls are supposed to get married or matched up between the ages of 16 and 18, indeed, many Roma men look for a wife who hasn't been even kissed by another man beforehand, according to women participating in the research. If a boy asks a girl out, she should refuse at least twice before finally saying yes. It is typical for them. It was confirmed by the participants of the research.

Table 2 shows the approach of Roma girls to dating, we were curious what they think about dating and having a boyfriend. The answers of the sample were put in these codes: being cool, curse, fun, worth, natural think, timing and feeling of happiness, believe in better life and respect.

Table 2 What does dating mean for you?

Codes	Expression of participants in research sample
Being cool	Each of us wants to have a boyfriend, because it is cool. If you do not have a boy, you are not respected by others; you are still a small girl.
Curse	Roma believe if you are in love and give birth you are blessed. If not, you are cursed.
Have a fun	To have a boyfriend is a great fun. It is exciting at the begging of dating and you are much in love with the boy, even you do not hear good things about him.
Exacting thing	You know, it is exciting if you are in love, you are like in a heaven ... you do not think about anything, future, school, family problems...
Worth	If you do not have a boyfriend, it means you are not pretty or clever.
Natural thing	It is normal to start sexual life as soon as possible, no one wants to be alone, and you can see sexual things everywhere.
Timing	If you wait for dating with the "right" man, you can miss him, and you stay alone.
Happiness	Meeting a boy, having fun, dating and kissing are great games, it is exciting, and it makes you happy.
Better life	If you are in love, you believe in a miracle... I am persuading myself my boyfriend makes me happy and makes my life better
Respect	Having a date, you show the others you are worthier than other girls in the Roma community.

Reasons of unplanned/early pregnancy

The research was focused on analysing the most common causes of pregnancy of Roma girls before 18 years of age, the research findings point out the social and family aspects as the main causes.

Table 3 presents the most common reasons of early pregnancy identified by semi-structured interviews with young Roma women and categorised to following codes.

Table 3 Reasons of early pregnancy of Roma girls

Category/CODES	Financial reasons	Family reasons	Social reasons
Emotional reasons			
Oestrogens and emotions	High costs	Family culture	Lack of awareness and family planning
Fun, cool	Poverty	Tradition	Low level of sexual education
Fear/Curse	Poor living standard	Thinking/Taboo	Changing society values
Natural think	No pocket money	Parental maternity	Globalisation

Code: Emotional Reasons

During adolescence, teenagers often feel pressure to make friends (other Roma girls have a boyfriend) and fit in with their community. Many times these teens let their oestrogens and emotions (happiness, being in love, affection, sexual desire) influence their decision to have sex even when they do not fully understand the consequences associated with the act. Teenagers have sex as a way to appear cool and sophisticated, but in some cases the end results in an unplanned pregnancy before reaching 18.

Roma girl 20: "If you are in love, you do not think."

Roma girl 10: "It is exciting and funny, cool, free."

Roma girl 19: "You are afraid of losing boyfriend if you refuse to have sex."

Roma girl 4: "Having sex is natural and if you are in love, you cannot stop yourself."

Roma girl 6: "It is about being natural, you believe in love."

Code: Financial reasons

Roma teen girls are more likely to get pregnant due to a bad financial situation, high unemployment of parents, poverty and low living standard of Roma families and many of them do not receive pocket money. Even they have pocket money and have active sex with their boyfriend, they do not use it for buying consumption, instead of it, they spend money on sweets, energy drinks or crisps.

Roma girl 8: "I cannot afford to buy condoms regularly; one packet is not enough to cover my sexual life."

Roma girl 14: "Instead of condoms I prefer to buy Kofola and chips."

Roma girl 16: "I have no pocket money, my parents are unemployed."

Roma girl 21: "You can buy two boxes of cigarettes for that prices or 5 packets of chewing gums."

Roma girl 3: "It is hard to get consumption if you do not have enough money."

Code: Family reasons

Roma teen girls are more likely to get pregnant if they have limited or no guidance from their parents. The specific for Roma family is open and free lifestyle and they do not provide them guidance and support that their young teenagers need to make good decisions on issues such as sex. Even sexual life of parents is open and the privacy is missing while parents practice sex due to common space/rooms. When a teen does not feel that she can talk to her parents about sex either because their sex talk is a taboo, she will more than likely turn to Roma friends or the Internet for searching information about sex, resulting in misinformation and possible teen pregnancy.

Roma girl 5: "Parents have sex regularly without privacy"

Roma girl 2: "It is normal that Gipsy women have many children and grow up before 18"

Roma girl 11: "Your sexual life is your thing... parents do not know and care"

Roma girl 13: "My life is hard and spending time with my boyfriend (having sex) makes me happy and gives me a space not to think about bad family things"

Code: Social reasons

Many Roma girls confirmed that they do not speak about sex with their parents because it is a taboo issue, their social contacts are limited, they look for a boyfriend mostly in the Roma community that is open to active sexual life before 15.

Roma girl 6: "Roma teenage girls speak about kissing and sex a lot, but the issue of pregnancy is a taboo."

Roma girl 12: "Roma teenage girls discuss about sex and change sexism jokes very often."

Roma girl 19: "Roma community is very open; each Roma girl wants to have a boyfriend but does not think about getting pregnant."

Roma girl 20: "School is boring, we talk about sex often, but I prefer personal experience."

Code: globalisation and modern world

The modern industry and the media contribute to teenage pregnancy by glamorizing teen pregnancy in news stories and movies. Movies that depict teen pregnancy as something to be desired encourage teens to engage in reckless sexual activity. Young people want teen pregnancy to be viewed as acceptable in their school or among their friends, Roma girls see becoming pregnant as a way to gain social acceptance in Roma community and get respect in the Roma family.

Roma girl 3: "Sex is everywhere, even in TV advertising."

Roma girl 4: "Sex of young people is presented as a natural thing and there are sexism issues everywhere."

Roma girl 9: "We are not used to go to the gynaecologist unless it is for medical care. But not for pills."

Roma girl 15: "I look for information on the Internet."

Roma girl 21: "I speak with friends or use the Internet if I need some information."

"Women are often mistreated because they are Roma. You go to hospital to give birth as a Gypsy woman. You may be well-groomed. But if your pocket is not full of money, you remain a Gypsy woman. I had a privately paid doctor at the birth of both children, they saw that I'm approaching their norms, but I felt I couldn't meet them completely. Especially, at the postnatal ward. The staff are nice to the not-Roma even if they are brought in from beside the trash can. But they think that the only reason why Gypsy women have children (and a lot of them) is to collect social benefits. That is what I felt when I was in hospital by the non-Roma who were there."

Health habits of pregnant Roma women

The ideal of beauty is very important for Roma girls because it symbolizes a good and respectful position in the Roma community. A nice Roma girl is desirable and barred by men, Roma girls search for excitement and provoke Roma boys to notice them, often dressed up with an urge. On the other hand, education and health are not among the top priorities, namely family and children's education.

Smoking prevalence levels are consistently higher in Roma than non-Roma communities. Mixed findings indicate significantly lower illicit drug used amongst Roma communities, although overall there appear to be a number of cultural factors which have a negative impact on the lifestyles of Roma. According to our research findings, pregnant Roma women are more likely to exhibit these risk behaviors and are less aware of smoking side-effects in pregnancy and do not care about issues related to medical services and eating health habits while they are pregnant.

The research findings have shown the manners of pregnant Roma girls and their eating habits in pregnancy:

- unhealthy eating habits are more preferred in general and continuing in pregnancy
- changing times of lack of food with the eating too much in one month
- a large amount of sweets and drinking sweetened and caffeine drinks
- lack of fruits and vegetables in daily menu
- low consumption of milk and dairy products, which are replaced by fat food, sweets and energy drinks

- high consumption of different kind of meat, white bread and baguettes, smoked bacon and ham, sausages
- smoking before pregnancy and in pregnancy
- poor prevention and medical care, low awareness and medical literacy

Table 4 Behaviour of Roma girls in pregnancy

Categories	Expression of research participants
Smoking	I cannot give up smoking even when I am pregnant. I started smoking as a teenager. I tried to smoke at primary school. I steal cigarettes from my parents. I smoke regularly.
Drinking alcoholic drinks	It is normal to drink alcohol; alcohol is every day in my family. I drink energy drinks we used to buy it at school break. I like to drink beer, it is said to be healthy for digestion.
Health care	I do not go for prevention medical care. I go to the doctor only if I must go, not as prevention. Health care is not of a very good quality here. I do not ask for special medical care.
Bad habits	I do not eat healthy food because it is expensive. I eat fast food without matter. I do not have money to change food habits at pregnancy. I did not care about myself even while I was pregnant.
Sexual life	I have sex during pregnancy. To have sex with partner is normal even if I am pregnant. Sexual life is alive even if I am pregnant Sexual life is necessary for my partner.

Attitudes to pregnancy and maternity

Q4: What do young Roma girls think about pregnancy and maternity?

According to the answers of the sample, we identified and categorized findings into these codes: having children, low sexual literacy, lack of skills and experience for maternity, giving birth is natural for Roma women, active sex and free lifestyle.

Each code is expressed by the interview answers of pregnant Roma girls as the example of open coding process.

- Roma girl 14: "I do not want to have many children as my mother, but it happened what I had not planned."
- Roma girl 6: "To get pregnant in teens was not my dream at all."
- Roma girl 4: "I did not think I can get pregnant so fast after one sex with my boyfriend."
- Roma girl 8: "I do not care about sexual protection... I think it can't happen so easy."
- Roma girl 17: "I am scared I do not know how to take care of a baby."
- Roma girl 19: "I do not know anything about babies, but my mother will help me."
- Roma girl 13: "Gipsy women have a lot of kinds and men are proud of them."
- Roma girl 16: "Roma people cannot give up giving birth; it is natural and sometimes the only way how to survive."
- Roma girl 1: "Roma women start active sexual life very early, we are too open and trustful, we believe in a better life while being in love and free."
- Roma girl 5: "We love freedom and we have a free lifestyle, to get pregnant changes things a lot."

The influence of religion to attitudes of Roma girls to pregnancy

The research results found out the religion has the important impact on the attitudes of pregnant Roma girls to maternity and child breeding. We identified these codes to explain the issue of religion and thinking about pregnancy.

Code: Attitudes to abortion

- Roma girl 1: "I have never considered abortion."
- Roma girl 3: "We have never talked about abortion at home."
- Roma girl 7: "I cannot afford to pay for abortion."
- Roma girl 18: "Abortion is very expensive for me and I considered this opportunity as a solution."
- Roma girl 13: "I was thinking about the abortion for a while, I was scared when I got to know I am pregnant, but now I'm happy with the baby."
- Roma girl 21: "I wanted to go to abortion, even if it is difficult, I do not want to go nowadays."
- Roma girl 2: "I found out late that I am pregnant."

Code: Change in thinking

Roma girls confirmed that when they found the God, they changed their thinking in a positive way and it helps them to overcome bad feelings and frustration from their situation.

- Roma girl 8: "I changed a bit."
- Roma girl 12: "Faith has changed me for the better; I'm no longer frightened, even I'm pregnant."
- Roma girl 5: "I feel belief in God helps me a lot."

Code: double discrimination

- Roma girl 5: "People think Roma women only give birth and get pregnant every year."
- Roma girl 15: "I often feel that I am a Roma and especially when I'm pregnant, Roma means pregnant."
- Roma girl 19: "They look at me strange, of course, a young Roma and pregnant. One of them."

Code: finding sense of life

- Roma girl 4: "When I started to come for community activities, I began to believe more and the faith helped me find a way."
- Roma girl 6: "Thanks God I look at things differently."

Code: Encouragement

- Roma girl 13: "Faith gives me an encouragement for better future."
- Roma girl 14: "I believe in better life for me and my baby."
- Roma girl 20: "I'm not losing faith and it helps me to see the world more beautiful."

Discussion

Most of the Roma girls do not know how to recognize that they are pregnant. When they do realize it, then they hide it from their parents until they cannot conceal it. They do not consider abortion as a solution of their problem. But they say that the pregnancy exacerbates their already stressful life. They say that they have a little idea what to do. Once the pregnancy is known, a Roma girl usually gets support from the family. She usually moves into her boyfriend's home. And she will listen to lectures about how she should be more self-controlled.

To understand the growing incidence of teenage pregnancy, it is important to recognize the underlying causes, such as growing number of Roma girls having active sexual life at an early age, free lifestyle, preferring energy drinks and sweets instead of protecting themselves against pregnancies by using condoms. The research had shown the most often reasons of pregnancy of Roma teenage girl due to low sexual awareness, worse family situation, lack of sexual education, poor parental care, financial problems and strong Roma culture and traditions as well. According to a Roma girl, active sexual life is exciting, using protection is expensive, being in love is cool and they do not think about responsibility for outcomes of early sexual life. On the other hand, they believe in better future with their boyfriends and do not think about negative aspects of early unsafe sexual life, boys do not use condoms and girls do not have money to buy them. Roma girls and boys live free lifestyles, they are emotional and impulsive, they love excitement and drive with the instincts, these facts make them likely to get pregnant in connection with active sexual life at teenage.

A sexually active teenage Roma girl who does not use regular protection has a very high chance of conceiving in the first year due to having a date at early age connected to unsafe sex, being keen on trying everything (what is forbidden), and lack of responsible attitudes to sexual life. It is more important to educate teenagers about safe sex rather than imposing moral lessons on them to avoid having sex completely, because you cannot stop them to fall in love. For a Roma teenage girl being in love, means have active sexual life. There is no privacy at home and sexual life of parents is open, they do not speak or prepare girls for sexual life but they do not hesitate to practice it without a shame.

Young Roma girls do not plan the future with a lot of children, they are not ready to take the responsibility of the child, but due to unprotected sex, early sexual life before 16, and no using of condoms, they usually get pregnant as teens. All of them explore their sexuality without the right sex education and family planning, without awareness of impacts of unsafe sex. A teenager who becomes pregnant unintentionally has a lot to consider and reconsider. Minority of Roma girls put in their mind possibility of abortion as the way of solving their life situation, they are scared and afraid, but their lives with the birth of a baby are common and expected by family surrounding. Even they do not need to plan the future, giving a birth is future of Roma women in general. On the other hand, with most Roma mothers, it is seen that their lives are negatively impacted when they become pregnant at an early age and they wish better future for their daughters.

The research results had shown risky behaviour of pregnant Roma girls before 18. Roma girls admitted bad manners and habits in pregnancy such as: no change of eating habits, no avoiding unhealthy meals and bad eating habits, they do not stop smoking and they do not care much whether the food was healthy or not, e.g. chips, energy drinks, coffee, fat meals. In their normal lives they behaved just as before they had not been pregnant, they did not pay much more attention to pregnancy, they travelled by train, collected mushrooms, went to school, conducted sexual life, smoked cigarettes, and so on.

The majority of Roma girls do not have an idea about their pregnancy, they hide the pregnancy before parents until it is visible, they think about abortion at first, but it is only due to stress and an unexpected situation, they are finally not for it. A Roma girl is supported by the family; she usually moves to her husband's home and has to listen to the mother-in-law, being stricter to them than to their own daughters. Young Roma have to face a hard life situation with low education, the constant existence struggle and daily care of small children and others affect their personal plans and feelings. Roma women stop to plan their own future and adapt to the life of the family. They no longer dream about a better life, but of the better lives of their children. That their children will have it better than they themselves did due to early pregnancy. Negative

social changes, high unemployment rate, bad economic situation, low education and lack of life and working skills (due to early pregnancy), increasing generational poverty as a consequence of this situation, however, marked the position of Roma women in the community as the disadvantaged. They have low chance to make their lives different and to give better opportunities to their children in the future, it is a recurrent circle.

Conclusion

The research results cannot be generalized, but it is clear that many young Roma face an unplanned and early pregnancy due to different factors mostly leading to existential struggles. Regardless of whether the pregnancy was planned or unplanned, all the teen mothers in our study decided to proceed with their pregnancy, none of them indicated experiences of abortions. The study presents direct link between early pregnancy and future family life, the more children they give birth the more problems they have to overcome to integrate in the society and labor market, they are mostly bound to the children and state financial support. Roma women, after they get pregnant, slowly stop planning anything for the future and they learn to adapt to the maternity.

The study has shown relation between health literacy, active teenage sexual life and open sexuality of parents and poverty. For a Roma teenager being in love, means having sex. In the very crowded homes of Roma, there is no privacy. Parents are engaged by sex and the children are fully aware of what they do. Yet it is a taboo subject for healthy discussion. Roma teenagers are not prepared to understand their own sexuality. The circle of unplanned pregnancies is increasing due to low literacy, low education, early active sexuality and.

We can summarize the results of research as follows: the reasons for unplanned pregnancies are associated with early engagement of sexual activity, unprotected sexual life and preferring unhealthy food to buying condoms, lack of education and information about reproduction, healthy habits throughout pregnancy. These young females often do not complete their education and they begin a perpetual cycle in which their families go on due to similar factors and the poverty. Research results point to the need for education about safe sex rather than imposing moral lessons on them. In their world, it would be unrealistic to tell them to avoid having sex completely.

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TOWARDS RECONCILIATION IN A BROKEN WORLD: REPORT AND REFLECTION FROM THE ICCJ CONFERENCE IN HUNGARY



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Introduction

The annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) took place this year in two beautiful Hungarian cities, Budapest and Kecskemét, between June 24 and 27. The topic of the conference was „Towards Reconciliation in a Broken World: Jewish and Christian Contributions to Responsible Citizenship“. It was evident from the main lectures given by Professor Judith Frishman (Leiden) and Cardinal Péter Erdő (Ostrihom, Budapest), from most plenary sessions and from some conference workshops that the multi-dimensional violation of our daily reality and the memory of past injustices and suffering which people feel, especially in the historical memory and context of Eastern Europe, requires reflection and healing/reconciliation. Overall, the invitation addressed to the people involved in the inter-religious dialogue, and especially the Jewish-Christian dialogue to engage as active members of their communities and societies, and seeking reconciliation, was a clear focus of the whole conference. The lectures and discussions concerned these topics. They also showed a convincingly clear link between these topics and, in a few cases, illustrated how to engage in an authentic dialogue on a given topic.

Report

The first plenary session focused on reconciliation in Judaism and Christianity. The panellists have attempted to enter into a mutual discussion with views of the issue based on their own religious traditions. Faith and expectation are central for Jewish tradition while reconciliation is inseparably linked to repentance and tranquillity. During the discussions and debates these contexts were explored in depth. In addition, the focus was also laid on the link between reconciliation and justice. Although reconciliation is undoubtedly a religious and spiritual value, attention was not solely devoted to its biblical and halachic aspects but also to wider social overtones. For Christian faith and theology, reconciliation is one of the key concepts. Theologians and missiologists based on Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 5: 11-21), often argue that reconciliation service is one of the most crucial tasks that the 21st century Christians are called to. The opening plenary session asked what these connotations mean in practice. From a related perspective, it also asked what implications it poses for inter-religious relations. The reconciliation was interpreted as a complex concept covering the most diverse aspects. The opening session explored the historical, political, social and environmental consequences of the Jewish and Christian understanding of the reconciliation.

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The next plenary session titled „Towards the Responsible Citizen Engagement: How to Leave the Victims' Mentality in a Central European Context“ examined one of the central themes of the conference – responsible civic engagement. Politologists and historians claim that the so-called victims' mentality is a frequent phenomenon occurring in the context of post-communist Central European countries. This situation is complicated by the emergence of new forms of nationalist ideologies. Besides, minorities seeking a new awareness of national identity are often forgotten, yet they find themselves in an increasingly deprived, and sometimes worsening situation. In such cases, the external, mostly historical, factors are interpreted as the main, or even the only reason for the pitiful situation that the community is currently located. This consequently leads to the acceptance of the victims' mentality and behaviour, which has destructive consequences for the future of the group. The plenary session examined the described phenomenon from a historical, political, social and theological perspective. One of its aims was to seek ways to overcome this mentality in an effort to actively engage in social life.

The last plenary session on the first day of the conference was conceived as a multi-faith dialogue panel. It sought to find answers to the question of how to find God in „another“, specifically in relation to responsible belonging to a particular religion. The point of the discussion was the fact that while the fundamental question for people before the advent of the New Age was „How can I find a saving God?“ nowadays, it seems that an increasing number of people ask „How can I find God in other (human)?“ In addition to the main question, panellists and conference participants along with them asked also other questions, such as: Who is „another“ for me? Who is my friend/neighbour/sibling/enemy? Also, when considering these issues, what is the role played by the fact that human identity is complex and consists of different components (religion, race, gender, status, age, education, culture, etc.)?

During the second day of the conference, there was only one plenary session in the programme that examined the issue of religious fundamentalism and political extremism. Lately, both of these phenomena have received considerable media attention. The question that can be rightly raised in this context is whether it is de facto a true reflection of reality, or more likely a political move aimed at increasing the general feeling of anxiety and threats to society? Similarly, we can ask what and if there are any common denominators combining these two phenomena. Do religious fundamentalists have anything to do with political extremists? Another related topic for reflection can see how religion is used or misused by (extremist) politicians and vice versa. This session explored these and other relevant questions from the perspective of various academic disciplines (theology, political science, religion, history or sociology) as well as considering geopolitical factors (international contexts, western cultural circle, Central Europe).

On the third and final day of the conference, the participants moved to the city of Kecskemét. There were two plenary sessions in the programme. The morning session offered young professionals' perspectives on the opportunities that open to young people in Jewish-Christian and inter-religious dialogue. This session was conceived as deliberately dialogic, including voices from various contexts and religious traditions. They were thinking about the key themes of reconciliation, responsible civic engagement, and Jewish-Christian, or inter-faith dialogue and co-operation. Special attention was paid to the experience of panellists from their diverse contexts, especially from the host city of Kecskemét, but also from Canada and Iran. The second session was also the final session of the whole conference. It was called „Šalom alejchem! Pax nobi! As-salamu alej-kum! Béke legyem veled! Peace be with you!“ and within it, the religious leaders, activists

and academics met to discuss peace and reconciliation issues. How can we, whether believers or non-believers, contribute to mutual understanding, reconciliation and peace in our own contexts, which are often marked by national, religious, ethnic or social conflicts – this was a key issue of the plenary session as well as the whole conference.

Reflexion

Like some of the previous ICCJ conferences, this one also showed that the liturgy is something that has the potential to offer air for the Jewish-Christian (and generally inter-religious) dialogue. The liturgy combines the double dynamic of God's action for the benefit of people and creation. At the same time it reflects the constant human search for the divine. Thanks to these important aspects, the liturgical worship can connect spirituality and religiosity with other areas of human life. Liturgy, grasped as a ritualistic act or dramatic embodiment of God's and human conduct, can also serve as a hermeneutical tool for interpreting the complex reality of *conditio humana*. All these factors came out very clearly in the foreground, especially in the first plenary session when the speakers examined their own understanding of the liturgy, thereby illuminating the multi-dimensional nature of reconciliation from the Jewish and Christian perspectives.

Regarding the wording of the conference theme, it could be expected that this event will have a certain political charge. Indeed, the feedback from the participants after the conference ended suggesting that for some of them the conference was too political, while for others it wasn't political enough. Although the ICCJ definitely isn't and doesn't even try to be a political organisation or a lobbyist group, as an agent in the field of inter-religious dialogue, it has to deal with some issues and themes of a political nature. Let me say that it is right like that. Otherwise, it could appear that Jews and Christians, as people of faith, are either fleeing from the public sphere seeking asylum in a quasi-position or risking the fundamental fragmentation of their lives in several inter-connected areas.

The reconciliation as a conference centre is undoubtedly one of these concepts which are both religious as well as political. How we define politics is crucial of course. I believe that in the field of theology and religion it may be useful to adopt a wider view that, as a political one, understands everything that is related to public life, in contrast to the more common view that politics refers to the professional management of a particular country. Politics also has its theological implications. The words of Tomas G. Masaryk, statesman, philosopher and the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1935) are that political life is only a modest part of spiritual life. Accepting this view, one of the ICCJ's tasks could then be to using resources from both Jewish and Christian traditions to provide opinions on subjects that not only have religious but also political significance so that not only members of the ICCJ family but ideally the wider public could also use it in their own contexts.

Also, as in case of some other events organised by the ICCJ in the past, this conference also addressed the opportunities and challenges posed by social networks and modern communication technologies, although only marginally. This issue has been explicitly at the forefront of the plenary sessions devoted to civic engagement and religious affiliation. I am convinced that the ICCJ (as well as other similar organisations and initiatives) will have to cope in the future with at least two tasks related to modern technologies:

Firstly, it will be necessary to examine their vast potential for connecting and mobilising people more thoroughly in the context of inter-faith co-operation and dialogue. I believe that this role goes beyond simple user functions and involves the discovery of

creative and innovative ways of using modern technologies in the inter-religious context. Needless to say, such a process requires competent and motivated people to take on the role of the discoverers and agents of the new mode of inter-religious engagement.

Secondly, it's necessary to seriously accept the view that social networks and modern communication technologies often appear as superficial. The phenomenon of the so-called „Social bubbles“ when people belonging to one of these „bubbles“ are barely in contact with people who have different opinion, makes the whole situation even worse. Although this phenomenon undoubtedly existed before the onset of the „Facebook era“, the possibilities and limitations that bind to modern technologies seem to act as a catalyst and an amplifier, so the issue becomes more acute than ever before. It's a great challenge for inter-religious dialogue and co-operation.

Several contributions were made at the conference, which seriously took the reality of the breach and fragmentation of the world where we live. They were very beneficial because they thematised this generally human experience and provided an explanatory framework for understanding of the (broken) relationships between God and humans and, above all, among people in different contexts. The reconciliation in this context must necessarily include the healing of memories and relationships. Our own religious traditions contain sufficient resources to help individuals and communities in this endeavour. During the conference, a stronger emphasis could perhaps be placed on the fact that such healing and reconciliation must also include yet another dimension – the one between people and other creatures.

It's also necessary for the reconciliation and healing of relationships to include honest dealing with our own past. In this regard, as one of the organisers of the conference, I must confess that the issue of history was not addressed at the conference to the extent we had originally imagined, especially regarding the 100th anniversary of the First World War. This was a significant historical context of our conference and it could become one of the main points at the discussions and reflections. Unfortunately, it remains a missed opportunity.

Another aspect that may should have been given more attention was the anchoring of Hungary and the Hungarian situation in the wider context of Central and Eastern Europe. Although some attention was paid to this issue, especially in some plenary sessions (for example, in the one devoted to civil engagement), the conference could have explored it deeper. This attitude of human over and over again brings to mind that all inter-faith enterprises are and should be contextual with their local and global dimensions.

Conclusion

The above considerations point to the fact that as I believe ICCJ (and other organisations dealing with inter-religious relationships in general) should continue to strive to be a platform for inter-religious dialogue in a way that brings together the diverse dimensions of human life. In addition to the topics apparently related to the Jewish-Christian dialogue and co-operation, this includes

- a) Inter-connection of people and themes from the fields of theology, religion, education, politics and culture;
- b) establishing contacts between religious communities and bottom-up initiatives, activist groups and academic environment; and
- c) purposive development of inter-generational dialogue.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the ICCJ conference in Budapest and Kecskemét was successful, thanks to the diversity of topics discussed, the international diversity and the opportunities it offered to immerse in authentic dialogue. We can only hope that it provided its participants with a wealth of inspirational ideas that could be used in their local groups and projects devoted to Jewish-Christian co-operation.

More detailed information regarding the conference, including the detailed programme and the text from some contributions (in English or Hungarian), can be found on the ICCJ website on the following link <http://iccj.org/Conferences.5133.0.html>

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