

In these various agreements, reflections and proposals regarding the papacy – in the dialogue and in the encyclical – there is the disclosure of an ecumenical vision of a united Church in the future. Typical of this vision is the concluding reflection of the Roman Catholic participants in Dialogue V: “In such a wider communion of churches the papacy would be able to serve as a sign and instrument of unity, not simply for Roman Catholics, but for others, who have never ceased to pray and labour for the manifest unity of the whole Church of Jesus Christ”.⁸¹

The writer wishes to offer this brief update on the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues in the United States. In 2005, a tenth round was completed and published under the title “The Church as Koinonia of Salvation: Its Structures and Ministries.” In 2010, an eleventh round, “The Hope of Eternal Life,” is anticipated for completion.

On an international level, “The Apostolicity of the Church: Study Document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity,” was published by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in 2006. This text, as well as the U.S. document on “The Church as Koinonia of Salvation,” deal with the challenging ecumenical issues of ecclesiology.

NAGYPÁL Szabolcs

Speaking the Truth in Love: An Ecumenical Framework for Interreligious Dialogue

When drawing an ecumenical framework for interreligious dialogue, we must consider the history of this endeavour both in the circles of the Genève-based World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Rome-based Roman Catholic Church. Some important concepts such as religion, ideology, worldview and spirituality need to be defined as well. The Biblical basis for such a framework is constituted by the appearance of the word dialogue in both the Holy Scripture and in some interesting places which may serve as engines on the interreligious path. All these point towards a changing landscape of interreligious ideas and methods.

I. History of Thoughts on Interreligious Dialogue in the Ecumenical Movement

1. Interreligious Endeavours of the World Council of Churches (WCC)

The first ecumenical meeting to address and deal with the question of interreligious dialogue and encounter was the legendary missionary conference which took place in 1910 in *Edinburgh*.¹ This gathering decided to once and for all split with the previously practiced idea of *comity*, which means the allocation of certain areas for the work of a certain denominational foreign mission, whose consequence was

⁸¹ *Papal Primacy*. 38.

¹ More on the history of interreligious dialogue may be read in the following entry: ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Interfaith Dialogue*. In LOSSKY Nicholas – BONINO José Míguez – POBEE John – STRANSKY Tom – WAINWRIGHT Geoffrey – WEBB Pauline (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*. Genève, 1991. 281–286.

that by agreement no other mission could work in that given area.² As a follow-up to the encounter, the Edinburgh participants decided to form the *International Missionary Council* (IMC), which – because of the turmoil of the First World War (1914–1918) – could not take shape earlier than in 1921.

Probably the most decisive meeting for the future of dialogue was the one in *Tambaram*, India, in 1938, where the Dutch Protestant theologian Hendrik KRAEMER presented his significant book, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.³ In this book he uses and applies the important distinction introduced by Karl BARTH between *religion* and *faith*. This meant the alleged superiority of Christianity, dealing with faith in Jesus Christ, as opposed to other religions, which are “just” religions – in other words, human attempts to establish a relationship with the transcendent.

Another very influential answer to the same question came from the Indian theologian Paul David DEVANANDAN in his paper written in 1956, *The Word of God and the Living Faiths of Humans*.⁴ He focuses on not handling people of other faiths as pure objects, but always as genuine partners in dialogue. The first study project concerning other faiths undertaken by the World Council of Churches (WCC), *The Word of God and the Living Faiths of Humans*, was approved by the Central Committee in 1956 in *Galyatető*, Hungary.⁵

The long-awaited merger of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) finally took place in the *New Delhi* Assembly of the WCC in 1961 in India. The great leaders of the two movements at that time were well aware of the fact and law in social sciences that “either the movement disintegrates, or it becomes an institution: this is simply a sociological law”.⁶ In the next assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), in *Uppsala*, Sweden, in 1968, the participants invented and later issued a program on *The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Humankind*. The dialogue this program envisioned was intended to be simultaneously human, personal, relevant and humble.

2 SLY Virgil A. speaks about this idea of comity in the early nineteenth century missionary movement: SLY Virgil A., *The Ecumenical Era and Denominational Sovereignty*. International Review of Missions (IRM) 1961/3. 266.

3 KRAEMER Hendrik, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. Tambaram, 1938.

4 DEVANANDAN Paul David, *The Word of God and the Living Faiths of Humans*. Tambaram, 1956.

5 ARIARAJAH S. Wesley emphasises the importance of this study approved in *Galyatető*, Hungary: ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Socio-Political Issues and the Credibility of Dialogue*. In ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Not without my Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations*. Genève, 1999. 73.

6 BOSCH David J. refers to WEBER Max with this rather evident or apparent insight in his great summary and amazing encyclopædia on the issue of mission: BOSCH David J., *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. New York, 1991. 52.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee meeting in *Leuven*, Belgium, in 1971 decided upon and introduced the topic of *The Unity of the Church and the Encounter with Living Faiths*. This meeting entrusted the Indian Protestant pastor Stanley J. SAMARTHA with the task of building up and leading the newly established World Council of Churches (WCC) *Sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* (DFI). This dialogue sub-unit then first focused on the question of seeking community and searching for communion with each other. We must emphasise here that there was definitely a certain slowness in setting up a sub-unit for interreligious dialogue.

The *Nairobi* Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1975 brought a harsh but useful debate into the fore in many senses. Extraordinary Asian theologians, such as Lynn A. DE SILVA and J. Russell CHANDRAN, represented the dialogue side in this debate. They mainly emphasised the need for *mutual witness*⁷ and *plurality of witness*⁸ with our neighbours. All in all, the hostility to interreligious dialogue was enormous at the WCC Nairobi Assembly.

One of the most important documents of the dialogue sub-unit – and also of the whole World Council of Churches (WCC) and of the ecumenical movement – is the *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* from 1979. The language it uses is utmostly refined – for example, it speaks about being genuine fellow-pilgrims with others – but it is interesting to note that there was a fourteen-year gap between *Nostra Ætate* and the *Guidelines for Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies*.

In the second meeting of the Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DFI) Working Group, which happened to take place in 1980 in *Mátrafüred*, Hungary, they identified five emerging concerns of interreligious dialogue: *community*, *spirituality*, *ideology*, *witness*, and *science and technology*.⁹ The *Vancouver* Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1983 in Canada discussed among other things the topic of *Witness in a Divided World*. At the Assembly the negotiations were rather grudging, and the marginalisation of the dialogue sub-unit within programme unit two started after this.

There was also change in the leadership of the sub-unit, when the

7 ARIARAJAH S. Wesley explains and elaborates the concept of *mutual witness* in ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Witness and Dialogue*. In ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *The Bible and People of other Faiths*. Genève, 1985. 39–47.

8 The study guide of the WCC sub-unit on dialogue speaks about the *plurality of witness*: *My Neighbour's Faith and Mine – Theological Discoveries through Interfaith Dialogue: A Study Guide*. Genève, 1986. 31.

9 POTTER Philip, the then-editor of *The Ecumenical Review*, shares this short news about the meeting in *Mátrafüred*, Hungary: POTTER Philip, *Dialogue Meeting Identifies Five New Areas of Concern*. The Ecumenical Review 1980/3. 336–337.

Methodist pastor S. Wesley ARIARAJAH from Sri Lanka took over this responsibility as the second director of the World Council of Churches (WCC) dialogue line. Hans UCKO later became his successor. The *Baar Statement: Theological Perspectives on Plurality* was an eye-opening text published in 1990 by a group of leading theologians and church leaders appointed by the World Council of Churches (WCC), but it was not officially endorsed afterwards.¹⁰ Thus the spirit of this document, which is closely connected to the acknowledgment of the plurality of witness, somehow got lost in the further work of the WCC.

When summarising the theology, policy and activity of the World Council of Churches (WCC), we can recognise many ways in which the attitude towards other religions has been fairly ambivalent in this ecumenical organisation. All in all, there are five phases in the theoretical development of interreligious dialogue within the World Council of Churches (WCC) that can be discerned. The first phase of development is the beginning of the use of *dialogue* as a distinct term, meaning especially its form in community. Then the question of mission came amidst the reality of religious plurality.

Some years later the dialogue wing became institutionalised as a WCC sub-unit on dialogue, whose important journal is *Current Dialogue* (CD).¹¹ The findings of this dialogue sub-unit have slowly started to permeate and influence the life of the churches, susciting efforts to open and widen their horizons. But at present, some even speak about a virtual abandonment of the dialogue sub-unit's theological achievements and trajectories present in the worldwide ecumenical reception.¹² The future of this theological movement constitutes the fifth phase of development.¹³

2. Interreligious Developments in the Roman Catholic Church

We may mention some Roman Catholic milestones as well in the road of interreligious dialogue: these are the key moments in the history of the Roman Catholic Church, when interreligious dialogue took an important turn.¹⁴ The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) brought wide-ranging changes and paradigm shifts in this respect as well. It dealt with the interreligious question in at least five conciliar documents: *Nostra Aetate* (NÆ), *Lumen Gentium* (LG), *Ad Gentes* (AG), *Gaudium et Spes* (GS) and *Dignitatis Humanæ* (DH).

Apart from issuing these documents, the Council established the *Secretariat for Non-Christians* in 1964, which was later renamed the *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* (PCID) in 1988. In connection with these structural developments, Pope PAUL VI (1963–1978) issued the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (ES), also in 1964, called by some the Roman Catholic *magna charta* of interreligious dialogue. The *Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences* (FABC) has become one of the forerunners and leading forces in the topic of interreligious dialogue following its plenary assembly in *Taipei*, Taiwan, in 1974. The *Theses on Interreligious Dialogue: An Essay in Pastoral Theological Reflection* of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) was subsequently released in 1987, summarising their findings, firm stances and forward-looking perspectives.¹⁵

The Apostolic Exhortation of Pope PAUL VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), was published in 1975. The document speaks with high respect, deep appreciation and genuine esteem about other religions and people of other faiths.¹⁶ Following the *World Day of Prayer for Peace* at Assisi in 1986, the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio: On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate* (RM) was issued by Pope JOHN PAUL II in 1990. It deals with the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ and enlists three main kinds of dialogue: dialogue between experts or official representatives, the sharing of religious experience, and dialogue of life.¹⁷

10 *Baar Statement: Theological Perspectives on Plurality*. Baar, 1990. <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/baar-statement-theological-perspectives-on-plurality.html>.

11 One can find issues of *Current Dialogue* (CD) at the following address: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/interreligiousdialogue/current-dialogue/magazine.html>.

12 CRACKNELL Kenneth's long article has an equally wide scope as the one of KROEGER James H., when CRACKNELL summarises the seven ambivalent ways of interreligious relations within the World Council of Churches (WCC): CRACKNELL Kenneth, *Ambivalent Theology and Ambivalent Policy: The World Council of Churches (WCC) and Interfaith Dialogue (1938–1999)*. *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 1999/1. 87–111.

13 ARIARAJAH S. Wesley detects and follows these five phases of theoretical development in ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Not without my Neighbour*. In ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Not without my Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations*. Genève, 1999. 7–9.

14 KROEGER James H. MM provides a general overview on the twelve keys of Roman Catholic developments of interreligious encounters: KROEGER James H. MM, *Milestones in Interreligious Dialogue*. *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 1997/2. 232–239.

15 *Theses on Interreligious Dialogue: An Essay in Pastoral Theological Reflection*. Hong Kong, 1987.

16 Pope PAUL VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN). Vatican, 1975. In http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html.

17 Pope JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris Missio: On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate* (RM). Vatican, 1990. In http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html.

The Secretariat for Non-Christians, as it was still called at that time, published in 1984 *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*. It was later followed and extended by the document *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, published jointly in 1991 by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.¹⁸ It distinguishes four different forms of interreligious dialogue: these are the *dialogue of life*, the *dialogue of action*, the *dialogue of theological exchange*, and the *dialogue of religious experience*. As we can see, dialogue of theological exchange equals dialogue between experts or official representatives, while dialogue of action originates from dialogue of life.¹⁹

II. Frame Concepts: Religion, Ideology, Worldview and Spirituality

Before going on after this historical overview, it is crucial to define some key words and phrases connected to the interreligious realm and endeavour, especially the notions of religion, ideology, worldview and spirituality.

1. Religion as Framework for Seeking Salvation

Religion is a particular framework endowed with a certain belief system, with a moral code, with a form of worship and finally with an authority structure to keep it together.²⁰ It is a unified system of beliefs and practices, in which human beings seek salvation through relation to a transcendent power, and in which life is experienced as increased, unified, and given meaning through union with this sacred reality.²¹ In addition to this, and in accordance with their self-understanding, many religions claim that they are not only human quests, but they receive their mission and vocation from a divine inspiration or revelation.

18 Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) – Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Vatican, 1991. In http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html.

19 Defined and analysed in McDONALD Kevin, *Dialogue and Proclamation: A Comment from an Ecumenical Perspective*. Bulletin (Pro Dialogo) 1993/2. 128–129.

20 ARINZE Francis starts his article with these definitions of spirituality and religion in ARINZE Francis, *Spirituality in Dialogue*. Pro Dialogo 1977/3. 371–372.

21 This definition is based on the one of VILADESAU Richard, quoted in KUTTANIMATTATHIL SDB Jose, *Practice and Theology of Interreligious Dialogue: A Critical Study of the Indian Christian Attempts since the Second Vatican Council*. Bangalore, 1995. 6.

2. Ideology as Guidance or Distortion

These are not only world religions, but also different *ideologies* with which Christianity is challenged to engage in deep dialogue. In a positive sense, ideologies are coherent systems of notions and convictions which serve as guidance for analysing society, and for action to change this society.²² They may also be systems of ideas which can organise political and communitarian behaviour.²³ In a negative sense, however, ideologies may be systematic distortions of truth and reality as well. They work, for example, at the levels of presuppositions and assumptions, social theory, radical social change, or secular faiths. The state can support dialogue by separating religion and state, protecting the free practice of religion, and maintaining a common system of laws equally valid for all.²⁴

3. Worldview as Overall Interpretation of Environment

Worldview as a concept most of all means the overall interpretation of the conditions in the world around us and the understanding of our role in and in relation with that surrounding world.²⁵ For example, there have been some distinct phases in the history of the interreligious worldview of European Christianity. In the Middle Ages, the interreligious relationships concentrated mainly on Judaism and Islam, and the Ottoman Empire was understood in apocalyptic terms.

After the European discovery of the Americas, there was an extensive triangular trade in the North Atlantic community, marked by the forced mission of the conquistadores. From the nineteenth century onward, the modern missionary movement was dominated by the optimist ideology of social Darwinism. On the other hand, interreligious dialogue in the twentieth century is informed by the fact of religious pluralism. Thus, some of the challenges facing Western (and Middle Eastern) monotheism are the mythological matrix, the Asian notion of emptiness, and the experience of other revelations.²⁶

22 SAMARTHA Stanley J. quotes this definition: SAMARTHA Stanley J., “... And Ideologies”. The Ecumenical Review 1972/4. 482.

23 SAMARTHA Stanley J. quotes the *Nemi Report of Church and Society* in SAMARTHA Stanley J., “... And Ideologies”. The Ecumenical Review 1972/4. 482.

24 MOLTSMANN Jürgen speaks about the great world religions in his chapter: MOLTSMANN Jürgen, *Theology in Interfaith Dialogue*. In MOLTSMANN Jürgen, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*. London, 2000. 21–22.

25 HALLENCREUTZ Carl F. speaks about the four phases of the Christian worldview, and he also defines the meaning of worldview in HALLENCREUTZ Carl F., *Dialogue and Community: Reflections from a European Periphery*. The Ecumenical Review 1977/1. 12–14.

26 BERGER Peter L. enlists these three challenges to the whole monotheistic idea for us to cope with in his article: BERGER Peter L., *God in a World of Gods*. First Things 1993/8. 29–31. www.firstthings.com/

4. Spirituality as Resource and Sustenance

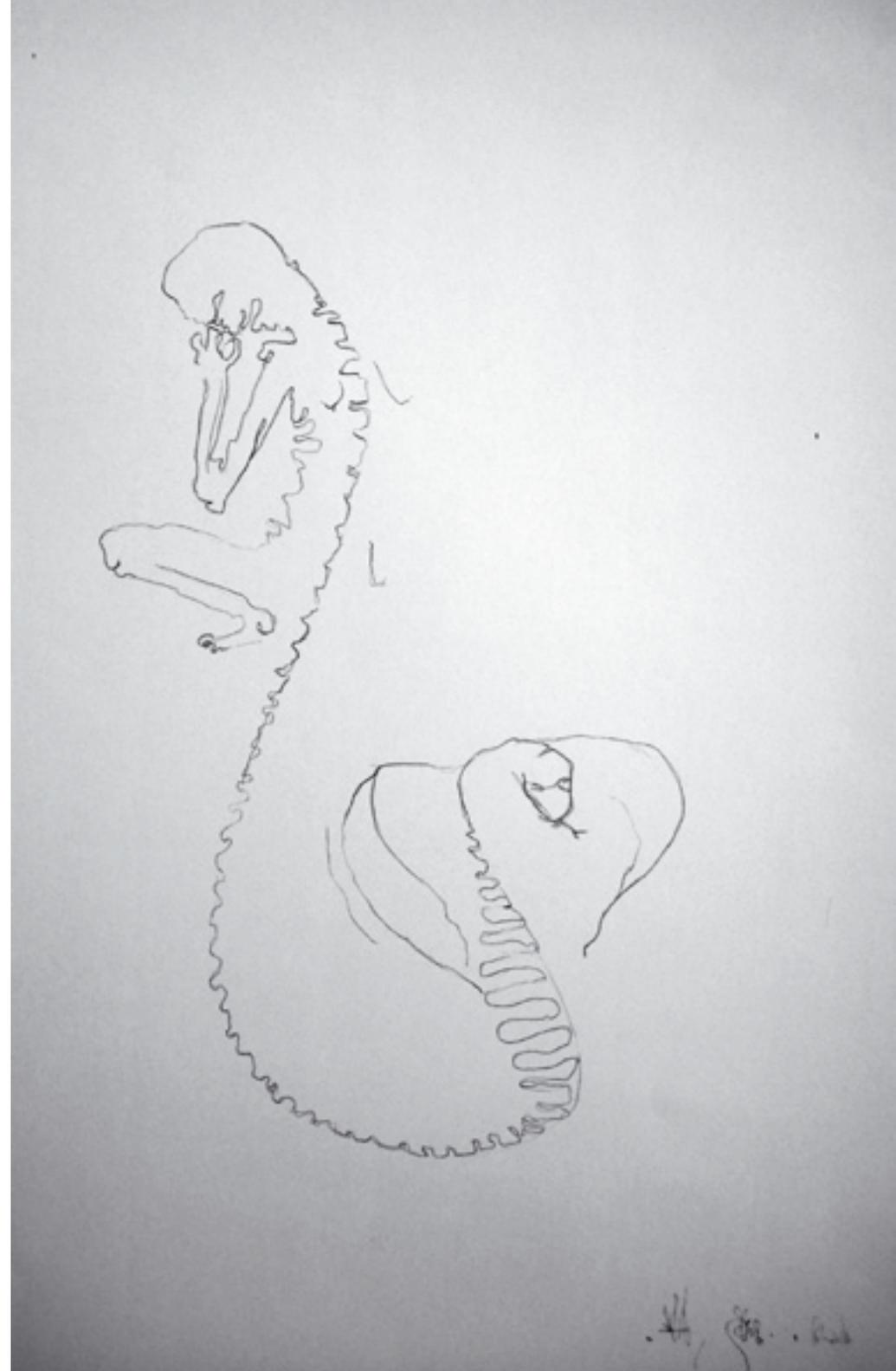
Spirituality gives meaning and a sense of direction to human life, calling to go to our higher self and even beyond this self; and it aspires to relationship with a Divine Being or God Godself. In dialogue, people of faith have discovered that they are all searching for ways of liberation from “I”-consciousness and for an interiorised relationship with Transcendent Reality.²⁷ The prophets are not so much upset about other gods, but about how religion corrupts people and is corrupted by people.²⁸

In connection with spirituality, we may differentiate between prayer and worship. *Prayer* is on the one hand an attempt by human beings to be in communication or even in communion with God;²⁹ and on the other hand it may be contemplation: openness, readiness and presence for the call of the Transcendent. *Worship*, on the other hand, is a systematically ordered response to a realised experience of the Sacred within a specific religious community.³⁰

It is high time to recognise and acknowledge the other world religions as spiritual contexts whose resources have provided spiritual sustenance, theological direction and ethical guidance to billions of people throughout the millennia. They are also foundations for the building up of various cultures and civilizations.³¹ They promote and secure the survival of humanity in the framework of the Earth’s organism. Thus holiness of life reached in our spiritual traditions is a prerequisite to dialogue.

ftissues/ft9308/articles/berger.html.

- 27 Both interreligious discoveries are from WICKREMESINGHE Lakshman, *Living Faiths in Dialogue*. *International Review of Mission* 1979/4. 387.
- 28 DIETRICH Gabrielle states this when she speaks about the meaning of conversion in different contexts: DIETRICH Gabrielle, *Dialogue and Context*. *The Ecumenical Review*, 1981/1. 29–30.
- 29 ARIARAJAH S. Wesley defines prayer in ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Can We Pray Together? Interreligious Prayer: A Protestant Perspective*. *Pro Dialogo* 1998/2. 262–263.
- 30 ARIARAJAH S. Wesley also defines in this way prayer and worship in ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Dialogue and Spirituality: Can We Pray Together?*. In ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Not without my Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations*. Genève, 1999. 38–39.
- 31 SAMARTHA Stanley J. argues for this new recognition of world religions as spiritual contexts in SAMARTHA Stanley J., *Mission in a Religiously Plural World: Looking beyond Tambaram (1938)*. *International Review of Mission* 1988/3. 312, 321.



III. Biblical Basis for Dialogue

1. The Word *Dialogue* in the New Testament

There are two verbs which linguistically can be connected to dialoguing in the New Testament. The one closest to the meaning we are looking for is *διαλεγομαι*. It appears thirteen times in the Bible, of which ten times are in the Acts of the Apostles. It is obvious that Luke likes this verb and often depicts the action of Paul with this word. It can mean, however, different things according to the context.

Paul argues (*διελέξατο*) with the Jews from the Scriptures in the synagogue of Thessalonica on three consecutive Sabbath days.³² In Athens he does the same: he argues (*διελέγετο*) in the synagogue with Jews and devout people, as well as in the marketplace with those who happened to be there.³³ He continues to do this in Corinth, too: he argues (*διελέγετο*) in the synagogue and tries to convince Jews and Greeks alike.³⁴

In Ephesus, Paul goes to the synagogue and has a discussion with the Jews.³⁵ Returning to Ephesus after some time, he speaks out boldly in the synagogue and argues (*διαλεγόμενος*) persuasively about the Reign of God.³⁶ After having to leave the synagogue, he continues to argue (*διαλεγόμενος*) in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, also in Ephesus.³⁷ In Troas, at a Eucharistic festive occasion, Paul holds a discussion (*διελέγετο*) with the congregation.³⁸

He talks (*διαλεγόμενον*) even longer there, so that Eutychus falls asleep and dies, only to be resurrected in short order.³⁹ In front of Felix, the governor of Jerusalem, Paul claims that he never disputed (*διαλεγόμενον*) in the temple with the people there, and never stirred up crowds in the synagogues and throughout the city.⁴⁰ This is fairly surprising when we take into account the enlisted occasions. Some days later, in a private audience, Paul discusses (*διαλεγόμενον*) justice, self-control and the coming judgement with Felix and his wife Drusilla.⁴¹

³² Acts 17,2.

³³ Acts 17,17.

³⁴ Acts 18,4.

³⁵ Acts 18,19.

³⁶ Acts 19,8.

³⁷ Acts 19,9.

³⁸ Acts 20,7.

³⁹ Acts 20,9.

⁴⁰ Acts 24,12.

⁴¹ Acts 24,25.

Apart from the Acts and Paul, there are only three mentions of the verb in the whole New Testament. The disciples are arguing (*διελέχθησαν*) with one another about who is the greatest among them.⁴² In Hebrews the author quotes the Proverbs,⁴³ where the exhortation addresses (*διαλέγεταῖς*) us as children.⁴⁴

For us the most interesting mention of dialoguing is the thirteenth one, which is also connected to the Old Testament. Jude refers to a para-Biblical tradition (according to ORIGEN of Alexandria [185–254] the story is from a book entitled *The Assumption of Moses*), which tells us that angels buried the body of Moses in an unknown place in order to avoid its veneration.⁴⁵ Deuteronomy only says that Moses was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor.⁴⁶ Jude says that the archangel Michael contended with the devil and heavily disputed the body of Moses.

So it seems from the enlisted texts that it is possible to be engaged in dialogue with people of our own faith, even if they exercise power upon us, or they are our disciples; furthermore, it is possible with neighbours of other faiths, or with people of no faith, or even with the devil itself. Moreover, even in this special diabolic dialogue we should not bring a condemnation of slander against the other, as Michael did not dare it; we can only offer dialogue into the hands of God.

This is the exact reason why Jude refers to this legend: because there are persons who are quick to slander whatever they do not understand. Through this story we can see the purification of language as a prerequisite for dialogue, the bondages of identity as obstacles to dialogue, and mutual understanding as a main goal of dialogue.

2. Interreligious Considerations in the Bible

In the New Testament (NT), especially in the letters of the Saint Paul the Apostle, the question is not so much whether there is another God in the Universe, but whether Jesus Christ is the only way to our God. The special language we get acquainted with in the Bible is not a kind of dogmatic or systematic language of the one absolute truth. The Biblical rhetorics rather use and apply the emotionally rich and inspiring language of faith and of love, especially the deep love of a child towards one's Parent.

⁴² Mark 9,34.

⁴³ Proverbs 3,11–12.

⁴⁴ Hebrews 12,5.

⁴⁵ Jude 9.

⁴⁶ Deuteronomy 34,6.

The Gospel according to Matthew tells and informs us about God's fundamental impartiality:⁴⁷ "God makes God's Sun to shine on bad and good people alike; and gives rain to those who do good, and to those who do evil."⁴⁸ In his letter, the Apostle James writes about the universality of the possibility of wisdom: "If any of you lack wisdom, you should pray to God, Who will give it to you; because God gives generously and graciously to all."⁴⁹

In the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Peter the Apostle makes the following statement:⁵⁰ "God treats everyone on the same basis. Whoever worships God and does what is right is acceptable to God; no matter what race one belongs to."⁵¹ In Acts we can read the title of a pagan altar: "To an Unknown God." So Paul can surprisingly declare: "That which you worship, then, even though you do not know it, is what I now proclaim to you."⁵² The author offers another inclusive and all-embracing reading: "We too are God's children. In God we live and move and have our being."⁵³ Another place claims: "God has no favourites, but in every nation the person who is God-fearing and does what is right is accepted by God."⁵⁴

In the same book we find the most decisive statement about God's care for all peoples on the Earth, and about God's divine plan for salvation, in which all nations have an important role to play. This passage is much-quoted and variously interpreted in the history of Biblical hermeneutics. It reads as follows: "In the past, God let all nations go their own way. Yet God has not left Godself without a witness."⁵⁵

We cannot cite here all the texts opposing (sometimes only seemingly) interreligious dialogue. But among others, these enlisted Biblical places constitute some of the considerations based on the Holy Scripture which we must take into account when engaging in the process of interreligious dialogue.

47 ARIARAJAH S. Wesley quotes this important passage from the Bible in ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *A Biblical Basis for Dialogue?* In ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths*. Genève, 1985. 31.

48 Matthew 5,45.

49 James 1,5.

50 Also quoted in *Christians in Dialogue with People of other Faiths* (Zürich, 1970). International Review of Mission 1970/4. 383.

51 Acts 10,34–35.

52 Acts 17,22–23.

53 Acts 17,28.

54 Acts 10,34–35.

55 Acts 14,17.

IV. A Changing Landscape of Interreligious Ideas

Some of the most significant and most controversial issues in interreligious dialogue are the ones of theological, Biblical, liturgical, cultural and psychological nature: the question of Truth, theological basis, mission and witness, ideologies, spiritual resources, worship and prayer.⁵⁶ But there can be many points of contact with other believers, too: the one Creator, our aspirations for transcendence, fasting and almsgiving, prayer and meditation, pilgrimage, and so on. A special place is reserved in the realm of dialogue for the different interreligious, cross-community, intercultural and interfaith marriages, which themselves serve as unique and rich communities.⁵⁷

Following almost total opposition, dialogue is historically the third kind of response of Christianity to the challenges of religious pluralism in Asia. The first response was the reaction of adaptation: the appropriation of psychological elements, taking them out of their context and putting them in the hands of God.⁵⁸ The second response was naturalisation: going back to the basics of religion, and finding there common points of reference. And only recently Christianity has used dialogue as a method to build community with the other fellow-countrypersons.⁵⁹

According to S. Wesley ARIARAJAH, the birth of the concept of dialogue was when Christianity decided especially in India that in the long and painful process of nation building, people of different living faiths should no longer be only the objects of discussions, but equal partners in conversation.⁶⁰ He also acknowledges that there has been a change from Teutonic captivity (the ancient Greek philosophy

56 SAMARTHA Stanley J. collects and evaluates the different topics dealt with in various interreligious dialogues in his over-viewing article: SAMARTHA Stanley J., *Dialogue: Significant Issues in the Continuing Debate*. The Ecumenical Review, 1972/3. 333.

57 At the moment, there is a policy of effective isolation in almost all religious communities towards interreligious couples. It can mean an accusation of *betrayal* from the part of the community, the losing of confidence for *support*, and a strange fear of *interference* on the part of pastors and spiritual leaders. The ironic "solution" for the situation usually means either the conversion of one spouse to the other's religion, or the nominal religiosity of one, or a kind of undeclared peace inside the walls of the marriage. See ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Interreligious Marriage: Problem or Promise?* In ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Not without my Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations*. Genève, 1999. 85–99.

58 BAVINCK J. H. dedicates a whole article to this phase of the interreligious encounter, and he deals with it as a means of communication in BAVINCK J. H., *The Problem of Adaptation and Communication*. International Review of Missions 1956/3. 307–313.

59 WICKREMESINGHE Lakshman enlists the three responses to the contextual challenge in WICKREMESINGHE Lakshman, *Christianity in the Context of other Faiths*. In FABELLA Virginia (ed.), *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity: Towards a Relevant Theology*. New York, 1980. 29–31.

60 ARIARAJAH S. Wesley draws our attention to this fundamental paradigm shift in Indian theology and the Christian way of thinking, attributed to DEVANANDAN Paul David in ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *The Ecumenical Impact of Interreligious Dialogue*. The Ecumenical Review 1997/2. 214.

embodied in the Holy Roman Empire, spiced with some Germanic temperament) and from exclusivism, as well as from a certain form of functional polytheism, to a new or wider or macro-ecumenism of religions.⁶¹

We could contrast sharply the Christian theology of religion, which is conceptual, doctrinal and antagonistic, with the Christian theology of religions, which is historical, social and political, as well as empathetic.⁶² Accordingly, Israel SELVANAYAGAM greets the developments that the emphasis of the Christian theology of dialogue has shifted mainline Christian theology from Christocentric universalism, Christomonism or a kind of totalitarianism, towards the concept of the previousness of Jesus Christ, or a Jesus Christ-centred secular fellowship. The responses for these challenges are different exclusivist, inclusivist and pluralist theological models.⁶³ Parallel with these, dialogue people have started to rediscover and revitalise various ancient theories and theologies, like the one of the seeds of the word, or the theology of the pre-existent Logos.

In sum, if we consider the other religions to worship other “gods” or “goddesses” and thus refuse to take part in their prayer occasions, we are basically guilty of functional polytheism, since there is only one God.⁶⁴ Instead, if we really want to share our love and charity with other persons, we are challenged to evolve and develop a theology which can try to find places for the others’ narratives, in order to involve them as well in the mainstream of the salvation history God offers to all people on Earth.

61 ARIARAJAH S. Wesley tries to convince us about these categories in his article: ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *Towards a Theology of Dialogue*. The Ecumenical Review, 1977/1. 4.

62 SONG Choan-Seng speaks about the plural and singular form in his article: SONG Choan-Seng, *The Power of God’s Grace in the World of Religions*. The Ecumenical Review 1987/1. 46.

63 SELVANAYAGAM Israel summarises these three responses to religious pluralism in SELVANAYAGAM Israel, *Christian Theology and Mission in the midst of many Theologies and Missions*. In *Theological Perspectives on other Faiths*. Lutheran World Federation Documentation 1997/41. 185–187.

64 The term *functional polytheism* is from ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *No Other God*. In ARIARAJAH S. Wesley, *The Bible and People of other Faiths*. Genève, 1985. 10.

SÁRKÁNY Péter

An Outline of the Philosophical Care of the Soul: Phenomenology, Existential-Analytic Logotherapy and Philosophical Counselling

Beginning with ancient Greek philosophy, one of the most important characteristics of philosophical self-awareness is the parallel between body and soul, on the basis of which philosophers perceived philosophy as therapy of the soul. PLATO, for example, often compared the scientific and therapeutic ambitions of the philosopher to the activity of a medical doctor (see Gorgias 464a).

This connection was first brought to our attention by Werner JAEGER, who identified PLATO’s philosophy with the expression Therapie der Seele (Werner JAEGER. 1954. II. 32.), that is, cure of the soul, a kind of psychotherapy.

The philosophical tradition of cure of the soul, with all the peculiar ruptures of the Middle Ages and modernity, is still alive in XXth century philosophy; let us only think of the work of Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, or the Czech philosopher Jan PATOČKA, who was also a disciple of Werner JAEGER.

Recent philosophy has put the subject again into the forefront of philosophical discourse, primarily due to the works of Pierre HADOT and Michel FOUCAULT; and, like any truly important mental achievements, this also searches for the meaning of philosophy.

Pierre HADOT in his publications draws our attention to the original practical nature of ancient Greek philosophy, as well as to the fact that