

On the Borderline

The Reformed Church between the Historical Heritage and Chances of “Reformation” after the change of regime in 1989/90

THESES

1. The 1989 political shift should be seen as a social and historical event that resulted in a change not only in terms of the social and public position of churches, but as one that has provided significant impulses for theological reflection as well as for social and political interpretation of society and of politics.

In practice, for theological reflection it means the following:

- a critical understanding and interpretation of the past;
- the reflections on the changed social framework of the church;
- the evaluation of the post-communist social structure, political thinking and public life

All these critical interpretations are not the consequence of a specific postmodern political theology, but the contextual applications of the biblical interpretations of the Christian perception of history and time.

2. There a priori exists a theological interpretation of social and political changes, of which the most characteristic examples are the theological interpretations of change and freedom. In connection with the events of 1989 much less has been said of the theological interpretation of freedom, which, contrary to this, was obvious in connection with 1956. Still, to achieve an awareness of the regime change, the theological interpretation of the post-1989 freedom would be relevant. Yet, this theological-interpretation posits certain limits to political events, and from an eschatological view it relativizes the issue of political freedom.

3. The 25 years after the 1989 regime change can be considered the era of orientation and information – both from a social and church point of view. However, the political identity crisis triggered by socialist political ideology proved to be too long-lasting, and this greatly hampered the development of a citizen, democratic identity. The rediscovery of a strengthening national identity, however, brought along the danger that the Christian and the national identities are placed on the same level of moral interpretation. It is the responsibility of the church and of theology to give the right interpretation of national feelings and of Christian existence both in the process of moral value judgement, and in the development of identity.

4. After the regime change the Protestant church not only had to reconstrue its role in society, but also had to face the transformation of its internal structure. The origin of this transition process is a public church heritage which brought factors to be reconsidered both from the classic public church era before 1948, and from the eroded structure of the years between 1948 and 1989

On thinking about the public church the following points should be considered:

- the structure and mentality of the people's church must not be solely made the subject of negative criticism;
- the model of an envisioned transitional new people's church structure also carries elements characterizing the people's church;
- the institutional structures of the classic people's church and public engagement cannot compensate for the ecclesiological deficit;
- it is necessary to separate and distinguish between, then compare the sociological and theological categories.