

Sándor Gaál:

“Initiative Church”

János Victor’s Contribution to the Issue of Church Development with Special Attention to Missions and Church Growth in the Reformed Church in Hungary”

THESES

1. There may be a period in the life of the church when the missionary work is forced to function in para-church movements. In this case the reviving ministry of the para-church organizations is legitimate. The necessity and the healthiness of the missionary movements may be tested on their intention to integrate their work into the church.
2. Church and mission may not be separated. An ecclesiology that does not take the missionary existence of the church as its point of departure (or does not even take it into consideration) or a missiology that passes by the biblical ecclesiology, work for the destruction of the foundations of the church.
3. The church, as God’s people must recognize the times when she should withdraw from the public in order to reflect on her inner qualities. By this the church revises and corrects her activities, her motivations and the forms of her mission. She must also discover the mechanism of natural growth. The expansion of monastic communities offer an analogy for this. The church does these for the sake of a more genuine presence in the world, thus such a self-limitation does not hinder her worldwide mission, but it serves its better fulfillment.
4. Our church has failed to revise the principles and practice of baptism and of the confirmation and to clarify their mutual relationship, for generations. Until this dept is not equated, she keeps herself in the status of being a mission field, strengthening the phenomenon of “non-church within the church”.
5. Mission is God’s mission entrusted to the church. The local congregation has a primary role in fulfilling it. All other church structures are subordinated to this, because God has linked His mission to the gospel, and the congregation is the hermeneutic of the gospel for the world. Our main task is to rediscover the local congregation. These congregations must be helped to exist as “initiative churches” so that we may fulfill our mission, according to the nature of the church.