

V. Summary of the PhD dissertation

This dissertation stands for the hypothesis of listening to specially selected Bible stories can dissolve anxiety in children. The main argument of my thesis is that framing inner images while listening to Bible stories can dissolve anxiety.

God is present in our lives by stories. The transcendent God can be grasped and recognized by stories told about Him, about Creation and about His deeds. His presence is encouraging, empowering and healing presence. In our understanding not only His presence is encouraging, empowering and healing, but the stories told about Him have the same attribute, in our case they can dissolve anxiety in the most vulnerable age-group, in children. Our research had as an aim to document this thesis from different angles, so this paper incorporates the theological support of the theme, explaining the most important physical and psychological expressions used in the research, the theoretical and the practical approach.

Introduction brought forward the theme, the description of the dissertation and the explanatory vocabulary of the most important expressions.

The first chapter started with the theological grounding of storytelling as a personal and common existential mood and communication form, then came the presentation of the WORD and Bible stories as a power of call into being and keeping in existence. We recognized God's fulfilling Will as a story, and the story as an instrument of communication for God. We got a glimpse on the risks that occur related to God's image created by telling the stories about Him, because we wanted to clarify that this image shall not cause neurosis and shall not be unnerving, so it is very important which Bible story is chosen

to dissolve anxiety and that the language used with children should be appropriate and easily grasped. The next part in the first chapter was the Narrative Psychology's approach in forming a stress-free identity, followed by Narrative Theology which presented the tradition of Bible-story-telling as a deep influence on forming a person's identity. We closed the first chapter with presenting storytelling as a symbolical act.

In the second chapter we mapped the border between fear and anxiety, the difference between the two feelings and we investigated the roots and the phenomenon of fear and anxiety. After acquainting the psycho-physical effects of fear and anxiety, we presented the basic forms of fear based on the work of the German Psychiatrist Fritz Riemann, and we concluded that there is no personal and character development without an appropriate level of stress and anxiety. Later we presented the aspects of child development and understood the stress and conflicts as the enzymes of growth and progress.

We had an excursus where we informed the readers about the forms of attachment, remarking that the incorrect forms of attachments might cause anxiety in children, then we presented the different forms of anxiety from gender point of view, some were more characteristic to boys and some were to girls. After this distinction we described the manifestation of anxiety and the pathological defense-forms against it, then the ineffective and effective methods of dissolving anxiety. We recognized the border between the protective and the constricting anxiety, we looked for the balance created on this border and we described some of the resorts of facilitating anxiety. We came to the conclusion that even the facilitating anxiety will make a great demand on the whole personality, and we examined the importance of stories and storytelling in grasping the balance between the facilitating and debilitating anxiety.

We formulated the question, that can be possibly faith and anxiety in a positive relationship, if so, how can that happen, if we take in account the characteristics of personality enlisted by the German Psychiatrist Fritz Riemann in *The basic forms of fear*. In the last part of the second chapter we investigated, how can an adult recognize the anxiety of a child, her/his own transpositions and how can those be controlled, and even more, how can an adult recognize the child's transpositions on the adult and what adequate answer can be given.

The third chapter delineates the practical possibilities of dissolving anxiety by communication and by reading special bible stories.

Firstly, how can be used communication as method in dissolving anxiety in general and should we understand stepping in a relationship as a form of communication? Is storytelling an anxiety dissolving communication, and is Bible-story-telling a special type of anxiety dissolving communication? We got an insight in the work of the conscious and subconscious related to symbols, we looked for the impact of these on dissolving anxiety, then we examined the anxiety dissolving storytelling as deacon ministry and counseling.

We discovered the healing space or field, which is described as morphic and morphogenetic fields, or common manifold space, which cannot be touched, but it provides the space for learning, reconsidering and change. In the following sub-chapters we looked at the bibliotherapy, Bible therapy and Bibliolog therapy as possible answers in our search for adequate forms of dissolving anxiety. Later we described the systematical desensitization as the method of our anxiety-dissolving work, and then we stopped on the border of Narrative Psychology and Narrative Theology, to verify our thesis that listening to special Bible stories has effect in dissolving anxiety in childhood.

After the review of methods described in the first part of the third chapter we verified our theses in practice by a special project run in primary school classes. We put up a project with questionnaires where we checked the type and level of anxiety of children before listening to the Bible story and after the listening of it. After the evaluation of the questionnaires we can formulate the conclusion, that our thesis proved to be true, listening of Bible stories can dissolve anxiety in children. This leads us from the possibility of reading Bible stories to children to the demand of doing so, not only to share information, but to enable them to gain authority upon their fears and anxiety. It can be the theme of a later research which Bible stories can dissolve efficiently different types and forms of anxiety in childhood and in adulthood as well.

VI. Theses for the public dispute

1. Telling stories and listening to stories is a way or form of life created and sustained by God's Word.
2. There is no development/growth without anxiety.
3. Anxiety has double aspect: it can disable or enable. The extent of anxiety and the character of the person will give the resultant which drives to disablement or enablement.
4. Near adequate circumstances faith and anxiety can be in positive relationship.
5. The existence of the healing space, the morphic and morphogenetic fields makes possible to use verbal systematic desensitization to ease anxiety.
6. Storytelling, especially bible-story telling can ease anxiety in childhood by mobilizing the ability of inner image-making.