AN "INQUISITORIAL" FILE OF A PROTESTANT PASTOR. DOCUMENTS REGARDING A SERIES OF CONFLICTS STARTED BY AN EVANGELIZATION WEEK

Júlia Zsigmond, PhD Student, "Babeș-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca

Abstract: During the last decades a series of spiritual and awakening movements have appeared in the Hungarian Reformed communities of Transylvania. The church was trying rather to ignore and overshadow them instead of integrating, but neither the institution, nor the local communities were able to fulfill this task.
This made possible, that a week of evangelization in 1998 divided the Reformed community of Kalotaszentkirály: a part of the community approved what the invited minister said, the other part was outraged by the sermons and the ritual of the worship. The latter part of the congregation took its complaints to the level of the diocese and of the church district.
The pastor of that time collected in a folder every written document, which was issued regarding the case starting with the minutes of the first consistorial meeting following the evangelization week through the letters of the dean and the bishop and the supporting and aversive letters of the fellow pastors to the newsletter articles about the question.

Keywords: Reformed church, awakening movement, religious mentality, written memory, discourses.

Religious and Sociological background

The Hungarian Reformed community in Transylvania is familiar with the religious renewal movements, which stirred up waves of religious awakening in several communities around the country, creating such groups among within traditional congregations that changed radically the religious mentality and habit of their members. These events justified the theory of the postmodern scholars of the sociology of religion, based on the processes experienced throughout Europe, according to which the concept map of religiosity is constantly changing, and communities arise, which reinterpret their relationship with the transcendent powers. The members of these communities thrive for a more intensive religious practice and at the top of their standards the requirements of their faith.[1]

For thos who are not involved in these processes, they may give a reason to worry, since the religiosity, which loses its necessary ties to formal religious organization, it is likely to be controversial and irregular.[2]

The sociologists of religion agree that several types of religiosity exist within the same congregation. Miklós Tomka describes this in concentric circles, each one relating to layers of

[1] Diósi 2012. 36–38.
[2] Lyon 1999. 23.

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

different ways of religiosity: the core is formed by the clergy and the activists, the second circle includes that of the members, who attend church services regularly and live according the norms of their faith, to an external circle belong those who practice their religion seasonally, mostly of religious holidays, who keep the rules of their faith is somehow loose, and the margins are filled with those who are "casual religious persons", they participate only in particular events (such as weddings), and the agnostics as well as the atheists are outside every circle.[3]

This typology is problematic because of the question if by "ecclesiastical regulations" we mean the regulations drawn up by the church leaders or the regulations set down in the Holy Scripture, and how are these interpreted. The question is not avoided, but still overcome by the theory of Meredith McGuire, who defines the types of religiosity from a different perspective,[4] thus, she does not set out from the relationship of the individuals with the institutions, but focuses on the mindset of the individual (dividing it into churchly, denominational, cultic and sectarian orientation).

The Reformed community of Transylvania is characterized predominantly by the denominational orientation, but the sectarian orientation is also present, which I would rather call intensive religiosity, because this notion doesn't have negative connotations. The denominational orientation is briefly characterized by the fact that the individual doesn't define himself primarily as a religious person and is satisfied by measuring himself to others, rather than to the founder of his religion, while the opposite pole is characterized by the fact that the individual defines himself as a religious person in every situation, and always tries to surpass his own levels of morality, as if he were thriving to achieve perfection.

Local specificities

The geographical area of my research is the region of Kalotaszeg, an ethnographic region situated on the southwestern border of the Transylvanian basin, in particular the center of its subregion called Felszeg. This subregion is also called the „original Kalotaszeg", and focus on its most characteristic settlement: Kalotaszentkirály (Sancraiu). The region of Kalotaszeg (with a few exceptions) converted to the Reformed faith in the 1560s, the community of Kalotaszentkirály became Reformed at this time. The respect for the tradition in the village situated near Bánffyhunyad (Huedin), which is often visited by ethnographic researchers and Hungarian tourists, is closely related to religious habits, and their devotion to authentic Reformed identity. The census of 2011 registered 991 Hungarians out of the 1073 inhabitants of the village, at the end of December 2013 the Reformed congregation had 823 members, so Kalotaszentkirály is at least a 90% Hungarian and Reformed community.[5]

The Reformed Diocese of Kalotaszeg has 32 congregations, from these only Kalotaszentkirály is, where there are church services in other days apart from Sundays (Monday morning and Saturday evening), and apart from the weekly Bible study group for the congregation, there is youth Bible study group (two occasions: one for the younger and one for the elder youngsters), Bible study group for married couples and Bible study groups for families (the latter is a rarity among villages in Transylvania). The church services from Monday and Saturday were held also before the change of 1989, and there was a common bible study

[3] Tomka 1994.
[4] Kiss 2003. 58.
5 Data are taken from the reports of the Reformed Congregation of Kalotaszentkirály and from the Internet database of the 2011 census.

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

occasion, and one for children. Youngster from ages 12-15 and above 16 were first invited to Bible study group by pastor János Mihály in 1991, and when these youngsters got married, he founded the bible study group for couples. The home Bible study groups created in some neighborhoods are linked closely to the evangelization held in autumn of 1998.

If a charismatic pastor with an intensive (sectarian) religious orientation starts working in a traditional congregation with denominational orientation, sooner or later he attracts a group of individuals, whose religious orientation will change as well. The pastor who is committed towards awakening is interested in pursuing this change, because he desires that his followers seek the occasions of individual and collective religious practice not out of respect for tradition, as a family or local custom, but out of an internal desire for the closeness of the transcendent power, and the leading of the preaching, and to be lead on these occasion by repentance of their sins and gratefulness for their salvation.[6]

In order to achieve this, pastors used several methods. János Mihály organized an evangelization week between 26 and 30 October 1998, inviting the Hungarian pastor József Zimányi jr.. The event was in some aspects successful. Several family Bible study groups have started, but on the other hand, the events offended several church members, and the internal conflicts generated external conflicts too, not just in the congregation, but also in the diocese and in the church district, having also an intensive press reaction, this way reaching a lot of people (even if in a less intensive form). János Mihály collected in a folder several documents regarding the Zimányi-case (minutes, official and private letters, press articles etc.), mentioning it as his own "inquisition-file", making reference to his prosecution of his (and others') person. We should find out later weather the expression suits the content of the folder or not. I think that an analysis from the perspective of the anthropology of writing would give us the expected results, and througha content- and discourse-analysis we could see the internal secrets of the inquisition process described by the folder.

The facts about the 1998 evangelization week

The documents from the inquisition file do not recall uniformly the events that led to the series of conflicts. Even though the event was an objective happening with real parameters (time- and space-coordinates, causality, actors), these parameters are not equally obvious for the participants of the event, this way the reception of the event happened differently. We cannot deny that the stories told about the event are more or less precise, or more or less credible, but we can ask with László Tengelyi: "what kind of criterion can we use to assess the precision or credibility of a story, after we realize that the vivid reality may be called basic text only with playful irony, to which all stories should adjust".[7]

In the following paragraphs I try to present the events of the evangelization week by avoiding the perspective of written reports and I try to focus on objectivity.

János Mihály announced on four consecutive Sundays that the week preceding the Feast of Reformation (31 October) will be an evangelization week, when József Zimányi, a pastor from Hungary will preach. The guest preacher brought with himself four colleagues, who visited church members with the elders during the day, had short conversations with them about their faith, and invited them to the evening events. Except for the opening day, Monday, every

6 The basics of Reformed faith is: Christ, the Son of God made a subsititutionary sacrifice for 'the sins of all the people.
7 Tengelyi 1998. 24.

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

worship was held in the evenings, but their liturgy was different from usual in many aspects. The pastor called on every occasion the congregation to choose: when everyone leaves the church, those who want to turn away from their sins, and want to leave their lives under the guidance of Christ in order to be saved, should come back. On Saturday evening, he asked the congregation, that everyone, who returned in the church on one of the days, because accepted Christ's call, should remain in the church. At least 400 persons attended the evangelization, and 150 of them remained at the last event in the church. At this time, according to their residence, the pastor divided them into groups of 10 members, they discussed the schedule of the home bible study occasions, and they set up a liturgy. They distributed printed documentation for the bible study group, and appointed the leaders of the groups. 14 groups were organized at that time.

The liturgy was different from the usual, because after the sermon of Zimányi, his partners gave testimony about how the grace of God saved them from their sinful past, how He is protecting them, and how they see their only goal in life to live according to His will, that is why they became missionary workers, in order to share with people, how they realized the presence of God in their lives, and how that turned their previous misery into joy. After one of the worships the congregation witnessed a public repentance and request for forgiveness: one of the pastors made a confession while standing in front of the pulpit, that he has deceived the local pastor with an amount of money, he repented what he had done, and he returned the money in front of everybody and asked for his forgiveness. After the end of the evangelization week, the diocese organized a canonical visitation (as it was usual once in 3 years) on November 13th, when the consistory asked the board of the diocese to examine its circumstances and consequences.

The contents and context of the inquisition folder

The folder contains mostly documents regarding the Transylvanian evangelization of József Zimányi: apart from dealing with of the events of Kalotaszentkirály, the most significant documents are the confrontation of the pastors from Magyarlapád (Lopadea Noua), Méra (Mera) and Balázstelke (Blăjel) regarding Zimányi, and the statement of the CE Union, the institution involved in the greatest awakening in the history of the Transylvanian Reformed church. In the folder the problematic expressions that were used during the investigations are also significant: awakening, conversion, renewal, evangelization, mission, tradition, church discipline.

The corpus contains official and private letters, spontaneous correspondence, circulars, minutes, reports, statements, declarations, denunciations, appeals, decisions, most of them in copies or cut out from newspapers, with a lot of handwritten underlining and comments. The newspapers published not only official documents, but also articles of complaining written by both parties, but also published interviews with the persons affected by the case or with experts, and they even tried to make reports on the event.

Most of the documents are dated between 1998 and 2001, and a few related documents from 2002, but from earlier times only a few newspaper articles, which deal with the theological and social area of interest of the pastor. The last document in the folder is the medical record of János Mihály, he was diagnosed with cancer, and died in 2011. The folder belongs now to his widow, and only a few persons know about it: the closest relatives, friends, and those pastors who also invited Zimányi, or at least supported those who were called to account by the leaders of the church.

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

Texts, just like people, have their own history. This history connects with the destiny of different persons, those who create and those who use this text,[8] sometimes it survives people, like this case. Meanwhile it may change its meaning, it may eliminate itself, it may fall into an irrelevant context,[9] where accidentally, occasionally, lost in its function, out of use remains nothing more than a red, hard covered folder, a bit larger than the size of an A4 paper, with a clam inside, and with 120 different documents (sometimes with multiple pages). But still: it bears the past.[10]

We can only guess the motivation behind the collecting, archiving attitude, but our guessing at can be close to reality. The majority of the written texts are notes with the role of easing the memory, so we may say: writing is a form of the output of the memory. The textual form liberates us from the constraint of the memorizing, because the information settled in the text can be searched any time.[11] Writing preserves the past and makes it visible, or as Walter J. Ong puts it: it may break the discourse, but as soon as somebody decodes the text, it becomes an extratextual element and the suspended discourse may go on.[12]

"Both the preservation and the conservation and usage of the written text are related to social habits. The creation of documents is always motivated by the intention of leaving behind the memories"- says Keszegh in his course of text-anthropology.[13] We may not know for sure what was the plan of János Mihály regarding the future of the folder, but one thing is sure: he collected in the folder everything he considered worth of attention, preservation and remembrance, important and useful. This way we may see in it the tool of self-representation: the collection of the folder encapsulates also the real and accepted personal involvement.

Archiving might involve also the hidden hope that the case once should be tried again, or when the case, which was very uncomfortable for many, will be closed in every level of the church hierarchy, several circles will be able to find the *truth* in the documents of the folder. We may recall the lines underlined by János Mihály, in which he expressed his protest, his question and exclamation marks and we may ask ourselves: didn't the Leading Board of the church make justice after all those investigations? Instead of looking for answers to reflect the truth, let's quote here András Sütő's novel entitled "Anyám könnyű álmot ígér": "my anxiety is only deeper when I experience that though writing and truth are siblings: they still wander sometimes on different roads."

Mapping the fields of discourse

As it may seem from the short presentation of the contents of the folder: apart from several concrete sub-topics, the documents are thematically uniform. We may formulate this way the main questions which according to the documents argue with each other: is there a need for religious awakening in the Reformed church or for internal mission, does the church want to integrate the renewal movements, is everybody converted who attends church, are József Zimányi's evangelization methods acceptable, are they in contradiction with the Reformed doctrine and traditions, are they harmful for the Reformed congregations?

[8] Fejős 2003. 86-87.
[9] Keszeg 2008. 166.
[10] Idem 159.
[11] Assmann 1999. 23.
[12] Ong 1998. 146.
[13] Keszeg 2008. 140.

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

After setting the boundaries of the objects of the discourse, I try to describe the structure of the field, to grasp the alternative forms of knowledge from the discourse, the system of the declarations and statements that make it up, the unsaid presuppositions carried by them, and the underlying intentions, and to identify the actors and strategies, which bring all these to light, this way revealing the complex space of different competing meanings.[14]

The clash between the different systems of experience and views goes on different panels: on the level of the congregation (between church members, and church members and pastor), where the primary agent of the emerging conflicts is the orality, and we can read about these as quotes and references; on the level of the church structure between the different steps of hierarchy, including different investigation and legislative authorities, where communication is made primarily in writing, and apart from the oral negotiation and talks the written statements have always the real authority; the debate extended also on the level of the press, on the one hand through those who wanted to share their part of the truth through the printed media, on the other hand through the desire of the newspapers to collect statements from the persons involved.

The actors and stages of the discourse

Though the statements made on different panels overlap, let's take into condsideration according to the enumerated levels the actors of the discoursive field, and the content and the agent of their manifestation. Regarding the internal conflict of the congregation, there were a few persons without any leading role in the life of the congregation who formulated private letters: a woman touched by the evangelization who started attending home bible groups wrote a private letter to the mother of the pastor, that his son didn't commit anything disapproving, and the blessed fruits of his conscientious work can already be seen. Another church member addressed to the dean from Bánffyhunyad, to one of the counselors of the Királyhágómellék Church District and to the president of the synod of the Hungarian church: Gusztáv Bölcskei, in order to present them the shocking events, and to ask for their help before the whole Reformed church becomes sectarian. These letters were published in the newspaper Partiumi Közlöny.

The pastor's wife also wrote a private letter to bishop Kálmán Csiha, and she thanked for his support, expressing her regrets about the fact that the bishop rejected the Zimányi-movement in an interview given for the Szabadság daily newspaper. She refers to the earlier statements of the bishop appreciating it, and she reports the positive and negative development of the life of the congregation: the bible study groups, which work well and the hostile elders. The private letter of the pastor, János Mihály, is the most detailed report about the evangelization week: he wrote for the chief manager of the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church at the request of Zimány and the chief manager. There is no primary document regarding the tensions between the church members, but every official document refers to the unrest and division among the congregation. Apart from the official documents, there are a few papers that reflect the misunderstandings of János Mihály with the dean, the bishop (he wrote some handwritten notes about meetings, discussions, talks, he recorded his dissatisfactions), his commitment towards Zimányi (e.g. he has got from him a handwritten greeting on a piece of white paper with the text: I think of you with much love, Christ is triumphant, Satan is defeated. Greetings, József) and his conflicts with the elders. More precisely there is one elder who is mentioned in one of his notes in a concrete situation: he listens to the presentation of Zimányi at a friend's congregation and

[14] Foucault 1998. 50-74.

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

makes notes about what he has heard. Then he realized that there was somebody in the room and he wrote on a piece of paper, which presumably was given to the person sitting next to him,: "The person who has rat on us at the dean's office is sitting in front of us, near the window. In the middle or on the left? – comes the answer. In the middle. He might be an informer. After this spontaneous conversation he continued the notes on the presentation, but after another sentence noted from Zimányi's speech, he writes another comment: The love of Christ compels me – and you too, informer.

Regarding the documentation of the different levels of the investigation of the church leaders, in the inquisition folder there are copies of the following documents linked to Kalotaszentkirály: VII. Assessment – instruction, Appendix to the minutes of the canonical visitation held in the congregation of Kalotaszentkirály-Zentelke on 13 November 1998 (the pastor declares that the 14 bible study groups is the result of long years' hard work, and of the evangelization week, and is the community of those church members who had been converted, gave their lives to Christ and their spiritual needs are higher than that of the others – the Committee is glad to see the awakening, but is worried because of the movement, which does not respect Reformed traditions, and they fear the schism of the congregation), Minutes (abstract) – Diocesal Committee (Bánffyhunyad, 19 November 1998 – there were doubts regarding the confessional loyalty of the service of János Mihály, he is instructed to give every week a detailed report of his congregational work); Minutes of the extraordinary consistorial meeting from 20 November 1998 on the occasion of the investigation of the diocese council (the header contains a handwritten note: the minutes is biased, lacking 70 percent of the information, doesn't contain every detail of the discussions – also contains lies. Recording!!!!! The text also contains underlined passages, with questionmarks at the ends of lines, for instance: "the consistory itself informed the agents of the diocese about the situation", "27 of the 36 members of the consistory have requested the investigation". "The committee is not here because it wants to hurt anybody", "the majority of the congregation and the consistory condemned the incident.") *Resoultion of the consistory* (bible study groups can be organized only in the church premises: 23 of the elders voted against, 6 voted for, and 2 abstained; family worships can be held only at the request of the family and only by the pastor, the consistory can decide who is abilitated to preach on these worships). Letter to the Pastor's Office of the Kalotaszentkirály-Zentelke Reformef Congregation from the Dean's Office of the Kalotaszeg Diocese, 25 January 1999 (Bible studies of József Zimányi according to the committee are inferior, primitive, undemanding, and therefore forbidden to be used). Another letter dated 27 April 1997 (requesting the pastor to send to the committee of the diocese recordings of his four consecutive sermons, and exempt him from the obligation of the weekly reports). Clarifying report about the evangelization week of Kalotaszentkirály-Zentelke, 26-30 October 1998, Monday to Friday, József Zimányi, pastor, Tiszanagyfalu, 8 December 1998 (Zimányi's detailed report of the evangelization week).

The folder contains documents regarding the Zimányi-case of Magyarlapád (Lopadea Nouă): the letter of Miklós Bódos to the dean and the pastors, 29 February 2000, Extraordinary statement of the consistory of Magyarlapád, 30 November 1999; letter from the bishop to the dean; letter from the bishop to the congregation of Magyarlapád, letter from the diocese of Nagyenyed to the board of the church district, abstract of the minutes of the council of the Diocese of Nagyenyed from 4 November 1999; the decision of the disciplinary committee regarding the Bódis-case; letter to the Board of the Transylvanian Church District, Udvarfalva

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

(Curteni), 3 January 2000, signed by 31 pastors (expressing their solidarity with the pastor who was forced to leave his congregation; reply from the Bishop's Office, 20 January.

The pastor also documented the cases of two of his fellows regarding the awakening and Zimányi: Summons – the Disciplinary Committee of the Transylvanian Reformed District for pastor Kiss Csaba from Balázstelke (Blăjel), 19 June 2002. Minutes: the Disciplinary Committee of the Transylvanian Reformed District, 24 July 2002 in the case of pastor Kiss Csaba; Denouncement: of pastor Csaba Mezei against theology professors Tamás Juhász and Dezső Kállay at the Board of the Transylvanian Reformed District. Reply from the Board for Csaba Mezei; Appeal of pastor Csaba Mezei from Méra (Mera), 18 October 2001, another appeal, 17 December 2001, letter of counselor János Gyenge to Csaba Mezei in the name of the Board of the Transylvanian Reformed District, 7 December 2001.

There is also a statement of the Reformed Church of the Subcarpathian Ukraine about the services of pastor József Zimányi declaring that he board of the church was satisfied with him, they did not declare him persona non grata, and no disciplinary investigation was brought against him – signed by bishop László Horkai. There is also in the folder the resolution of the Board of the Transylvanian Reformed District: "Taking into consideration that as a consequence of the church services of pastor József Zimányi a lot of congregations suffered from division and unrest, the Board declares the services of the pastor undesirable. They remind the pastors of their disciplinary responsibility and advise them to avoid the services of the pastor."

The previous paragraphs show that the board of the local church district was forced to make a clear statement, while the other Hungarian Reformed Church Districts could afford to remain indifferent.

The ambivalent situation of the CE Union requires a separate paragraph because several CE-members joined the side of the supporters of Zimányi, and in certain circles the evangelization of Zimányi was considered to have had CE background. But in fact the Union did not support at all the evangelization methods of the pastor from Hungary, it was therefore necessary to publish a statement in which it gives a few pages long detailed presentation of everything they dissociate themselves from and the causes of it: they did not agree with the method of inviting back the converted in the church, because it emphasizes too much the role of the individual's will in the acceptance of the grace, and that can't be urged by the request of a quick decision, because it creates the danger of deception. On the other hand the Union considered very important every occasion that created the possibility of evangelization and awakening.

The third stage of the debate was the media: "Everything there is, it only appears in the light of publicity, this is the only place where it becomes visible for everyone"- claims the contemporary philosopher Jürgen Habermas.[15] While the previously listed documents were available only for a small group, the situation is changed by the media. The most involved newspaper was the daily Szabadság, but the folder contains also cuttings from the newspapers Krónika, Harangszó, Kis Tükör, and it refers to some documents published in the newspapers Üzenet and Értesítő. There is only one article, which deals exclusively with the situation of Kalotaszentkirály: the three mentioned letters of Márton Okos (to Hungary, to the other church district and for the deans) were published by the Partiumi Közlöny. Most of the newspaper

[15] Habermas 1971. 12.

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

cuttings relate to Magyarlapád and to the phenomenon of the awakening in general. The folder counts 24 such publications, most of them are interviews with the retiring bishop Kálmán Csiha and the newly elected one, Géza Pap, one with Theology professor Tamás Juhász and one with the pastor from Kolozsvár, János Visky, who first met Zimányi and invited him for evangelization for several times. The answers of the bishops may be regarded as the official statements of the Reformed church (Kálmán Csiha: the evangelization of Zimányi is extreme, not Reformed in its methods, dividing, unacceptable – instead of such superficial solutions the local pastors should focus more on the deepening of the faith of their congregation. Géza Pap: every renewal which starts from the inside of the church is to be supported, but destructive efforts coming from the outside should not be tolerated. The answers of Tamás Juhász and János Visky seem to represent the different sides of the members of the congregation: that of those who dislike the renewal movements, and that of those, who were open to experiment new methods for the sake of the spread of the gospel. There is also an interview with Kálmán Adorján, a well-known pastor, president of the CE Union, emphasizing the importance of the awakening – but not with any price. László Varga a pastor who suffered in the years of communism in detention wrote an aggressive article, considering the punishment of the pastor of Magyarlapád too mild (he was transferred to the congregation of Hátszeg, instead of having been forbidden to preach).

The newspaper cuttings from the folder also contain underlined texts, question and exclamation marks which express the approval or disapproval of pastor János Mihály.

Arguments

Through the discourse-analysis of the documents several types of statements related to the object of the discourse can be distinguished, thus forming different fields of opinion. The most used keywords and expressions are: awakening, renewal, conversion, schism, unrest, outrage scandal, confession, tradition, ancient, Hungarian. The connotation of these expressions is not uniform. According to their pro or contra character, the arguments formulated towards the supporters or opponents of the movement are constructed from such elements that appear in two types of statements and two types of confutations.

The support for the renewal movement linked to József Zimányi shapes a defensive while the opposition shapes an offensive discourse. In order of their frequency, the reasons to oppose the movement are the following: it divides the congregation, it ignores the Reformed confessions, the ancient churchly traditions, it does not use Reformed methods, it has a sectarian character, it is not honest, credible, it misleads and confuses people, it provokes unrest and tensions, it is extreme, it is meant for effect, it impels immediate conversion, it uses public repentance, the method of inviting back the converted is harmful, it uses mass psychosis, the tone and terminology of the preaching differ from the usual in the Reformed church, they are scandalous for the people, they despise the institutions and the traditions of the official church, they don't identify themselves with the people who are not converted, it is excessively zealous, pious, they boast about their own conversion.

We would like to emphasize that several pastors and elders who speak against the movement are characterized by the intention of preserving the unity of the minority Hungarian community: they accuse it with the division of the tormented Hungarian community, and they claim that the new religious mentality does not fit in the Hungarian people's spirituality.

The defensive discourse reflected in its arguments about the possibility, which responds to a necessity, the goal of the awakening and the results: a lot of formal church members don't

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

have personal relationship with Christ, the conversion of the majority lead to a radical change in their lives, they broke with their destructive and immoral habits, they became active church members, they participate on church occasion every time they can, but their personal religious practice is also more lively (they lead a praying, Bible-studying life), their spiritual needs grew, they are mindful, confessing Christians.

The two fields of statements also have a common layer, the positions can somehow be approached because on the one hand even the opponents of the Zimányi movement agree that there is a need for awakening, the pastors should lead their followers closer to God, and the formation of new bible study groups that church members attend gladly is to be pursued. On the other hand, the pastors who invited Zimányi in their congregations admit the fact that the method of inviting back the converted may be a bit sharp, it doesn't necessarily lead to conversion, there is need for follow-up care, and they agree that the style of Zimányi's preaching is unusual for Transylvania.

Strategies

The importance of power ambitions in the context of the organization of the discourses is grounded in the circumstance, that public statements often have a stake: the speakers express their need for the legitimate authority over a topic and for the approval, that they are competent in the issue, and that they are representing it legitimately.[16] The most graceful texts from the documents of the inquisition folder are the official statements, which formulate harsh critiques in a sound and diplomatic style. This elegance arises from the superiority of the hierarchical order or of the theological experience, or from the self-assuredness coming from the conviction of personal vocation.

We can also note that if somebody is on a lower level of the hierarchical chain, and if his/her possibilities and means to change the way things work are limited, his/her style is unexpected, daring, outspoken (like the style of those church members or elders, who wrote letters of complaint for the local newspapers), as if the style was a compensation for their lack of means. When they connect to the public discourse, the speakers may achieve some symbolic advantages, according to how much conviction their arguments and style carry. These kind of symbolic advantages are those possessed by the persons who are asked by the press to give statements in the topic, and those who are personally involved in the events. A press statement can be therefore a part of strategy, but not just an attempt to achieve symbolic advantages, but also because it trusts in the public opinion-shaping powers of the media.

We may also find strategic steps behind the investigations of the official church, which in their documentation show on one hand a willingness of the leaders for dialogue, but on other hand show the fact that the power is in their hands, they have the last word in the debate. The pastors have also their own strategies to secure recognition for the evangelization of Zimányi, in order to be able to see in other congregations too the positive results they have witnessed during the evangelization with the Zimányi-method.

Conclusions

The inquisition-folder is a collection of documents of a personally involved pastor regarding a highly disputed and much debated issue. His involvement is not based on his own pragmatic interest, but rather on his spiritual and emotional implication for the cause of the

[16] Foucault 1998. 50-74.

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)

awakening. It is understandable that he collected documents about the fellow pastors in the same situation and that the documents bear several remarks and notes he made regarding their content. As for the authors of these documents, their fields of interest, arguments and strategies are a natural mixture of their will to maintain the status quo of their church, their benevolence towards the evangelization or their hope to see the results in other congregations.

Bibliography

DIÓSI Dávid: *Egyház és posztmodern. Korunk vallásossága és esztetizáló hajlama.* Budapest Kolozsvár, 2012. 36–38.

HABERMAS, Jürgen: *A társadalmi nyilvánosság szerkezetváltozása.* Gondolat, Budapest, 1971

KISS Dénes: *A CE Szövetség és a református egyház.* Erdélyi Társadalom I. 2. 2003, 55–66.

ONG, Walter J.: *A szöveg mint interpretáció: Márk idején és azóta.* In: Nyíri Kristóf – Szécsi Gábor (szerk.): Szóbeliség és írásbeliség: A kommunikációs technológiák története Homérosztól Heideggerig. Budapest, 1998, 146–166.

STOKES Jane: *Kulturális és médiaszövegek elemzése. A média- és kultúrakutatás gyakorlata.* Budapest – Pécs, 2008, 66– 109.

KESZEG Vilmos: *Alfabetizáció, írásszokások, populáris írásbeliség.* Egyetemi jegyzet. Kolozsvár, 2008

FOUCAULT, Michel: *A diskurzus rendje.* In: Foucault, Michel: A fantasztikus könyvtár. Budapest, 1998, 50-74.

ASSMANN, Jan: *A kulturális emlékezet. Írás, emlékezés és politikai identitás a korai magaskultúrákban.* Atlantisz Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1999

FEJŐS Zoltán: Tárgyak az időben. In. Uő: Tárgyfordítások. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2003, 83-92

TENGELYI László: Élettörténet és sorsesemény. Atlantisz Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1998

LYON, David: Religion and the Postmodern: Old Problems, New Problems. In: Flanagen, Kieren (szerk): Postmodernity, Sociology and Religion, Hampshire, 1999, p. 23.

TOMKA Miklós: *Egyház és vallásosság a mai Magyarországon.* Budapest, 1994

BDD-A22390 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:58:51 UTC)