

STUDY OF THE WORK OF THE HUNGARIAN BAPTIST AID

**WITH A SPECIAL STRESS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY AND EVANGELISM**

ERZSÉBET NAGY-AJTAI

“I declare that *Study of the work of the Hungarian Baptist Aid – With a Special Stress on the Relationship between the Social Responsibility and Evangelism* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.”

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RESPONSIBILITY AND EVANGELISM

BY
ERZSÉBET NAGY-AJTAI

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JOINT SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR DR ANDREW KIRK

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- ii. By E. Nagy-Ajtai
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- v. Supervisor: Dr. Nico A. Botha
- vi. Joint supervisor: Dr. J. Andrew Kirk
- vii. Summary: In this study we studied how holistic mission should be accomplished. May we speak about social and evangelical mandates? This search is done through the examination of a Christian relief organisation, the Hungarian Baptist Aid. Our main research question was: Is the work of this service holistic?

Although we concluded in the light of David Bosch's mission interpretation that their mission is not yet holistic, the model of Hungarian Baptist Aid is encouraging how we could multiply our resources that are placed in God's hand. How we can see a commission that seemed impossible can become possible, and how we can find our way in God's mission.
- viii. Key terms: aid, development, donation, evangelism, holistic mission, international mission organisation, motivation, social responsibility, teamwork.

Preface

I grew up in a Christian family. I have seen my parents donate to the needy. I was impressed by their social public-spiritedness. I read missionary reports about holistic missions in poor countries. I admired missionaries like Patricia St. John and Isobel Kuhn who lived among the poor offering their life to evangelism and social help. It developed in me that I could not walk away from homeless or drunken people. I joined a service helping the homeless during my time in college. We went out to do bible study, discussions, share food and sing together. We became acquainted with them, their values and stories, and realized some reasons why they became homeless. We began to know them on a deeper level.

When I started mission studies one of the topics that interested me most was the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility. Often it would be easier to just give money or food without any concern about their soul and problems. It is really hard to help a homeless people to come out of their difficult situation. Holistic mission requires lots of energy. The Gospel is not always welcome. They need lots of care and the return is not guaranteed.

I have had a personal interest in the experiences of other peoples and churches. What, why and how do they think and act? What kind of struggles do they have? I like to know the official standpoint of different denominations. All of my papers were written on this topic at UNISA. It is good to know the present theological standpoints in relation to the practice. However, theological studies often neglect the practical areas. I think theology is useful if it materializes in the everyday. The study of the theory and practice of Hungarian Baptist Aid was hence attractive for me. For me personally, Sándor Szenczy, the leader of HBA, gave the main message during this study. Everybody should realize what is his or her way and he or she should go on that. “You are responsible for what you have seen.”¹

¹ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

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List of Abbreviation

BWA	Baptist World Aid
EBF	European Baptist Federation
ECHO	European Committee Humanitarian Office
HAND	Hungarian Association NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid
HBA	Hungarian Baptist Aid

Introduction

“...merely with material essentials situation of the people living in the most troublesome and distressed conditions cannot be ameliorated: we could not accomplish anything without the power of the Spirit.”

(M. Lengyel László)²

The relationship of social responsibility and evangelism in the activities of churches and mission agencies is one of the most discussed fields of Christian theology in the last decades. One cause of this is the polarization, which stands out increasingly in the world economic situation. The problems, which are raised by this fact call for urgent solutions. Other causes are wars and disaster situations. There is a very challenging question: “what can Christians do in this situation?” From the previous essays³ it is clear that Christians may avoid neither social responsibility nor evangelism. The questions remain, “How can they manage it? What possibilities are available? What new way should be implemented?”

In the course of the present research I discovered biting criticism of the western attitude, however, I have also found projects working towards reform of this mentality. Humanity should face the threatening reality and try to find solutions for the problems. No Christian may get away from this challenge. Now we will explore what the present situation is, as well as ascertain how we arrived at this point. What comprehensive change is necessary? What can we do as Christians? General answers will be sought in the first chapter. A concrete model of solving this social problem on a Christian way will be discussed in the dissertation. Before this, we will study the topic of relief and development in order to complete the theological and social foundation of the research of the concrete model. What is the role of development and

² My translation

³ The theology of different denominations and a movement was studied in the first one. There it was ascertained that we can understand the standpoint of the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, and the Evangelical Movement according to the Lausanne, Orthodox and Vatican II documents. In the second paper the actuality of the Kingdom of God was discussed in connection with the Christian mission.

aid in the service of a Christian mission? Another purpose is to present the structure, methods and sources of the dissertation.

Much work is done in this topic. This present survey is relevant because this area of mission is not sufficiently crystallized in Hungary. The Church should find new ways to carry out mission in Hungary. We can gain new understanding through this research.

The dissertation will be built upon the survey of the service of the Hungarian Baptist Aid⁴ mainly from the point of view of the relation between social responsibility and evangelism in their mission. The Hungarian Baptist Aid is a Christian relief organization. Its research provides a good opportunity to make a study in this topic. HBA is one of the most significant Hungarian relief agencies present. Their service is national and international. They are in cooperation with the Hungarian government. In the course of their work they are one of the Hungarian relief agencies which does mostly relief projects, and also collaborates in development projects. Their actions are followed by significant media attention. They react quickly in dangerous situations. Their co-workers are present in the lines of danger and in disaster and war areas. They have even more relief projects. For example, they look for titular adopters who will contribute monthly to the cost of meals or the education of an orphan or poor child. This work is supported not just by Christians but also by non-Christian Hungarians. They can nicely recognise the world in which they are operating. They can react well to the challenges.

Whereas they operate as a Christian relief organization, the question arises: “What is their philosophy and theology?” This is a seldom-discussed area of their service. It is important to examine the background of this effective organization. How do they determine their motivations and how do they build up their theology of service? What is the role of evangelism in their service and with what stress? How much are they part of an extensive project? What is their work? What is their ultimate goal? How do they understand their calling? What is affected by their service? Are they in relationship with development? These questions will be discussed in the dissertation.

In the first chapter, the relation between development and mission, and Christian relief will be explored; method, sources and structure will be introduced. The service of the Hungarian Baptist Aid will be discussed from chapter 2 to chapter 5. The understanding of relief and development will mainly be developed according to the interpretation of David Bosch, Wayne

⁴ Hereinafter: HBA.

G. Bragg, David C. Korten, Pikó Bettina, Peter C. Wagner and Samuel Wilson. The works of Alan Neely and Irving Seidman were used as a guideline during the methodological planning. We have gotten information about HBA from the collection edited by Zágoni Jenő.

The result of the present research can help reflect upon the work of HBA. Their service can be observed from a new light. In addition to the staff of the HBA, others can gain a fresh touch and encouragement to mission. An overview of the components of efficient mission can be useful for the churches.

Chapter 1

I.1 Development and relief

The term “development” began to be used in a contemporary sense after World War II. (Smith 1989:23f) Western politicians proposed to restore and develop those regions and countries that were hitherto underdeveloped. The professed purpose was the lifting up of poor people. “The concept which gave expression to the contemporary challenge was development. Governments of the First and the Second Worlds were going to contribute to the solution of the problem of Third-World poverty by pouring their resources into ambitious development projects. Hurriedly, Western churches and mission agencies got onto the bandwagon as well.” (Bosch 1991:433)

It became more and more evident that the plans went awry. The poor became poorer and the rich became richer. Development, in its general meaning, did not live up to expectations. The goal – the elimination of poverty – could be reached by other ways. Development was useful, but only for a few people. The profit remained at the level of the elite. Possibly the GDP grew but it affected only a small percent of inhabitants. (Wilson 1989:149) Modern age slavery came into existence, that is, a sort of new colonialism. “In spite of billions of dollars of development aid, the socio-economic situation in many Third-World countries was getting more desperate by the day.” (Bosch 1991:434)

The plan came up against numerous hindrances. The western consumer mindset and system cannot be sustained in the whole world. Perhaps a key would be to reduce consumerism, and redistribute the goods. For this, humility and unselfishness is necessary. From a Christian viewpoint, this would resemble a state similar to the Kingdom of God. Wealthy people would not oppress their poor fellows; the distribution would be far more equitable. Not only would physical needs be in the centre, but also the spiritual ones would be given favoured attention.

One of the problems of development was the financial dependency of the receiver on the West. Previously, at the beginning of the development project, warning was given about this danger. In 1945, Senator Robert Taft pointed insightfully to the risk of foreign relief based on

big monetary cash flow. He advanced the idea that Americans overrated the value of American money and relief for other nations. Nobody may transform another person. Every nation should solve its own problems. A nation, which rests in dependency upon donations and loans coming from others, probably would lose the opportunity of doing the arrangements necessary for its redemption. (Korten 1996:206)

Another problem is that Westerners try to form the culture of other nations according to the model of their own. In the course of development, the development workers spread their culture and mentality. These are often contrary with the attitude of that place. “Our Anglo-American tendency is to equate material prosperity with happiness and well-being. One negative effect of multinational corporations is their penchant to project Anglo-American material values as ‘the good life’.” (Wagner 1989:124) And in general they lay less stress to relationships than people from the third world. In many cases, economic growth damaged the societies built around relationships.⁵ However, it is true that the state of the women and children was attended to in these societies before development also.

The goal of development may not determine the transformation of the receiving nation’s culture. If it happens otherwise, a non-suitable lifestyle or work rhythm could cause the ruin of those societies. “Latin Americans contrast their lifestyle with that of North Americans: ‘North Americans live to work; we work to live’.” Wagner is quite sure that not always is the best goal of Christian social service simply handing out material goods, except for in an emergency. (1989:125) Local people should find the solution. A program coming from outside in many cases does not take into account the local social facilities and demands. Because of that, it is often more harmful than useful. National and international wills conflict during the development projects. (Bragg 1989:57)

Western society can bring illness to other ones. Bragg criticizes: “Development is more than meeting economic needs. Humans are multidimensional with physical as well as psychological needs: dignity, self-esteem, freedom, and participation. To reduce people to only producers-consumers is to assume a basic materialism as the goal of life. Capitalistic materialism is still materialism, and in some ways no better than the dialectical materialism-socialism. Obviously, meeting material human needs is necessary, but it is certainly not sufficient for human self – realization, as indicated by Maslow’s “hierarchy of needs” (1954). A society that produces neurotics, latchkey kids, runaway teenagers, child-abuse, wife-beating, a large prison population, abortions, high suicide rates, and other social maladies just

⁵ This is similar to the case in Europe after the Industrial Revolution.

to remain economically strong is not a model of development. In fact, many poor societies manifest social and cultural features that are certainly more “developed” than the rich, industrial societies such as sharing, caring for the weak, protecting the land, and other traditional values.” (Bragg 1989:56f)

Bragg sees the roots of the problem in secularisation, which destroyed the holistic and unified view of reality, which characterizes the traditional societies. “By divorcing the physical world from the spiritual, modern science has made it possible to conquer nature and subject it to the dictates of human manipulation through high technology. There is nothing held sacred in such an anthropocentric world.” (58)

It is obvious that the problem of international relief and development cannot be solved simply. Sándor Szenczy the leader of HBA realized a new paradigm being formed: the receivers do not demand effective help and presence from the donors. They want to use the goods they have gotten according their own consideration.⁶ The aid organisations should take this mentality into account at the creation of they plan of working.

In this dissertation we will not end our methods by discussing the problems of the different societies. From a Christian view we interpret human life as holistic where the physical world is not separated from the spiritual. This will be examined in the work of HBA. From the above discussion it appears that development may not orient itself just toward the production of physical prosperity, and may not be equal with the extension of the western culture.

Consequences of Globalisation

Globalisation has expanded the western culture worldwide. Among other characteristics, it can be said that this culture evolved around consumerism, which represents an awareness of life. (Pikó 2003:17) In view of its socio-psychological impact, this process may not be ignored. It is as though everything could be handled with consumerism. This would be not according to inner needs but based on external expectations. Materialism became a reality, and as such, an ideology which controls our lifestyle nearly exclusively. That became the social standard. (Pikó 2003:39)

Similarly Bragg, David Korten pointed out the price which has to be paid for the globalisation of the economy. Abnormal societies are created, and in turn, produce diseased

⁶ Interview with Szenczy in October 2005

behaviour: violence, suicide, drug abuse, avidity and environmental destruction. He attributed this social amortization also to the break up of the holistic unit. He indicated that in a community, which is built up along the value of globalisation, damaged communal affections are exhibited. Such a society cannot give confidence, love or a common meaning to life. There is a triple crisis: “deepening poverty, ravage of the environment and the disorganization of society which are all the manifestation of this dysfunction.” (Korten 1996:318 – my translation) Western humanistic individualism also causes much damage.

It is very good to study this (self) critique of the western attitude. Many things are unveiled, which are experienced and understood as a given situation by people living in that society. Thus, warning should be taken into consideration. Sweeping change is imperative. Resources are finite. Christians feel also that the world is going in a wrong direction. Catastrophes will happen if an alteration does not change both this lifestyle and service.

Korten advocates e.g. that local farms should not be united so the farmers would not become dependent. The possibility should be left for everybody to work for a living on one’s own soil independently. One’s superiors should not skim off the top so that the worker has nothing left.

Whereas we live in a common world, our fate is common, also. A global consciousness should be built. (Korten 1996:326) Neither the earth nor each other should be exploited. A good quality of life should be established, which is in balance with nature. (328) A concentration only on humanity is dangerous. Nature should be taken into consideration. Christian responsibility is to care for nature. Our understanding is limited by our dangerous anthropocentrism. (Bragg 1989:59)

The effect of modernization is that people are displaced from the countryside into the cities, which leads to their rootless state. Social problems multiply. “This is the social and economic cost of articulation into the international, capital-market system rather than developing an internal, decentralized, rural-based system that will keep people in the countryside.” (Bragg 1989:57) Researchers of development hold important the concept that people can find subsistence in their own milieu.

One of the most important elements of this lifestyle is the family, along with the provider communities. It is important for a person “to belong to somewhere and to co-operate” (Korten 1996:338 – my translation). Caring for families and communities is a good means of Christian service. (Wilson 1989:145f)

In place of exploitation one should make an effort to live in balance with nature. As a consequence of development, which has affected the whole world through modernisation, the environment has suffered badly. In many cases conservation principles were set-aside in the struggle for monetary profit.

David Korten asserts that it is necessary to roll back the exaggerated consumerism. (1996:340) On the one hand it requires the discretion and selflessness of the well-off people. The occasionally offerings are not sufficient. Then again the western economic system is built up on ever-expanding acquisition of goods and services, which exploits the non-western people. Economists should rebuild this system. We can see this idea as a very utopian one at present but one day maybe this can be materialized.

Relationship between development and mission agencies

“Christianity is not only a supernatural, spiritual force, it is a social force for change. By its very nature, vital Christianity is an active social change agent.” (Wilson 1989:145)

As is clear from my previous research papers, the church has social commitments. But over and above that Christian service should care for the whole person. “Two important emphases helped swing evangelical missiologists back toward recognizing that mission included more than winning souls to Christ. One was the recognition of the biblical emphasis on the kingdom of God in the here and now. The other was taking seriously the Cultural Mandate.” (Wagner 1989:118) In considering the above, we realize that the necessities should be addressed and answered. “Ultimately, after gazing in the mirror and staring through the window, the church will have to move to the door and out into the world.” (Meiring 1990:257)

The vision of a normally operating world is drafted by Korten and resembles the features of the Kingdom of God. There people live so magnanimously, being both concerned for each other and the environment as well. In addition, it can be asserted that the restored relationship with God gives force to this transformation. The Kingdom age started with the service of Jesus. The signs of the Kingdom are observable. Christianity has affected much social transformation throughout history. Unfortunately the Kingdom is not fulfilled in the whole world yet, but we are on the way toward this⁷. Because we have not reached that, we cannot

⁷ The location of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God is discussed among the theologians. The fulfilment will happen under the rule of Christ. The question remains whether it will happen in this present world or in the new

surrender, but must live for the sake of the Kingdom. This is the purpose of Christian service this is the will of God. People should become aware, and give up their selfishness. "... the more and more people submit themselves to the reign of the King, the wider blessings of the kingdom of God will be more evident here and now." (Wagner 1989:118) It is clear that the oppressive, dehumanizing forces, which act in the world are emanating from Satan. The church cannot validate them. The Kingdom of God humanizes, liberates and enriches man. The people of the Kingdom can start to live according Christ's new kingdom and recognize that it will be fulfilled completely in the future. (Wagner 1989:119)

Wagner defines social service as a kind of social ministry "geared to meet the needs of individuals and groups of persons in a direct and immediate way." (Wagner 1989:122) The worker of a social service acts in famine by giving food. Or if an earthquake or tidal wave devastates an area they provide food, clothing, blankets, and medical supplies; they give help to rebuild homes, schools, and churches. In the case of an agricultural crisis social service will introduce new crops, livestock, and farming methods. "Within social service there is a further technical distinction of terms that has been fairly well accepted: relief and development. Relief treats the symptoms. It comes after the fact. Development treats the causes. Development would include establishing medical and dental clinics and training local people how to staff them, digging wells where the water supply is inadequate, setting up cottage industries, or providing short-handled hoes in Niger. Both relief and development are social service." (Wagner 1989:122)

Once we comprehend these statements, we can distinguish between the different understandings of development. Development, by its general definition and description above, was a failure. But notice should be taken of another understanding in the evangelical movement. Elliston edited a book about Christian Relief and Development with a view of developing workers for effective ministry. In this understanding, development has a positive meaning. Some aspects of this will be discussed hereafter.

"Generally, development is the struggle of a given social segment to transform itself toward improved life quality and participation for an enlarging percentage of its members." (Wilson 1989:153) Assistance, coming from outside, helps these efforts. Wilson states that, "Development as a dynamic relates to the total social system. Its elements involve at the very

heaven and new earth. The eschatological questions are at the forefront of in the thinking of HBA so we will discuss this further on.

least, technological innovation, economic structures, and political system. These combine in their effects to launch growth in productivity.” (Wilson 1989:149)

Development includes both the area of production and distribution. Wilson advises that a social transformationist should seek and work with local leaders. “Through these leaders, the development worker will be able to sense and express the inarticulate longings of social sectors which do not participate fully in the goods and rewards available in a social and economic system. Rarely will it be possible for someone from outside the group to be trusted by and speak for them.” (1989:154)

Christian duty includes giving aid in danger and in cases of disaster. Development methods are seen in a positive light when done in such a way as to demonstrate co-operation with local people in their given situation. This is in direct contrast with methods that are oppressive and come from the outside.

I.2 Methods of the dissertation

In the previous essays the relationship between social responsibility and evangelism was studied in reflection to mission. In both papers, the understanding of more denominational or theological lines was examined. In the first one we discovered principled positions on the basis of published documents. Our study questions were: How do the different churches define mission? How can mission be done in a right way? What should not be left out? Is it only allowed to either evangelize or to carry out social care?

Mission is a Christian duty and one must reach an understanding of how this duty can be managed in a right, successful way. This question is extensively discussed. Although different aspects can be determined, mission work is in fact, holistic. The different areas are not separable and cannot be totally independent of one another. Love of one’s neighbour, which is grounded in mission, has to be holistic. Christian experience is the salvation which touches every area of human life.

The church should obey the commitment in the given situations, eventualities, circumstances, and according to the necessities. It has to give relevant answers to the challenges both of the present and coming ages. It cannot be said to be never changing, or adhering to obligatory methods, or classifications. Rather specific analysis and decisions are required in many situations.

God wants all mankind to be saved. Christians need to become worthy of being listened to by non-Christians. Showing Christian love to one's neighbour can often attain this. It is necessary both to verbally proclaim the Gospel, as well as to present Christian love by deeds.

The church's task is to present the signs of the kingdom. The expectation of the coming of the Kingdom and the opportunity of its fulfilment has given hope for multitudes of oppressed people during the past millennia. Our Christian duty and responsibility is to serve the fulfilment of this Kingdom, and to pray for its coming. From the two essays, it became evident, that the church's destiny deals equally with the whole human being along with his spiritual and physical needs.

Participation in relief and development work can be a good way to show Christian love toward our neighbours. The question is how could or should this social activity be composed with the proclamation of the Gospel.

In this paper we will be concerned to stress the social aspect. The topic of the dissertation will therefore be an examination of a Christian relief organization. After this foundational chapter, we will discuss how the Hungarian Baptist Aid sees and carries out its role in God's mission.

The hypothesis of the dissertation is: In the theology and practice of the HBA, the understanding of the relationship between social responsibility and evangelism is clearly discernable. It can be predicted that the work of the Hungarian Baptist Aid can be attached to development. A precursory expectation is that the HBA makes an effort to carry out a balanced, holistic work; the ultimate end of its mission is to move forward in both the physical and spiritual life, and the salvation of people.

The modus of the working-out of the dissertation will be presented in the sub points of this chapter. The dissertation will discuss a concrete model in the Christian mission from which a lesson can be drawn. First we will see that in what ways we could talk about a case study in the course of studying this agency. The main tool for making a survey will be the interview. The conception touching the interview research will be discussed after that.

Case Study

In the previous essays the Christian's participation in God's mission was studied. Their tasks were in focus in relation to social action and evangelism. This happened mainly on the

theoretical level. Interpretations were outlined around a holistic approach. It is obvious that theoretical declarations are useful just in the case if they are transplanted into practice.

The present dissertation seeks to examine and analyse how a theoretical Christian standpoint is fulfilled in the service of a Christian aid agency? This was grounded by a Christian church and its mission declaration, phrased as follows in a prayer form: “Dreams. Help us achieve them: food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, medicines to the sick, survival to the disaster victim and revival to the countries”⁸. We try to find common principles, which are useful in general, too.

The dissertation will be a Case Study approach. This will be in some points different to the classical one discussed by Alan Neely. The present adaptation is the following. According to Neely, the description of a case should raise a problem which should be solved. The studied work did not understand a case in a closed, solved form. The end of the story remained open. We do not know how the people decided to act in the questioned case. The explorer should reach his or her own verdict: What would he or she decide in the given situation? What should he or she do?

In the case of the Hungarian Baptist Aid we cannot talk about specifically open questions. Of course they do not have all the answers and solutions to every challenge, but upon their examination, the main concrete decisions and solutions will be at issue. At present it means that the practice of HBA will be analysed and collated with different expectations and standpoints evaluated.

Research proposal

The dissertation is completed mainly with descriptive but also critical stresses. The historical and introductory part will compose the descriptive one, the part about the philosophy and theology of service the critical part. The goal of the dissertation is to present the surveyed field and thereafter evaluate that in the light of the knowledge of the previous three papers. How does it adapt oneself and relate to present major Christian theological standpoints?

The HBA will be the focus. As was mentioned in the introduction, their social activity is very remarkable. They are a fast progressive organization. It was founded in 1995 and already

⁸ Neighbour – The Newsletter of Hungarian Baptist Aid – October 2002:12

today we can speak about a large international relief agency, which is present in Europe, Africa and Asia or in the USA. Important and interesting are the philosophy and motives behind this work.

First the structure of this organization, the stages of its growth, and motivations will be introduced.

For a Missiology student it is relevant to search the work of one of the most important Hungarian Christian relief organizations. A Church with an evangelical background grounded HBA. How does this appear in its theology? And not least this organisation is interesting as a workplace. It is a diverse field, which requires calling. Who works here? How do they understand this work?

One can hear much about them and their service in Hungary. In many cases this is the grapevine. It is challenging to see the reality. How do the staff members, who are insiders, live out and see these cases?

The goal is to introduce a well operating organization whose history and service could be instructive and motivating for others. They were open and collaborated in this search.

At this time just one dissertation with academic character has already been written about the HBA but it is not theological and is therefore not as helpful to our work.

Hopefully the research and its results will not satisfy just personal interest or only fulfil the educational obligation, but it will also be useful for the HBA itself. In the course of the interviews they could retrace and systematize their ideas about their work, calling, theology on the grounds of new points of view. Perhaps the question could make real their knowledge in some terms.

Some parts of their work are connected to personal or state secrets. These are managed confidentially in this paper so their discussion will be done with great care.

Hopefully the present dissertation will give a good and encouraging model for Christians. There is an unconcealed purpose to realize such principles that can be helpful for the service of others.

I.3 Sources of the dissertation

In this part the sources will be introduced on which the dissertation will be grounded. In the first part of the search the written sources will be surveyed.

According to my present knowledge, and aside from a dissertation, there is no other completed academic study about the work of the HBA. Many articles have appeared in different newspapers and on the Internet also. Two collections were completed from these writings. The first was edited by Mihály Almási (2001) the second was the last part of a book about the mission and relief work of the Hungarian Baptist Church (Zágoni 2004). The “Felebarát”⁹ is the newsletter of HBA in which reports can be found about the materializing of the action, but not systematized theoretical essays.

It would be insufficient to rely only on these articles while taking into consideration the purposes of this dissertation. Accordingly, it is essential to conduct interviews and fieldwork to become familiar with the standpoint and work of the HBA. These interviews are our oral sources.

Written sources: Academic writings were looked for, such as theological journals and books relating to the present topic. There was no article or book about the HBA but there exists some relating to the evaluation or analysis. E.g. Almási Mihály: *Ő a feje az egyháznak*¹⁰; Bosch, David J.: *Transforming mission*; Petersen, Jim: *Evangelism as a Lifestyle*; Wagner, Peter C.: *A Missiological View of Christian Relief and Development*.

In addition, information was obtained from the webpage of the Hungarian Baptist Aid. Very useful sources were the articles published in different collections and magazine.

Oral sources: In light of the deficient written sources the interviews had an important role. They were done with the leadership and staff members of HBA. Among others Mihály Almási, the former vice-president of HBA, and professor of the Hungarian Baptist Theological Academy, was interviewed in reflection of the theology of HBA. The way of managing interview research will be discussed below.

The result of searching these sources will be introduced in a comparative way.

⁹ English version appears under the title ‘Neighbour’.

¹⁰ In english: *He is the head of the Church*

Interview

In the following the plan of the interview research will be presented, showing how the particular interviews will come one after the other.

The underlying interview: The purpose is to get as wide a view as possible. The process has begun with a general interview with Debreceni István, the media reporter of HBA.

The object of the first interview was to lead the interviewee to tell the most about the organization in general. Then he focused on the special interest from the beginning up to the present time. The survey then has a background from this interview. The purpose was to collect material about the building up of the structure. We have a drafted a historical overview, an organizational chart of Hungarian Baptist Aid, and it has touched some principles according to which they operate. The next interviewees were more focused.

This interview was accompanied by a quick overview of published articles.

The second line of interviews: The purpose was to get to know the exact history, the main principles, the theological thinking, the work orders, their partnerships and the different departments.

Interviews were made according to the list as follows:

Révész Szilvia July 2005

Révész Lajos July 2005

Gál Dávid July 2005

The third lines of the interviews: The purpose was to clarify the questions that surfaced at the second lines of interviews and to burrow as deeply as possible. We discoursed mainly about theological standpoints and the understanding of mission. After systematizing the objects of the second line interviews, matters were singled out belonging to the dissertation theme. Interviewees were then asked to thrash out the main outcomes. An interview was made with Professor Mihály Almási about the fulfilment of holistic mission in the work of HBA and another with Sándor Szenczy, the director of HBA. This third line of interviews was successful because the previous lines managed to give a good ground to the further search.

It was important to delineate each purpose with the interviewees to be able to get the best result. An open and deep interrogation can be fulfilled best in such a structure, in which both the participant and the interviewer centre to the given purpose of each interview.

It should keep in view not just the interest in relation to the object of the interview, but confirm that the interest relates to the intention of getting real knowledge and understanding. We should be open and objective enough to be able not to just confirm one's own experiences and expectations. In that case the questions could be true to the core for which the answers were not given by the interviewer beforehand.

I.4 Structure of the dissertation

The structure of the dissertation will be presented in this part. The subject of each chapter will be introduced and blocked out.

Chapter I – Paper 3 – The first part of the dissertation will consist of the third paper.

Chapter II – The second part will be devoted to presenting the Hungarian Baptist Aid.

II. 1 Historical introduction – This includes the coming into existence of the HBA. The person who has set up the Aid, justification of the procreation of the HBA will be described.

The main stages of the growth of the HBA up to the present day will be given.

Introduction of the staff teams will be made. The principles of the working, introduction of the regulations will also be outlined.

II. 2 Systematic introduction of the special areas of the service of HBA – These include the national and the international sections.

II. 3 Membership at different organizations – HBA belongs to different Hungarian and European organizations, which assemble relief organizations. ECHO, HAND... The HBA is member of more than one of these. What is its function in these organizations? What do they stand for in their Christian background?

II. 4 Relation with the international organization of the HBA – Introduction of the partners of the Hungarian Baptist Aid will be included here and its relationship with the Baptist World Aid. The areas of their collaboration will be discussed. Their theological standpoints, examination and interpretation of the conformities and diversities will be mentioned.

Chapter III – *The introduction of its self-understanding and philosophy of service.* What was their philosophy of service at the beginning? How has this changed in the course of

time? It will be examined with emphasis on the mission determination of the HBA. It is unambiguous that they see their commission sourcing from God. They understand their work as being sent in his (God's) service; (Almási 2001:8, 11) detailed a search of this.

Main purposes will be examined, including their relation to people in other religions during their international and teamwork.

Their secondary service: reflection to the Hungarian Baptist Church.

Chapter IV – *The role of relief and development in their service.* Principles on the grounds they are working. What sources do they have? What is the ultimate end of relief and development programs?

Chapter V – *The question of the social and evangelism relation.* Which is stressed and why? In which direction do they plan to advance in relation to evangelism and social responsibility, and why?

Main purposes will be examined including their explanation on social work. Do they understand social action as preparation of the way for evangelism?

Introduction of concrete cases, in which decision on different stresses can be observed, can be analysed according to their theology. Examination of the reasons of the stresses, can give the background of the emphases. Why have they decided on the given way? After analyzing the answers, collation of the results with other theological standpoints will be done.

Can the work of the Hungarian Baptist Aid be called holistic?

Conclusions

Chapter II – Presentation of Hungarian Baptist Aid

This chapter will be devoted to presenting Hungarian Baptist Aid by its history, system and membership by different relief organizations.

II. 1 Historical introduction of the Hungarian Baptist Aid

The main stages of the growth of HBA up to the present day will be given. The development of the first five years can be well observed from the chronological series of articles edited by Almási. The events of the last five years are outlined mainly from the interviews. The historical summary leans both on the data sourced from the articles and interviews. The list of interviews is given at the end of the dissertation.

HBA has no written history. From the time of their role in Kosovo in 2000, the press has followed their work with attention. Lot of articles, films and tapes are available. Mihály Almási expressed his hope that somebody will write the history of the HBA because the workers of the organisation do not have any time for this. They are making history now by the grace of God. Their mission is unique among the Hungarian Baptists. (Almási 2001:8)

Deeds of faith are the action of the HBA, which has grown in the last ten years to be one of the largest relief agencies in Hungary. God leads their work. Sándor Szenczy is a prophetic person. When he realizes the next step as that which is in the plan of God, he leads the work of the organization in that direction. He has a good sense and heart to manage HBA toward new areas and with this toward the possibility to develop.

David Gál, who was present at the beginning, sees the history of HBA as follows. He sees the development in different steps. The steps were always programs. The HBA started in 1995 as a service of the Baptist Church of Velence in Hungary¹¹. Initially, it had one worker, the founder Sándor Szenczy¹² and then they added two workers without any salary. At this time

¹¹ The Hungarian Baptist Church grounded HBA but the Church of Velence did the effective work.

¹² The pastor of the Baptist Church of Velence at that time.

it was not visible how big the organization would grow. David joined HBA in 1996. They distributed food relief in Albania, which was the place of the Balkan war. They had social programs in the area of Budapest and Velence, mainly helping the needy. As the different possibilities opened, donations arrived and relief programs were developed. The organisation as a whole grew with these opportunities.

The service grew significantly in 1999-2000 when the work started in Kosovo. In fact this was the first big step and action, which lasted for two years. With this work, HBA felt ready and became able to work internationally. This was the first time in which they could work abroad with a larger team. There was a possibility to widen the number of workers to 15-20. The European Baptist Federation sponsored this program. A Baptist centre was built in Pristine and several relief programs began.

Next a difficult time came without enough sponsors. For eight months, there was nothing. No jobs and no money to pay the staff. Then they got a next big opportunity. They carried out a relief program for gypsies who were, or could have been, victims of the Gypsy Holocaust. They visited 30 000 gypsy families throughout Hungary giving them aid packages and filling out questionnaires with them. These one and a half or two years were the next step, which helped them to become able to work nationwide. This program ended toward the middle of 2003.

One of the other growth steps was the “Adopt a Child” program. It started in 2001 with 200 children supported in Cambodia. The next places receiving support were Malawi and Transylvania, according to the wish of the donors. After the earthquake in Bam, Iran, in 2003, they were able to manage big programs with 1800 donors. After the tsunami in Sri Lanka in 2004, the number of donors rose to 15,000.

The wife of the pastor of the Baptist Church in Velence, Szilvia Révész spoke about her work in relation to of the history of HBA also. The couple started their pastoral work in Velence in 1999.¹³ Their participation started in the relief service during the Balkan war. They visited the family Szenczy in Pristina¹⁴, and gave aid in that Muslim area. She felt how important is to show the love of Christ to them. They lived there for three or four months. After returning to Hungary, she shared her experiences with the media.

¹³ From that time Sándor Szenczy acted as a co-pastor.

¹⁴ By this time the family Szenczy dwelt in mission for some months in Kosovo.

In 2001, they transported medical relief to Mongolia twice. The organization grew, and Szilvia Révész helped in more and more ways. She edited the “Neighbour”, the newsletter of HBA. A significant area was born at that time, the “Adopt a child” project, through which Hungarian adopters help orphans monthly in many countries. At the beginning there were 20-30 adopters, and today they number over 12,000.

Lajos Révész, the pastor of the Baptist Church in Velence was a friend of Szenczy Sándor at the theological college. Their theological thinking was very similar. After finishing college, both started pastoral work in different places. Up to the year of 1999, the HBA grew so much that Sándor Szenczy, the former pastor in Velence and the director of HBA, could not manage both relief and church services. Then Lajos Révész started to work with him. He gave a spiritual background to the HBA together with the church, which was indispensable because HBA does not want to give just physical help for the needy.

In the past 10 years they worked in 16 countries, and in 7 war zones. They were responsible for more than 30 refugee camps. They participated in the rescue at 19 floods, earthquakes or disasters.

In the following we get a chronological summary about the main steps:

1995 Founding HBA – smaller national and international aid programs

1996 Relief to Albania

1999-2000 Kosovo

2001-2003 Roma project in Hungary

2001- Adopt a child project

2003 Iran earthquake

2004 Tsunami relief

2005 USA Hurricane relief and relief at the earthquake in Pakistan and India

Plans

They are open to answer the challenges which will be given.

They work on HBA institutions in Hungary, which should have an agency and service in each county centre of Hungary. They have achieved this goal in about the half of these centres.

They want to establish the Global rescue team which will be able to start out to any part of the world in 6 hours if it needs.

They want to see their churches growing and new churches planted.

II. 2 Systematic introduction of the special areas of the service of HBA

The national and the international sections are included here. Introduction of the staff teams will be made. The principles of working and introduction of the regulations will also be outlined.

The leader and members of HBA

The Hungarian Baptist Aid has 46-47 workers at present; more than 100 volunteers are available when needed. They are one of five major Hungarian relief organizations. The leading strategy is built upon friendship. Often the new workers are friends of colleagues. The leadership group consists of the following members: Sándor Szenczy, dr. Béla Szilágyi – lawyer, Dávid Gál – office leader and leader of the “Adopt a child” program. The Hungarian Baptist Aid is a foundation, which has an advisory board. The leadership team consists of people who are pastors and worship leaders. They often visit churches. Sándor Szenczy regularly participates in lots of evangelistic and faith-building events.

Sándor Szenczy received a definitive call from God. He started to fulfil that vision. From the start he found international relationships very important. These relationships were important not just in the work of the HBA but in the church’s life also. The church welcomed American volunteers for the building of the church house. This was a pioneer work among the Hungarian Baptists. They were very open from the beginning not just towards the Hungarian part of the body of Christ, but the wider body as well. This had fruitful results both in the HBA and the church in Velence. Sándor Szenczy is a pastor, a very people-centred person. This feature is evidenced in the structure of the HBA also. He was very open towards the media. This helped the growth of the organization.

In the team of the HBA there are Christians from different denominations including Baptist, Catholic, Reformed and Pentecostal; there are some non-Christians¹⁵. In the early days of HBA there were 5-6, and later 10, mainly Baptist workers. Today the special needs determine the composition of the staff. They have a highly educated social worker, and logistical experts, who are not by all means Christians. This great variety can be an advantage. They can practice tolerance inside of the organization, which is essential in the relief work. Nevertheless the HBA kept its religious nature. Each week begins with devotion, prayer and work discussions. Everybody accepts these meetings. Faith is an enormous source of strength for the workers in the very hard situations. The fact that they work with non-Christians together results in an inner mission situation.

The workers think that the HBA is more than a workplace: it is a life-style. The working time varies according to the different situations. This requires much flexibility from the staff members. They should consider this work as a service, which necessitates sacrifice. It is important that the leaders always visit new areas especially dangerous places. They try to follow Christ's model, which was not to demand deeds which he had not done himself. Everybody has his or her own duty, but the leaders work physically also if it is needed. The workers follow the leader's orders, which organises the whole program. They often work in war or disaster areas. They need discipline, much like the army.

At present the HBA works in 20-25 countries. The HBA uses the name Aid24 in non-Christian countries. Their system is very flexible and quick. Their working programs can be extended easily. They enjoy the confidence of the people nationally and internationally. There are no scandals, which has good affect on mission also.

Due to their growth, they face harder requirements and more rigorous orders. The administration is very significant. Donations and amounts gained by grant applications cover the expenses. These grants are national and international or EU ones. They are partner of ECHO (European Committee Humanitarian Office). Beside these possibilities, they manage programs of different Baptist federations.

Work orders and directives

Hungarian Baptist Aid has a statement which is basically the same as the confession of the Hungarian Baptist Church. Practically the rule of conduct of the work ethic of the HBA is a

¹⁵ They amount to 20-30 per cent of the staff.

confession built up on the Bible. They created some codes of conduct according to which they operate. There are international rules of the humanitarian work that are accepted by HBA but are redrafted according to the Bible. These are obligatory for the staff members.

As it was mentioned, among the colleagues are believers and non-believers.¹⁶ In the projects and at the meetings there is no distinction. But with regards to cooperation with local churches, the Christian workers are given preference.

The departments

As it was mentioned in the historical part, the HBA developed in the course of time in different sections. In the following, the main departments will be briefly introduced.

Social department

This department includes the services to drug addicts and the services to homeless people. The Street-front department, which houses an inpatient addict service, has its own office. They can exchange used syringes, and they work in drug prevention. The HBA operates a hostel for homeless people, which can sleep 50 persons. The lodgers describe the atmosphere of the hostel as peaceful.

International relief assistance

One of the main and most well known activities of HBA is the international relief and development assistance. As was mentioned, they are present in 20-25 countries. They have an international group, which is led by Ferenc Tisch. They can give immediate help in 12-24 hours anywhere in the world. The last main activities were tsunami relief in Sri Lanka in December 2004, the catastrophe caused by Hurricane Katrina in the USA in September 2005, and the earthquake in Pakistan and India, also in 2005. The other line of international relief and development works are long-term projects.

If it is possible they work together with local people. They try to build up relationships at the given place. Their activity is an open one. The donors can see how donations are used.

¹⁶ There is a good example of how the Christian workers live their authentic lives near God which affect the non-Christians strongly especially in dangerous situations. This has often a greater result than lots of sermons. It is life which can be desired.

Health, medical and special rescue assistance

The workers of HBA can give health and medical help when needed. They can give medicine and surgical instruments as relief. For example, the doctors offered complete medical examinations in Iran. After the flood, they gave vaccines for 3000 people to prevent an epidemic in Indonesia. Local doctors carried out this last effort.

The HBA has a partnership with a civil association for special rescue. This association has a huge experience in water, overland, and aerial rescue. They work at natural disasters. They can use the logistical and management system of HBA.

Anti trafficking assistance

They work against prostitution and human trafficking. They visit prostitutes, talk to them, and offer contraception. They have the possibility to put girls who want to give up prostitution in a shelter house. They give them life-leading guidance and education. The rehabilitation is grounded on Christian principles. They help victims of human trafficking to return home. They worked together with the government to organize an international anti-trafficking conference.

“Adopt a Child” supporting program

The most popular program among the donors is the “Adopt a Child” program. Fifteen thousand Hungarian people – not just Christians – undertook the monthly support of a child’s education or board somewhere in the world. The donors can have personal contact with the child through photos and letters. Sometimes the child can visit the donor also. In addition, this is a good opportunity for evangelism. They started to build orphanages and manage medical programs from the donations, too.

National programs

The main part of their work is in Hungary, although through the selective media references, the people know less about the national programs. The work nationally is varied. They have offices at the county centres. They support partners. They can give one time help for needy. They also have an institute for drug rehabilitation, the organization of needy

children's holiday, called the "Christmas of 1000 Children" project, etc. They have support programs for Hungarian children also. The street social work, the anti trafficking efforts, and the special rescue can be done in Hungary. The main evangelism programs happen here also. It is seen as significant to transmit the Hungarian donations toward Hungarians by a Hungarian organisation.

The role of the media

The success of the HBA is partly due to the media. It is very important that information reaches the donors. Their style of work and actions are not everyday ones, and people are interested. They regularly appear on the television, in magazines, and journals. Journalists often accompany them while they are travelling. The articles and reports help the work of the HBA.

Governmental relations

They have a good partnership with different government offices such as KM¹⁷, ICSSZEM.¹⁸ It is important for the funding applications nationally to have this good relationship. Each care foundation should co-operate with the government and adopt some lobbying. They can influence legislation this way. More law changes and new laws arose because of the participation of HBA. These regulate mainly refugee affairs, e.g. the operation of refugee camps.¹⁹ This cooperation is of common interest. The social organizations can help to raise laws that can work to better the practice.²⁰

II. 3 Membership at different organizations

HBA belongs to several different Hungarian and European organizations, which bring together relief organizations. ECHO, HAND... The HBA is member of several of these. We will discuss the function of the HBA in these organizations and the relation of the Christian background of HBA to these.

¹⁷ In English: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

¹⁸ In English: Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

¹⁹ Mihály Almási was a participant at such councils. Interview with Mihály Almási (October 2005)

²⁰ This can be a good possibility to the social role of the Church by a Christian organization.

The Hungarian Baptist Aid is one of the two Hungarian relief organization (the other is the Ökumenikus Segélyszervezet) which signed an agreement with the European Committee Humanitarian Office (ECHO). It required an accepted project in order to become a member. They pointed out a development project in Algeria. Now they are able to carry out relief and development projects covered by EU resources.

Another organization is the HAND (Hungarian Association NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid). Hungarian NGOs working abroad on humanitarian and development issues set up this Hungarian NGDO Association.

The HBA builds church relationships and in short opens its accounts to receive all donations. ...Already in their short time of activities they stand well alongside the Hajnalcsillag²¹ Foundation, an eastern European Mission, and they endeavour to build up numerous relationships with the European Baptist Union, too.” (Marosi Nagy in: Almási 2001:13)

Comparison to secularised organizations

The HBA is working among non-religious organizations. There are some similarities and differences. The HBA can react faster and more effectively because one person makes the decisions, while behind a secularised organization stands a government or a committee or a foundation, which require a longer decision-making process. The main crisis is in the first 48-72 hours after a disaster situation. They have a short time in which to act. They should give assistance according to the given situation. The coordination is easier if it is just one person with 2-3 department leaders.

The Christian background is most evident when they have to make a decision by faith. If God persuades Sándor Szenczy and the leaders, sometimes they accept work, when at the moment they do not have the funds. They can experience miraculous solutions. A secularised organization does not act in this way.

Nevertheless, there is not any difference between a religious or secularised worker in the field. Both are very good in their profession. The differences could be in the spiritual power and how they can interpret the experiences. Their faith in God can help in hard situations. The

²¹ In English *Dawn star*

secularised organizations follow the work of religious organizations with attention, and do not allow overt mission.

II. 4 Relation with the international organization of the HBA.

Introduction of the partners of the Hungarian Baptist Aid will be included here and its relationship with the Baptist World Aid. The areas of their collaboration will be discussed. Their theological standpoints, examination and interpretation of the conformities and diversities will be noted.

The Hungarian Baptist Aid collaborates with the Baptist Church nationally and internationally. The HBA contacted the European Baptist Federation (EBF) in the first year of its operation and managed programs together. Sándor Szenczy offered the coordinating help of HBA to the Baptist World Alliance in 1996 because the European coordination was not solved. More meetings followed each other. (Almási 2001:47)²²

The Baptist World Aid has many opportunities and financial resources, mainly from American funds, for which the American organization cannot execute the opportunities. There are areas where an American may not enter, for example into North Korea or the Arab states or the former Yugoslavia. However, people from the post-communist Hungary may enter. A Hungarian can carry out a relief or development program using an American donation, and they can better understand the local mentality in certain countries. The 40 years of communism were not wasted, but have resulted in some advantages.

The HBA likes to carry out Baptist programs. They must apply for these projects but it happens in a rather friendly, personal way. They should estimate the cost and afterward they should give an account correctly. But the process is not as bureaucratic and regulated as in the case of the governmental ones.

The Hungarian Baptist Aid managed many programs this way. These are relief and development programs. These acts are varied according to the requirement of the needs. They have some programs, mainly development ones, which can be used in many places.

²² They contacted the Southern Baptist Union Foreign Mission Society as one of 50 leaders, and a partnership was established between Texas and Hungary (Almási 2001:20f) Szamosi gave an account of the work of the HBA as an integral part of the Baptist World Aid (BWA) in 1998. (Szamosi in: Almási 200:27f) Sándor Szenczy was elected a member of the committee of the BWA.

Some of these programs were: The long time relief and development project in Kosovo; two programs in Sri Lanka, one of which is establishing a children's village, building houses, development of the infrastructure of a refugee camp, water and tents for refugees in Ankara. "The leaders of Baptist World Aid gave relief of 15 million USD ... helping the repatriation of Albanians of Kosovo, which escaped to Hungary from the war." (Dusza in: Almási 2001:42)

Mainly American and North-European donations of the Baptist Church's international organizations covered the relief for Chechnya, – Sándor Szenczy made a statement to the journalists that he saw the reason of trust in the HBA in the inexpensive and effective way of bringing the relief to the goal. (M. Lengyel László in: Almási 2001:52)

The HBA worked with the Canadian Baptist Federation on collaboration to establish a centre for handicapped children in Albania. (Almási 2001:21)

Comparison of the confessions of HBA and partner organizations

Essentially the confessions are the same, but differ in some details. The Baptist Church of Velence is a charismatic one. The theological thinking of European and American leaders is different in this question. They represent a conservative line, which is characteristic of the Baptist federations, but they have realized that the work of HBA is from God so they support and help it. They put trust in Sándor Szenczy and in the organization, which is led by him because they see the action executed by faith, and that they often risk their life in dangerous situations.

Chapter III – The introduction of their self understanding and philosophy of service

This chapter will be compiled in view of the HBA mainly according to the interviews with Lajos Révész, Dávid Gál, Mihály Almási and Sándor Szenczy because there does not exist written sources on this topic as it was previously noted.²³ We will deal first with the theological ground of HBA, then their relation to people in other religions, and, finally a reflection on the Hungarian Baptist and “universal” Church.

III.1 Theological foundation

The Church, the body of Christ has a mission on the earth. “The task of the body of Christ is the implementation of the thought and plans of the Head with the help of the Holy Spirit. Today it is the same with the accomplishment of the commission.” (Almási 2000:79 – my translation) The Great Commission is according to the Gospel of Matthew: to go among the nations and make them disciples.²⁴ Mission started with the presence of God’s people. They should demonstrate a Christianity which harmonizes with the laws of the Kingdom of God. After this they should make disciples of all nations who live also in the spirituality of the Kingdom. “The assignment of εκκλησία is the practice of serving motivated by love, which was presented by Christ, the getting along in sanctification together with the proclamation of the Gospel and with these working towards of the fulfilment of the βασιλεία.” (Almási 2000:38 – my translation) These elements can be observed at HBA.

The theological understanding of HBA is connected to the Baptist one. The main doctrines are the same. They represent one colour of Baptist theology. But it cannot be said that every

²³ The articles deal mainly with the actions but not the theory which is among the service.

²⁴ Acts 1:8 gives a more specific understanding about the territory of mission: internal and abroad also. We may not avoid either dimension.

worker has the same thinking because of their different denominational background. But this diversity does not cause problems among them.

Although we cannot realize a totally separate theology we can find an independent and conscious theological thinking. The service of the HBA is built up on the Bible text from the 14th Chapter of Matthew. Here can be found two miracles. One of these is the miracle of the five loaves of bread and the two fish, when Jesus asks his disciples to give food to the hungry crowd in the evening after a strenuous day. They apologize because they have no food. After this, the miracle occurs when the disciples take not their bread but a boy's five loaves of bread and the two fish and give them into Jesus' hands.

Sándor Szenczy considers one of the keys his life, service and work, that he is not the one who wants to solve the problems but takes these into Jesus's hand. And this time the few which he can give to Him will be enough for many and for him, also.

The other miracle is when Peter walks on the water. We can accept that the Son of God can walk on the water, but a man? The fact that Peter walks on water was the consequence that Jesus said to him "Come". The leader of HBA thinks that the miracles which they experience day by day are similar to the miracle of Peter's walking on the water. They should do acts which were not accomplished by them before. When they look up to Jesus, the impossible becomes possible.

These two miracles are the ground of the work of HBA. First: they believe that what they can do is enough. Second: the impossible becomes possible if it begins in faith. These principles are significant when they are going on a mission trip: a rescue team comes together, a new service starts or a new vision is drawn.

The service was started with these verses (Mt 14:13-33) at the beginning and these are the ones to which they always return. "If you have realized a need you should fill it." – Sándor Szenczy teaches his co-workers. (Szenczy in: Tihanyi in: Almási 2001:45) The starting point of their thinking is what they have, and not what might be. They want to act with the goods, talents, qualifications, and possibilities that they have received from God. We can see this mentality operating in their work. Sándor *encourages the people that ask for help from HBA to use these principles for him or herself*²⁵, because they are not able to help everywhere and everyone. Whoever has seen the need should meet it.

²⁵ It is a very important point: inspire others to work. This multiplies the growth. The goal in mission is to build the Kingdom of God in which everybody has tasks and should find his place and not build one's own "kingdom". Mission is not just for some privileged people but also for every member of the Church.

In many cases a person has had a calling for a certain mission. When a door opens, and a request comes for help, the person who is spiritually aware can start to work. We can observe this principle throughout the history of the organization. When a possibility or a new relationship appeared and they were sure that it was from God, they developed the service in that direction. These actions built the HBA step by step.

With this “faith principle”²⁶ it can be said that the collaborators are down-to-earth people. The decisions are followed up shortly with deeds. Nevertheless their experience is that it is God who coordinates the processes. He gives workers, helpers, donors, and persons that are encouraged to go, and without whom, the service would not be able to exist.

Principles of the leader

Some citations follow from Sándor Szenczy about the understanding of the work of HBA.

God gave me a talent to realise what others do not realise, to do what others do not think to do... If I have seen the need first, then to help is my responsibility also... In this world where everything is about ‘getting’ it can mean real peace for you if you can give. (Szenczy in: Tihanyi in: Almási 2001:47 – my translation)

Szenczy said that he is a follower of his Baptist predecessor Martin Luther King Jr. who always asserted that he had a dream: blacks and whites who take each others’ hands and live in peace. He has a dream also in which Yugoslavians and Albanians, Chechnyans and Russians take each other’s hands. (Almási 2001:48 – my translation)

His vision was largely influenced by the mentality of Martin Luther King. He learned to dream and believe that if God sends us to do something we can do it. The first step comes from this faith. The thinking is what makes a difference. The next is that we may not give up facing difficulties. And, lastly, we may not be afraid when our dreams materialize. Lots of people are surprised when they receive answers to their prayers. We can dream and believe that this will happen. His experience through the years has been that he should believe and give affairs to Jesus. Martin Luther King taught him that.

According to Szenczy, many are praying for their efforts. Their power lies in this. And they fight on the front line, but they do not bring weapons but rather the Bible in their hands. (Almási 2001:49 – my translation)

²⁶ In the following we will discuss in detail the role of faith in their work.

Their work is making peace, which is the work of God's children.

Appearance of the Christian nature of the HBA

The level of openness of the communication of the Christian nature of the HBA depends on the area in which they work. In the EU, in states with Christian background, they can be totally open.²⁷ In other non-Christian places, they need wisdom in this question. They do not use the name Hungarian Baptist Aid but Aid24, for example in Arab states. They do not think about this as a compromise, but wisdom. They may not use Christian symbols officially. Their understanding is that the most important thing is not in material goods or precepts but in finding a way in which an Arabian can accept the help. ... Afterwards from this contact can evolve a relationship or later a conversion.²⁸

The recognition of the will of God

A very significant factor in their work is that they undertake only the challenges they think are in the will of God. In the following we will discuss this.

Emilio Castro stated that the church could react well in the case of depending on God. "...asking Christ what we shall do, and being prepared to do what he asks of us." (Castro 1985:102) The thinking of the HBA harmonises with this. They confess that everything, which started according to God's will, can operate well if it stays in God's hand. Therefore they look for the possibilities to understanding what He wants.

In the everyday work they learned to distinguish God's plan from their own. We should hear his voice. The leader makes decisions about where to go, but planning the technical implementation is the task of the particular teams. Mihály Almási sees their decision making not as an ultra charismatic one. Not just the dreams and senses have roles. The rational and theological considerations are important also.²⁹ From time to time the leaders go on retreats for several days together to pray and plan.

Sándor Szenczy stresses that a missionary should have a calling from God and a vision sourcing from this calling. If he has no vision he will not be able to carry out that mission

²⁷ They openly declare their faith in different reports and statements and they speak that this faith and calling from God motivates them in their service.

²⁸ This is mainly just hope rather than fulfilled process. But they know people in non-Christian areas that accepted Jesus.

²⁹ Interview with Mihály Almási (October 2005)

which he undertook. He sees that the plan of God is very concrete. If we are obedient, doors will open. We are not the ones who should look for work. The Kingdom events happen according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and not by human effort. In that case the impossible becomes possible.³⁰

III.2 Relation to people in other religions during the international and team work

In many cases people do not have much knowledge about Christ and Christianity. In these places relationships should be built first because it is impossible to harvest before this. Jim Petersen, an American missionary in Brazil, wrote about his experiences in his book *Evangelism as a Lifestyle*. In Brazil, he faced the fact that the people who were ready to accept Jesus were fruits of former missions. “In my thoughts I always connected evangelism with the harvest. But then an empty field lay in front of me. There was need to sow, water and nurture before there was hope for the harvest.” (Petersen 2000:28 – my translation)

The members of HBA think similarly to Jim Petersen that evangelism is a process. (Petersen 2000:28) HBA can be only one part of this process.³¹ In the service of HBA we can realise that especially in non-Christian areas they find fields which are not ripe for harvest in relation to the Gospel. They can first sow. Relief work or development can open doors to this.

The members of HBA think similarly to Jim Petersen that evangelism is a process. (Petersen 2000:28)³² HBA can be only one part of this work. God is the one that takes in hand the whole procession. He can send others that will 'water' and harvest even when HBA cannot do these yet. The precipice should be bridged first between the proclaimer and the listener. It is important to realise what is required for a given situation. (Petersen 2000:48ff)

In this part we discuss the approach of the HBA to the non-Christian people during their work. Do they try to evangelise them or do they try to make dialogue or do they just give relief? How can they start to look for and finally find Jesus? These questions affect the main topic of the dissertation – the issue of social responsibility and evangelism in relation to the service.

³⁰ Interview with Sándor Szenczy (October 2005)

³¹ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

³² *ibid.*

Their confession of humanitarian assistance is that the need has neither religion nor skin colour or nationality or political relations. They endeavour to help everyone who needs it. Concretely evangelism does not come up. They do not take advantage of the vulnerable situation of the individuals receiving aid, unlike some organizations, which cause negative reverberations— affirmed both Dávid Gál and István Debreceni.³³ They realized in the course of the years that it does no good to combine relief and evangelism.

There are some classical stories in the humanitarian work about mixing evangelism and relief. One of these is exemplified when somebody is converted and baptized in order to get a blanket. The newly baptized person gets a blanket. After this the person ‘is converted’ again because he wants another blanket. Incidents like this should be avoided. There should not be a condition to get the relief, e.g. the needy are not obliged to listen to an evangelistic event.

However, when working hours, which are full with relief work, are finished, in their private life they join with the local churches and help their mission. For example in Kosovo the 8-10 co-workers managed different assistances, organized, and coordinated activities, etc. After this they helped at the church, which was planted by Albanian Christians. They went to the church on Sunday. They divide the different aspects in this way.

The question of proselytizing comes more and more into focus in the global relief work. Former religious organizations, which became secularized, observe how the Christian associations work. When they realize the conditions under which relief is connected to e.g. conversion, they react in a negative way. The HBA try to avoid such actions. The Hungarian Baptist Aid works 75 percent of the time in Muslim and Buddhist countries. They should avoid religious conflicts. Because of this, they decided to separate social action and evangelism.

According to the above, we cannot judge the mission divided into two mandates as holistic. Bosch defines mission which may not be separated into parts. The distinction between different aspects indicates that there exist more possibilities to carry out mission. “The moment one regards mission as consisting of two separate components one has, in principle, conceded that each of the two has a life of its own. One is then by implication saying that it is possible to have evangelism without a social dimension and Christian social involvement without an evangelistic dimension. What is more, if one suggests that one component is primary and the other secondary, one implies that the one is essential, the other optional.”

³³ Interviews with Dávid Gál (July 2005) and István Debreceni (May 2005)

(Bosch 1991:405). Evangelism should be embedded into social actions. (412) Whereas we see that this unity does not work in any Christian wing. Although Evangelicals acknowledge that there is a need to make a mission which cares about the whole person they give primacy to evangelism in their mission understanding. This approach is under discussion whether such a neglect of social actions is tenable or not? Contrarily, the Catholic Church is stressing the vertical level of mission alongside their mainly horizontal understanding and activities. Bosch concludes this process: “And yet, churches – Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox – are learning afresh «to overcome the old dichotomies between evangelism and social action...» (ME33)” (408)

Sándor Szenczy thinks that it is evangelism if he starts his speech about a one million dollar project with the sentence “I as a Christian”. They will not derail the Gospel so that nobody will be challenged to follow Christ, but they can prepare the way for the understanding between non-Christians and Christians.³⁴ We can realise in this mentality that they want not to carry out a whole mission but just a part. The part which remains is left to others who could accomplish it. The question is whether somebody follows who can complete that mission or not?

When they can help in a non-Christian society where the Christians are despised, the thinking of the inhabitants change. They realize that the Christians can think they are not a pariah. And that means a very huge change. When they could teach children to walk or eat, the people saw that as miracle. They embrace and kiss the co-workers, which were former non-touchable because of the joy. And this is mission.³⁵ The task of the church is to make God’s voice heard in the world. (Petersen 2000:79f)

‘Special Forces’

From the view of mission, the work of the HBA is a ‘Special Force’. Both Dávid Gál and Lajos Révész see that they can break through walls with good deeds, with the deeds of love. In relation to local people, opposition or the way of thinking of non-Christians can be changed. They want to see themselves followed by local churches and evangelists. During their work they build a lot of relationships. For example, in Sri Lanka they are in contact with 2500 children and probably more than 1000 families. They want to see that the local Baptists can

³⁴ Making peace.

³⁵ They can come closer to God by a lovely relationship.

keep the contact and can use those for evangelism. They can see some results of their operation in Kosovo. They think that the two year long period of stay helped the church grow.

In many countries they just hope that their presence and their faith can thaw at least the surface of the ice. They hope for any possibility to evangelize e.g. in Afghanistan, Iran or North Korea. In the last one this can spell public execution. They are aware of existing underground Christians in Afghanistan, but for the sake of their security they do not enter into relations with them. Their worker there was nearly constantly observed as to how much he lived according to the Muslim laws?³⁶

During the Yugoslavian war the Serbian Baptists that were identified with the Americans became a public enemy. They started a seed-corn project with the help of American churches and HBA to show that their American brothers in Christ aid people suffering from the war independent of religion or ethnicity. (Lukács in: Almási 2001:72f)

In some countries like in Vietnam or Cambodia, churches are permitted, but still under oppression. The workers of HBA could carry out mission in Mongolia also. They supported an orphanage and it was an entry point towards making relations. They could visit churches and villages.³⁷

We can sum up that there are countries where only through prayer will their presence and deeds be of service to the Gospel. And there are countries where mission could be started by humanitarian work. They are ready to preach the Good News if they have opportunity. The underplaying of evangelism in particular places is the cause of the adverse milieu and not because they do not see it as important. HBA does not affect the social orders rather confine itself to moderate the human suffering. In these areas, their function is not holistic. Their understanding is not a typical Evangelical one, social action can be done without evangelism.

III.3 Relation and Reflection to the Hungarian Baptist and “Universal” Church

The expectation from the Church according to her nature is consistent with the understanding of the ultimate end. How do we define Christianity? How high is the standard taken? What level is demanded? The Church is often faulted for identifying too much with the

³⁶ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

³⁷ *ibid.*

surrounding world. Many times she barely differs from it. Her liturgy hardens and a Church becomes less alive and growing.

The mission of the Church is about her reproduction. She can give birth to new cells resembling herself. That is why mission depends on the roots, on the 'quality' of the Church. Hence, it is very important that the person or community which carries out mission is clear and in harmony with God's will.

At the start of the present research it was not evident how important the areas are affected by the mission spirituality. The HBA is such an organisation, whose members live very consciously their Christianity and the development of their faith and Christian character³⁸. They want to grow in Christ. This gives much flexibility. Looking for new ways and following them are not exhausting for them. They can step out from used forms. This is a key according to the viability of the present Church. With the force emanating from healthy spirituality, one can do much for others. They can realise the situation e.g. of the society and can help.

As it was mentioned above, the Hungarian Baptist Church founded the Hungarian Baptist Aid. HBA has 2-3 reports annually to the Church. There is a good relation between the HBA and the Hungarian Baptist Church. The Church does not supervise the daily working; the HBA has a free hand but the Church council suggests and makes remarks. They conversely assist each other.³⁹

One of the main Hungarian sources of the donations comes from the members of the Hungarian Baptist Church. They support individually and corporately. For example, in a local church a member undertook the administration and coordination of the donations of 30-40 adopters. The purposes and acts of the HBA are very clear, e.g. help for victims of a disaster, which affect the social sensitivity of the people.⁴⁰

The Hungarian people appreciate the HBA widely, which is prosperous for the Hungarian Baptist Church. This can be used well in the evangelistic work of the Church also.⁴¹ We will see examples of this in the following.

³⁸ We mention here the Christian members. In the main roles, there work only Christian co-workers.

³⁹ Interview with Dávid Gál (July 2005)

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Interview with István Debreceni (May 2005)

Collaboration

The Hungarian Baptist Church has about 300 church buildings in the country. In case of need the HBA can use these buildings as relief centres. They do not have to rent storage facilities, and they can get accommodation also. The people that have received aid from a church see the church afterwards as one that helps in need.⁴²

Internationally these tendencies can be observed also. The workers of the HBA try to contact and co-operate with local churches. They find different levels of openness. In many countries the churches are not equipped for charity work. They think only of evangelism and have no vision for humanitarian acts. The collaboration is not always possible but in the majority of the cases it succeeds. For example, the local Baptist church in Kosovo was the only one in the country. The two-year long service was carried out in a totally Muslim surrounding. Another good example is in Sri Lanka where they were working for six months when they started a new program together with local Baptists. They named a responsible person as the leader. The HBA workers encouraged them to think long-term because they would leave in one or two years, but the local Christians have the possibility to work for a long time. "I think this⁴³ can help their mission, and their own existence in these hard places as Kosovo and Sri Lanka."⁴⁴

"It saves a lot of time, and energy if we serve with a local Baptist or a living Christian Church because the pastors and leaders are reliable. We can speak one another's language and I do not mean grammatically. We know how we think, we know the mission. We do not have to go roundabout ways if we are going to a strange place among strange people... the reliability is what matters."⁴⁵ Responsible relations can be built in a church in a shorter time period. They want to co-work with churches, which profess conversion in Christ, the rebirth and the baptism by water and the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶

There are good examples for collaboration with local churches in other countries also. The HBA could distribute the donations from the building of the local Baptist Theological Seminary in Novisad. (Szenczy in: Almási 2001:26)

The help is mutual, as was mentioned. The local church can help with buildings, and human powers, and the HBA can help the church to step out beyond the walls. The HBA can

⁴² Interview with Dávid Gál (July 2005)

⁴³ This is the relief given by the HBA together with the local church.

⁴⁴ Interview with Dávid Gál (July 2005) – my translation

⁴⁵ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005) – my translation

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

pass through such hindrances that the church cannot by its own effort. For example, The HBA can contact local political leaders easily. These leaders accept invitations for events organized by HBA; the authority of the local church, which works with the service, can grow, and its possibilities expand. This good effect is helpful for the local church. The reliable persons are important for the HBA. However it should be mentioned that the HBA does not require leadership in the local churches. “We are not for leadership in a church. If they ask us to make a biblical service or make a testimony of course we do it. But we want to leave the identity and authority of the local church.”⁴⁷ This is in harmony with the principles, which were discussed in the part about the development. (Chapter I.1) A help coming from outside can support the local activities but may not have domination over it.

Spirituality

I spoke to Lajos Révész about the relation between the HBA and the church’s life. As it was mentioned he is the pastor of the Baptist Church of Velence, which is the home church of HBA. “From our viewpoint: 7-8 church members work at the HBA and because of this we need to harmonize our things. It is obvious that in the case of a bigger action at the HBA the church stands behind it either by announcing fasting, or a night of prayer for the work of HBA. The church blesses the people that go out and tries to keep contact with them. In this way it is a part of the church and we are a part of the HBA. We can give all the spiritual backing which I can call home nest.”⁴⁸ He said that if somebody wants to carry out good spiritual work he or she should act under the authority of a church and a pastor. In the case of an organization it can be separated systemically and financially but it should have a spiritual base where it can return.

David Bosch discusses the question of Church and mission relation. The practice of HBA is in harmony with the today’s theological thinking about church and mission. They should not exist without one other. “We should not subordinate mission to the church nor the church to mission; both should, rather, be taken up into the mission Dei, which now became the overarching concept.” (Bosch 1991:370) The church should be a part of Missio Dei. This is an extremely important point. Mission organization has grounds to exist only within the frameworks of the church. Its work should react to the church.

⁴⁷ From the interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005) – my translation

⁴⁸ *ibid.* – my translation

“The missionary dimension of a local church’s life manifests itself, among other ways, when it is truly a worshipping community; it is able to welcome outsiders and make them feel at home; it is a church in which the pastor does not have the monopoly and the members are not merely objects of pastoral care; its members are equipped for their calling in society; it is structurally pliable and innovative; and it does not defend the privileges of a select group.” (Bosch 1991:373) The wide variety of the activities of HBA gives a lot of possibility to church members in finding their place in mission. They can become volunteers or can start a new relief office, or they can pray or give financial support. The church should discover the possibilities given in mission.

HBA has a fresh spirituality. This has a good effect on the Hungarian Baptist and Evangelical Churches as it helps the spiritual renewal of them. With the help of the HBA the church of Velence organizes conferences that serve this goal. They think that everybody has his duty in God’s Kingdom. They want to strengthen the church members in the fulfilment of their call.⁴⁹

Summarizing: It is good that HBA is closely interwoven with a church and is not an independent organisation, but builds the church also and gives possibility serve to the church members.

Visitations in different Churches

One important area of activity of the HBA is visitation. In this part we will discuss the visitation in different churches, religious youth conferences, theological colleges, etc. The goal of these is making known the work of the HBA. We often hear about their work in the media, but a personal encounter is more efficient. People like this. These visits always have a spiritual component. In the following quote, we can read about such a visit, in which we can observe the procession of such an event.

Our church⁵⁰ remembered the Baptist World Alliance, that it received Sándor Szency, the pastor-executive of the HBA with his wife on 2nd of February of this year. The prayer fellowship had prepared the blessings of this day, then we got to know the calling and service of brother Szency and the diversity of the extended function of the HBA from the preaching, the testimony and from the film projection. It was shocking to

⁴⁹ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

⁵⁰ A Baptist Church in Budapest

see the pictures of the areas distressed by war, earthquake and flood... In the second part of the worship service, we celebrated Holy Communion together. It was very moving when brother Sándor Szenczy asked guidance for their service, life and family by the laying on of hands in prayer... The HBA, which deputises and co-works with the Baptist World Alliance, will be understood in a new way and held in high regard in our church in the future also. This personal encounter was also important because our church wants to join in the organized and continuous aid work. Hence the people were together at a work-lunch that presumably could assist in this service. (Sipos in: Almási 2001:76f)

These visitations gain physical and spiritual supporters as they challenge and mobilize the churches. The church members like to help if they see reasonable purposes. In general, the churches initiate these visits.

Holiness in the Church

In most cases the visitations introduced above are connected with preaching or evangelism. In the course of church visitations they have opportunity to speak to the church as pastors. Sándor Szenczy has a special message and courage to present it. Some years back when HBA was already growing and in dynamic operation he had to face the seamy side of their spiritual life. He decided not to content himself with the order at the surface, but he delved deep and renewed his life at the roots. This shaping had such a strong effect on his life that he now travels the country with this message.

It is very important that the holiness of God emerge among the people. The forerunner of our Lord spoke about Jesus whose sandals he was not worthy to untie. John baptized with water. Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The church takes baptism by water and the Spirit. But what does baptism by fire mean? He teaches that it is the fire of holiness. Jesus wants to see us be holy.

He encountered during his visitation journeys lots of hard problems and serious sins. In the churches after his preaching, hundreds of people confessed their sins to him: envy, murder, homosexuality, sexual immorality and others. The only solution can be holiness. The authority of HBA is used to presenting the preaching about holiness in the Hungarian Church. As a leader of such a prosperous organization, he may not just interpret the work of HBA, but

speaks about themes that are not traditional in the Baptist Churches. This addresses the problem that sin is not spoken about in the Church.⁵¹

“When Jesus said that ‘I am the truth’ this was good news. He is our reference point by which we can measure ourselves... If a believer goes in the light, in the truth, which is Jesus himself, then his life becomes a message coming from God to the world which speaks about the existence of a possibility to choose.” (Petersen 2000:94 – my translation) Christians can show another way that differs from the way of the world but can be light in the world only when our ways are in harmony with God’s ways. To be able to carry out mission the church should live in the culture of the Kingdom of God. (Petersen 2000:95f) A wholly surrendered life can make an authentic witness without contradictions.

Melker’s worlds give us an interpretation of the process of sanctification: “God’s Kingdom begins within us. It comes to power in our inner life, and it emanates from our inner nature into all of our external manifestations in harmony with God’s written and declared commands and teachings... Until the external becomes the same as the inner; it spreads from then on from the individuals toward the nations.” (Petersen 104 – my translation)

Partnership

We have touched the topic of the General Priesthood. In the following we can see an example of how this helps fulfil mission in a church by involving the members. HBA is ready to build up partnerships with local activists or groups which want to carry out services like HBA. They appreciate them and they can work under the aegis of the HBA and are supported by it. For example, there is a mini aid in Győr (*North-West Hungary*), which is led by the local Baptist Church. There is an inscription “Hungarian Baptist Aid” and everybody can enter that has some need. They have workers that can help with clothes or food. This is a good possibility to complete the service of the local church by not just being active in worship, but also socially.⁵² This endeavour is helpful to the church. It is possible that they can get new

⁵¹“Qualitative” Christianity – Christianity according to God’s expectations.

⁵² As a church member, the Christian should not only understand mission as one of his or her important tasks among others, but his or her whole life must be lived in the light of that mission. His or her existence is the same with his or her commission. (Pásztor 2000:300) If the church understood the multiplicity of her mission, then she can realize that she can manage her task only in the case when every member is doing his or her work (Ephesians 4,16).

members too, but their main purpose is to fulfil the service of God to which the church is called.⁵³

To their credit, HBA helps to find and carry out services for others next to their own work. The work of HBA is encouraging others to start or do mission. It calls attention that mission is not the privilege of some but is for everybody.

⁵³ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

Chapter IV – The role of relief and development in their service

Sándor Szenczy set out at the first advisory board meeting of the Hungarian Baptist Aid that “the Hungarian Baptist Aid considers the support of the needy refugees, poor, elderly, sick, and orphans in Hungary and abroad and in addition to this the collation of the aid cargo its first purpose.” (Marosi Nagy in: Almási 2001:13 – my translation) The aid service was not known either before the foundation of the HBA in the Hungarian Baptist Church. They wanted to proceed in the area of charity with the founding of the organization. (Marosi Nagy Lajos in: Almási 2001:14)

At the beginning, the relief work was primary. It became important more and more in the last few years to not react in a given situation with a fire-fighting action but rather work long term. The goal is that the needy person or community become self-supported at the end. According to the plans, the service will stress the long time projects in the future besides the relief. In the following we can read some examples of development programs.

“On the grounds of this principle the FLAME program was started, which is for the development of handicapped children on physical and mental levels.”⁵⁴ They can help families especially in poor countries where the people living with disabilities are much marginalized. “Many children could be developed ... if somebody would treat them and if the parents would know how to care for them.”⁵⁵ Another program was a systematic support program of a duck farm in North Korea as there is a huge famine. (Tihanyi 2003:65ff) In another case the workers bring water purifiers and help to build up networks through which they can get medical help and medicines.

It should be noted that one area of the most significant activities of the HBA in Hungary is its work with drug users or homeless people that are ready to cooperate. (Almási 2001:58) They help the people formerly living in one of their shelters to make their way. This can be a final stage of a restoring process. They often offer jobs at HBA for former prostitutes, drug

⁵⁴ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005) – my translation

⁵⁵ *ibid.* – my translation

addicts, prisoners or the homeless. They are often rejected in the churches. The reception is crucial, therefore, because these people could not have received jobs and friends anywhere else and would have lost the possibility to start a new life. This integration is not always possible but there are several successful cases.⁵⁶

The development part is under continuous expansion. Lajos Révész thinks that it would be right to shift the stress to help local people. A long term process can be carried out just with local partners. These terms were discussed above. Without any local partner the HBA can only manage short-term actions. They stress that they do not want to obtain leadership positions in exchange for relief or the Gospel at different places. They emphasize that they think in terms of networks. The HBA is just one element of the solution. Each one is dependent on the others. In many cases the HBA is just a coordinator between the donor and the receiver.⁵⁷

In the following quotation we can mark a more important element of the effect of the development. The donation of the American Baptists was transmitted for the Hungarian churches by the HBA in Vajdaság (*Serbia and Montenegro*). About 300 local churches were involved.

In our present circumstances when the low salaries and pensions do not really meet the subsistence level, people rejoice over all help and appreciate it. The “seed corn” help *did not make the people passive beholders but required activity*⁵⁸ from them and inclined them to work. They had to till the ground, seed the corns, handle the springs and gather in the crop. The plants grew and bore harvest against the drought and the sweltering heat. In this way nature spoke to us of hope, endurance and persistence. We can reach the dual goal with help like this, which motivates the people: it gives hope for the harvest and encourages them to work. So he or she does not wait alone for *(aid)*⁵⁹ packages but it *makes the sower valuable to him or herself*.⁶⁰ (Nyúl in Almási 2001:57f – my translation)

People in need have problems with their self-esteem, and are oppressed and defenceless. The occasional relief cannot solve their problems, but a seed corn project can give useful activity, and in a sense, the beginning of independence. The purpose is to help people to live a

⁵⁶ Interview with Sándor Szenczy (October 2005)

⁵⁷ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

⁵⁸ Emphasis added

⁵⁹ Emphasis and interpolation added

⁶⁰ Emphasis added

full life. An important area of this is economic prosperity. Development, which does not cause dependency, can be a very good instrument in which to reach this goal.⁶¹

The workers of HBA think and act in terms of completeness. The first step may be saving a life at a disaster or on the street. Workers look for those who are needy on the streets. The first relief may be followed then by rehabilitation and reintegration. This is the main Hungarian model. Their effort is to transmit this model to the international work. It means that they are not just a relief organisation in the classical sense, which collects and transports the donations, but participates both in the special rescue and rebuilding.

The understanding of the spiritual part of mission is very similar to the above. They go to the people where they are and teach them. When they realize spiritual problems, they try to uncover the roots of these problems and go back to where something went wrong. They want to lead them to Jesus and help people live in the freedom of God without sins. It is similar to a spiritual rehabilitation. This process including reintegration can make healthy and strong Christians.⁶²

The question remains: can we designate the mission of HBA as holistic? From the above parts we can diagnose that they are aware of the importance of the holistic feature of mission. We realize a readiness and endeavour to carry out such mission. But we recognize also that they often cannot act according to this approach and that this does not cause them inward conflicts. This mentality could be severely criticised among those who do not see a reason for the existence merely of social action without evangelism.

⁶¹ Compare with Bragg (1989:57f)

⁶² There is no institutional training for workers. That is, on the one hand, because they employ professional well educated persons. The other reason is that the new members get installed by the leaders personally. They share the vision and the line of work at devotions and discussion every Monday.

Chapter V – The question of the social and evangelism relation

Which is stressed and why? In which direction do they plan to advance regarding evangelism and social responsibility, and why?

We will analyse their main purposes and their explanation on social work. Do they understand social action as preparation of the way for evangelism?

The introduction of concrete cases, in which decision on different stresses can be observed, can be analysed according to their theology. Examination of the reasons of the stresses, can give the background of the emphases. Why have they decided on the given way?

Can the work of the Hungarian Baptist Aid be called holistic?

The declaration of the need of the holistic mission has gained more and more ground in theology worldwide (Vatican II, Lausanne Documents...). In many cases the practice follows the theory with difficulty.

Essentially it can be said that the churches belonging to the Evangelical tradition view evangelism as a primary duty, which does not mean in all circumstances it is the first priority, as social work can prepare the ground for evangelism. Preaching the Gospel is the heart of Christian mission, and can in no way be passed by.

The churches belonging to the Ecumenical tradition stress more the social, political or cultural questions but realize that the Christian commission may not confine them to the horizontal level but to the vertical, spiritual level also.

The HBA in general has an Evangelical background and sees their work mainly in preparing non-Christian areas. Their service does not include political or cultural actions.

“The principle of the work of the Hungarian Baptist Aid is that we offer not just physical but spiritual help also. We have never concealed and neither will we conceal in the future but confess that we are Christians, and we act in this spirit from North Korea to Grozny to Albania. Jesus sent us to give food to eat to the people. Bread and Gospel.” (Almási 2001:12

– my translation) The principle of HBA is in light of the commission of Jesus providing both physical and spiritual help to the needy. The implementation depends on the given circumstances.

We see from the practice of Jesus and from Paul's letters that in some cases the first step of service toward a person is to carry out his physical needs. After this we can also share the Gospel with him up to the level that he is ready to receive. We may not make a condition. HBA works in that spirituality. Sándor Szenczy confesses that a Christian relief organization can evangelise best if it works and helps the needy.⁶³

They answer the questions of the people as to who they are, why they do this work, and what does it mean to be Christian? But they never bind this with evangelism. They faced the following questions also: What does the word "Baptist" mean? As Christians, why do they help the very people who shoot them, kill them or speak evil of them?⁶⁴

They studied these hard situations and continued in their service because it was God's will for them. We can see the grace of God moving in such acts. The help that is given may not source from the fact of worthiness. The deeds of grace are for everybody without considering his merit. This is God's mentality of grace toward us and he wants to see us do the same. Christians should be liberating in their relations with others. They can share life and hope where they appear instead of despair, conflicts and death. (Petersen 2000:89ff)

They want to be ready to speak about the reason for the hope they have in the course of their aid work. They also ask for wisdom of the Holy Spirit to know what to do because a sentence spoken in a bad time or place can destroy the work of years.⁶⁵ There is no point in forcing the vocal witness but there was such event when Sándor Szenczy prayed at the atheistic North-Korean embassy in the presence of officials in Budapest for being able to transport the planned relief.

Their main goal is to gain people for Jesus. The leader, Sándor Szenczy, is a pastor. He wants to see them be converted. But we should find the tool by which realize this. They see that their task is making contacts. And they hope that on a given day somebody will be able to lead the process to the goal.⁶⁶

⁶³ Interview with Sándor Szenczy (October 2005)

⁶⁴ They had incidents when co-workers were killed or injured.

⁶⁵ Interview with István Debreceni (May 2005)

⁶⁶ Interview with István Debreceni (May 2005)

Mission understanding

Lajos Révész's standpoint is that everything, which was put in motion by God, is mission. There the question arises whether we can place this into our understanding of mission. The mission of the HBA is certainly not about evangelism or proselytism. They saw needs and started to fulfil them. They realized that they could work only with the help of God. They are confident that their work can be called mission. They think that the general mission understanding is this: we go out to preach the gospel and possibly we can help on a social level also. The mission of the HBA is opposite: they give help, and if on the way God opens a door and they meet interest, they share the Gospel.⁶⁷

They recognize that people often sever the social from the mission part. The mission part is often restricted to evangelism. Lajos Révész does not see these parts separated. God has his plan. He can begin from different sides. God has a mission, which is composed of counselling, social help, and preaching the Gospel. He can see mission in this complex way. The knowledge and the experiences of the people about God are on different levels. We can operate on these levels. A human being who is far from God in his culture, religion and surroundings very likely will not be attracted by the preaching about God, but possibly by another arm of mission, which is closer to him.⁶⁸

The approach of Sándor Szenczy is that we do not start to evangelise hungry people. The fulfilment of needs has priority. We can evangelise optimally when we do our work and help in need. Anyway, first or last, they will ask why we do what we do and then we can speak about our commission we can tell that we are Christians.⁶⁹

According to Bosch's interpretation we cannot judge their mission holistic inasmuch as they do not want not to change the society directly. Their help is mainly on a personal level. It would be worth considering whether they should widen their service to stand up against e.g. social injustice. Whereas we should see that they would step over the boundaries given to relief organisations with such a political or social action. In the present form different prescriptions do not permit to encroach into a given state.

⁶⁷ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ Interview with Sándor Szenczy (October 2005)

Social care as a duty of the Church

HBA meet the expectations of the world which wants to leave the solution of the social problems to the Church. They agree that the Church has to assume a significant part but this may not be the main motivation. The world expects more from the Church that is not solely the task of the Church. However, it is very important to the Church to participate in social work. She should start new works. The danger comes when the balance shifts because too much energy is concentrated in the social part and there remains no time, workers, or possibilities to evangelise.⁷⁰

The ultimate end of their work

It was discussed above that HBA's first purpose is to fulfil the commissions given by different donors, organizations or governments.⁷¹ The next purpose is to open ways and doors. They see themselves as a wedge, which is staved in. The gap can be very little at the beginning but exists. Later somebody comes and broadens it. This model can operate especially in non-Christian societies, and in Muslim states. The wedges are the different relationships, which can be used by the evangelists, church planters and the leaders of the new churches that follow. The ultimate end of the work is to plant churches, and the question remains regarding which point of this process others can join in.⁷²

Judgement of the society about HBA – How can we reach the society in which we live?

The Hungarian people place confidence in the HBA because of their achievement. They work with great efficacy. Lots of non-Christians choose them to pass their donation to the needy. The everyday people do not identify them with Christianity. They connect the Christianity mainly to Roman Catholic spirituality.⁷³ But opposite to that, interestingly enough, they think about HBA as an active church. The good judgement of the HBA bettered

⁷⁰ Interview with Sándor Szenczy (October 2005)

⁷¹ The general argument: what is the end goal of mission? Afterwards, what do they think? We see that there are many parallel mission interpretations running with the organization: 1. Doing social service and when they face open doors they share the Gospel also (mainly international actions in non-Christian surroundings). 2. Endeavour to evangelise (mainly at 'second level' national programs as Christian conferences, visitations). We can realise that approach 1 and 2 are not in opposition to one another and are part of one mission.

⁷² Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

⁷³ 70-% of the population is namely Roman Catholic. It would be very interesting to deal with the image of Hungarians about God but it exceeds the limit of this dissertation.

the judgement and notoriety of the Hungarian Baptist Church⁷⁴ also. Thanks can be given to the strong and good presence in the media.⁷⁵ Today, it is a good position to be Baptist, according the voice of the society.⁷⁶

HBA carries out a worldwide mission, which affects the Hungarian Baptist Church also. The Hungarian Baptist Church belongs to the churches which did increase its support⁷⁷ in the Hungarian society by 30 % in the last year. This number is a very huge one.⁷⁸ This means that the Hungarian Baptist Church has had activities which interest and move the people on such a level that they choose them from among the approximately one hundred different churches⁷⁹ which exist in Hungary to support. The members of the HBA are sure that the good deeds of HBA affect the interest toward the Hungarian Baptist Church also.

The HBA has very interesting, gripping and moving stories. People like these. They are ready to listen to a presentation of Sándor Szenczy or another co-worker. The leader is a pastor, as it was mentioned, and tries to bring people closer to God. These events usually end in evangelism. The mission is more complete in this way. He thinks that this situation is a special present of God. He gladly shares the Gospel also. They are invited to clubs and fellowships, too. Lajos Révész confirmed that there was not any case when somebody would not grow in his or her faith even when he was not believer. The people do not only listen to the interesting stories, but realize that the workers of the HBA are believers, and they know what they should do. Most people felt not only it would be good to be a staff member at the HBA, but also firstly how good it would be to believe. Some present co-workers met HBA at such events and joined the organization.⁸⁰

The question of the relationship with non-Christians was often a hard question in Christianity. Especially in the denominations belonging to renewal movements, the believers fear the world and its bad affect on their holiness. The leaders warn the church members to keep a distance. The openness and readiness to work and be in close relation with non-believers would not be expected at the HBA because this organization is rooted in a rather closed tradition of the Christianity.

⁷⁴ The Hungarian Baptist Church is a minority church only the 0,1-% of the population belongs to it. It was a lesser known church but today has high 95 % recognition.

⁷⁵ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005) and István Debreceni (May 2005)

⁷⁶ This is the experience of the members of the Hungarian Baptist Church. They face more openness at their relationships toward their believe. They are often asked about the news of different actions of the HBA.

⁷⁷ Hungarians can offer 1 % of our income tax to a chosen church.

⁷⁸ This is very pleasing considering the position of the Christian Churches in Europe.

⁷⁹ Not just Christian Churches.

⁸⁰ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

Sándor Szenczy has a special gift of God. He can bring non-believers alongside him. This can be a well-known media person or a person just freed from prison. If he knows that this relation is from God he takes this person without any concern to his opinions and encourages him and tries to involve him as much as possible.

The notoriety of the HBA creates opportunities for Sándor Szenczy meets under secretaries or high public officers not just to gain full marks for their work but to speak about his faith. Many high post holders cannot speak to anybody about their questions of religious life. They ask him.⁸¹

The eschatological dimension

Their thinking has a stressed eschatological overtone. The following citation comes from Sándor Szenczy: “In the case of Iraq one of my eyes cries and the other laughs. It cries because I have seen much misery up to now but it laughs because I feel that the end of this world is near, and it is soon that Jesus Christ returns and judges the people. When the people sit in God’s tribunal and decide themselves what is right and what is not, it is from there that wars and tragedies always come. I think the world is ripe in that these things do not happen according to human conceptions. I am looking forward to this time and it seems from these signs that it is very near. Even so we should do everything which is possible.” (Tihanyi 2003:111 – my translation) They believe that the end of the world will be in the near future. They know that the last years and decades will be very hard. In parallel, they do not settle the time of this end.⁸²

They frequently use the term ‘midnight’ according to the parable of Jesus in which the bridegroom comes at midnight. (Mt. 25:6) They feel that they should act with great urgency because the time for this is very short. Tihanyi: “Soon it will be midnight... The steady tick of the second hand breaks the silence of the room. What will happen to the people around me? Soon it will be midnight. My body is tired but my brain works on. It would be good at least to take a rest, close my eyes and let the world around me become dim and lose its significance, go into the Rest where there will be no more significance to the events such as suffering, space and time, no more enemies, pain, death or mourning. There will not be any need for

⁸¹ Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005) and Sándor Szenczy (October 2005) We can realize interest to the faith and spiritual needs on every level of society. „There is no difference, for all ... fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3,23) and need the contact with God. The responsibility of the church is to find this people. We should be come within sight of them.

⁸² Interview with Lajos Révész (July 2005)

relief, or charity. There will not be any of my mistakes, weaknesses, and sins. And there will be none of my tears.”⁸³ (Tihanyi 2003 – my translation) The waiting of the soon coming end is not a new one. The Apostle Paul thought so. Our time is short. We should act quickly, especially those feeling the huge amount of work to do. They must not sink into their accustomed religious life without any mission challenges.⁸⁴ Then again we cannot realise a hard criticism on the present Church. They have helped the approach. We can see the aspect which Bosch mentions also. Christians get a calling at their conversion, not just for personal salvation but for mission also. (Bosch 418)

Their commission consciousness is very strong. Their activities harmonize to this. “...on Wednesday I am visiting the old refuge camp, and afterwards back to the capital... probably it is up to me also whether a humanitarian catastrophe can be averted. I should hurry because it is soon midnight.” (Tihanyi 2003:34-35 – my translation) Internationally this hurry appears mainly on the social level not on the evangelism level. They think evangelism must not be strongly related to their aid⁸⁵ but they often have possibility to do evangelism.

Motivations

In the following we can read some very personal citations in order to understand them better and know the heart of the workers. Their work is really difficult. The circumstances are terrible. The person who has watched some films about his work can never forget the details. They suffer together with the victims. Why is this so? Their motivation is the mission of God and his love.

In some places of the world people die during every minute because of the wars. The suffering of humanity is heavier that we could imagine from such a peaceful continent as Europe. The aid looks considerably small beside the catastrophes. A worker raised the question: “Is there any use of us being here?” We can find the answer in this command: “My

⁸³ A non-Christian journalist wrote this who accompanies Sándor Szenczy and his colleagues on many occasions.

⁸⁴ The European Church has not an easy situation with regards to church growth. We can observe mainly stagnation or doors getting closed. Some parts of secularised Europe want to break with their Christian roots. Lots of churches observe the occurrences without action. Significant parts of the European Church are without considerable mission activities.

⁸⁵ Wagner, the evangelical missiologist recognizes the existence of the Christian relief service without the efforts to gain people to Christ (1989:123)

command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that he lays down his life for his friends.” (Tihanyi 2003:50f – my translation)⁸⁶

They often risk their life. In the following we can realize the motives of the leader. He totally subordinated his life to the service.

Sándor Szenczy has worn for years around his neck a little metal plate, while risking diverse ways of dying over the course of years, months, days and hours in rain, mud, frost and sunshine, in good and in bad, pending escape, and worship. Then he takes it among his fingers and stares at it. It is cold to the touch; its edge is rubber so it does not clash at least with the cross next to it. On it is to be found some data: His name and his birth date are on this plate. He does so because maybe only this could be fingered if something happened to him. “There is excitement in me because things happen. Pressure to make decisions and answer questions are dumped on me, and I do not think that the answer is always simple. I feel at the end of each day that I should go on. Something pushes and pursues me, calls me because I have to work then I build again, start and proceed.⁸⁷ God knew why he brought me into this world, why here, why me, and why so. Nonetheless or because the task often seems hopeless... In turn there is a grim pursuing of the ever-running time. And I want not to be late. I have clasped my treasures so often on my neck and have looked out of the windshield of different vehicles. What am I about, why do I do this? I suffer if someone suffers. I cry if another cries. Yes, I make mistakes. Are my sins less than the sins of the persecutors? What have I done, and what could I have done?” (Tihanyi 2003:127 – my translation)⁸⁸

From the above it emerges that mission should be motivated by love toward God and neighbour. Doing mission always raises newer questions for which Christianity personally and bodily should find the answers.

⁸⁶ This discussion happened between the pastor-leader Sándor Szenczy and the non-Christian co-worker. We can observe the wisdom and love in how he handles him.

⁸⁷ People often realize that Sándor Szenczy is not a proud person. We can found the keys of this mentality in this citation, which makes him an authentic Christian and gives us a good missionary model.

⁸⁸ Many practical questions arise which could not happen just in the course of a theoretical survey on mission. They deal with questions which emerge in their work.

Their style is very popular – they speak of the language of the majority of the society. But they do not want only to reach the small religious intellectual elite. This communication is effective.

This work could not have been carried out without such a strong inner motivation, which begins from the calling of God.

Chapter VI – Discuss about the practice of the Hungarian Baptist Aid

VI.1 Case Study for holistic mission

In this part we will analyze the mission of the Révész couple in Mongolia. Lajos Révész got his calling during his years of theological studies. The materialization of this seemed very improbable. He became a pastor in Hungary. But after years in connection with the HBA he moved to Ulaanbaatar to fulfil his vocation. Above, we mentioned this work in the different chapters.⁸⁹ First we get an overview of this period.

February 2001 The first medicine supply – They were welcomed and had official discussions about the then Mongol situation and the further needs. The formal deliverance of the donation happened in the presence of Dr István Balogh, the ambassador of the Hungarian Republic. This aid of HBA was worth 15 thousand US Dollars.

May 2001 The second medicine supply – That time this was air freight. The Hungarian ambassador took it and delivered it as a Hungarian donation. This aid of HBA was worth 50 thousand US Dollars.

August 2003 – July 2004 Commission in Mongolia

Activities of the commission time

It is not permissible to live in Mongolia as a missionary. In the first four month they worked on the official registration of HBA as a non-profit organisation. After, they stayed as the co-workers of this legal organisation. They could act in more areas of Mongolia than in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, in the county Khovd in West-Mongolia and in the county Muron in North-Mongolia. Lajos Révész so describes that time:

Their effort was not just to make Christians among this nation, but start with the given need to help on both social and spiritual levels. They were supported both financially and with

⁸⁹ Medical help (Chapter II.1) Work in non-Christian area (Chapter III.2)

human power by HBA. They got e.g. medicines, clothes, and visitors who helped and encouraged them or taught in the church. The doctors who arrived in Mongolia to give medical help could serve in the mission of the local church after their work time.

Lajos Révész can hardly separate the different parts of mission. His statement sources from his experiences. In practice he interweaves pastoral care with material help. This multifunction can appear both in the service of a person or a team. God gives situations in life that can be solved only in a complex way. A leader of a ministry should recognise parts of the solution and the people who can carry these out in co-operation.

Ulaanbaatar

The Révész family lived in Ulaanbaatar for the whole time. They were planning of to stay just a year so they did not start a new church but joined to an existing one. They fell into the network of the local Christians and served in several churches. Their goal was to stabilise and build them. The missionaries are not pastors in general and a new converted person will become a pastor in the newly planted churches. These young pastors have no adequate training. Pastor Révész could compensate for this. Szilvia worked among the women they supported in the local children's ministry.

They could support the church they joined financially also. They started in their home a Home group where a woman took the leadership who could continue the work after the departure of the Révézs. They could evangelise non-Christians in their everyday relationships e.g. the teachers of their children or their language teacher.

Through the Adopt a Child project they could support a small private orphanage led by Christians. Formerly they had big financial problems because they had no governmental support. The monthly donations meant a great help to them.

Lajos Révész could join an attending nursing system. He visited last stage cancer patients with the doctor. They could encourage them alongside to the physical help. Lajos Révész had the opportunity many times to evangelise also. There was somebody who converted and at his funeral his family converted also.

North-Mongolia – county Muron

Shamanism is here the strongest in Mongolia. Lajos Révész could make the circuits with local workers. They visited churches and mission stations. Missionaries plan to begin church planting. Another Hungarian couple is ready to step in. The date of their arrival is a matter just financial resources.

West-Mongolia – county Khovd

In county Khovd, a hygiene education program runs with Mongol Christian doctors by the Good Neighbour Society⁹⁰. They work in different schools in the county. Lajos Révész joined some journeys during their period of stay (first in autumn 2003). These tours were good to make relationships. At these journeys they take along clothes and food as relief and see Christian churches also.

At these churches there are lot of young Christians with a minimal and non-continuous aftercare. This area is located 3000 km from the capital over the Gobi desert and is difficult to approach. The newly converted persons can be visited very rarely. There are not enough mature Christian leaders. So the aftercare is crucial in respect to the new Christians.

In the city Khovd couple Révész co-operated with the Good Neighbour Society also. They supported financially a group which prepared children to go to school.⁹¹ In Mongolia catechism is not allowed with children. The spiritual part can be carried out only very softly.⁹²

We can summarize from the above that the service of the Hungarian couple covered both the social and evangelical part. The given situation and the restrictions do not allow each part of mission to be carried out at particular places. The commission in Mongolia maps in little the work of HBA in general.

We can not evaluate this commission as totally holistic in every meaning in which always both part of mission is present in every action, but about a mission which uses the possibilities and is open to those and does not separate or limit itself to one of the approaches but endeavours to be whole.

⁹⁰ This organization was founded by Germans. Its co-workers are German, South-Korean and Chinese.

⁹¹ This project is to help the children of underdeveloped areas be ready to start at school.

⁹² Mongolia is a Buddhist state. The evangelism of underage people is forbidden.

VI.2 Overview of a primary text

We will discuss here a primary text on decision-making. The text can be found in the Appendix I. We pick out the main points from the extract of the journal of Sándor Szency. These highlight lots of elements, which were analysed above and are fundamental in mission.

1. *“I am listening to CNN in the background.”* The start of a new action can be often just news. The person that carries out mission should keep the eyes peeled.

2. *“...whenever I see such scenes I can somehow sense the despair and fear of those involved physically as well.”* The compassion is a strong motivation to make mission.

3. *“I summon my fellow workers into my office.”* Sándor Szency is the person who makes the decisions, often against the opinion of others. After this the organisation of a new journey begins.

4. *“Our organisations in London and Washington...”* He uses the international relationships to get information and help.

5. *“The leaders of my church advise me to stay nevertheless they support me with 3.000 USA dollars.”* The ‘home nest’ gives not just spiritual but financial support also.

6. *“My wife...”* The good family background is very important to be able carry out an effective mission.

7. *“...different churches all over the world are joining their hands in prayer – for me and because of me...”* Mission should be done only on adequate spiritual ground.

8. *“...It’s only five minutes to midnight! I feel a sense of urgency.”* We can realize a strong mission inducing that press towards new directions.

9. *“Are the Afghan my enemy? ... During the last five years I have been there in four wars and visited more than twenty refuge camps. In which ones did I meet enemies and where friends? And do the needy have a nationality at all?”* Mission should carry out regardless of nation, religion or skin colour.

Conclusions

This is the conclusion of a dissertation written about mission. We should demonstrate the knowledge that we have gained. Mission has been done for nearly two thousand years by obeying Jesus' Great Commission. Countless forms of it have existed in the course of time. The Church has grown through her mission. She has expanded physically and spiritually. Mission has persisted. In every era, the Church should find effective ways under the leading of the Holy Spirit. The different social levels and ethnic groups can be reached in various ways. Mission has many dimensions.

In this dissertation we examined one segment. How can we carry out mission built upon social work? Christian mission was discussed with regards to the relationship of evangelism and social responsibility. This was examined according to the work and theory of an organisation.

The previous essays were mainly theoretical; this search was mainly empirical and practical. First, we discussed the role of relief and development. We know as Christians that it is not sufficient to manage our own life but we should undertake the problems of others also particularly if they do not have the necessary resources for survival and development. We have seen that this task is not just for churches, but they can and should participate in this. When a church participates in social action, she can give spiritual help beyond physical help she is able to provide. We established that mission is not an optional or additional function of the Church, but it is fundamental to her life to extend her work toward every part of the human life. The proportion is different in every situation. Sometimes, more physical help is required, and sometimes more the spiritual help can be given. It depends on the fulfillers of mission since they determine the tone and decide in a situation what take they in what risk they take.

In the main part of the dissertation we discussed the history, structure, work and theory of an aid organisation. The purpose was to place them somewhere on the palette of mission. The other purpose was to realise their motivations and self-understanding. We have revealed their philosophy and theology and analysed the role of evangelism in their service and its stress.

We have seen that they work in a team and network. We observed their relation to relief and development.

Our method was interviews and article research. We got an overview about the organisation by systematising of the information gathered.

A number of people wrote on the theme of social action and evangelism's relationship with various approaches worldwide but just a few Hungarian studies exist. Even so this dissertation is relevant because this topic is not crystallized among the Hungarian Christians. We could make new observations by the examination of the work of a young, beforehand not excavated, service. Hopefully it does not seem that the work of the Hungarian Baptist Aid would be overestimated in this dissertation. But taking into consideration the stagnation, or in many aspects, decadence of the European Church it is bracing to study a developing Christian service. Their model is an encouragement and challenge for the other parts of the Church.

In this dissertation, Bosch's mission understanding was the foundation of the critical overview. Mission may not be divided into parts. When we start to speak about different mandates we disrupt the wholeness of mission. We know that the different churches and traditions try to find the management of carrying out mission in fullness. The Hungarian Baptist Aid is not any exception to this symptom.

We can admit that there does not exist any perfect mission but we can acknowledge also that each theological tradition tries to move toward holistic mission. (Bosch 1991:408) It is difficult to accept with an Evangelical background and call for more thinking on why we should require a Christian association to take political affairs when Jesus secluded himself from the idea of a political messiah. He stood for a non earthly kingdom. In the service of the apostles we can realize mainly they concentrated on the individual character and churches, not the level of society. And they demanded obedience to the lordship. We could hardly realize political intention. Whereas the question is raised whether Christians should affect politics more, as we live in the same society with non-Christians and the political decisions affect us also. This is the question of secularization on a social level. Should we wait for a Godly intervention or start to confront bodily political powers if it is crossing God's law. We as Evangelicals mainly observe in silence. Whether this tendency changes or not is the question of the future.

This dissertation is only the beginning. Every piece of information gained brings on newer and newer questions. But the model of the Hungarian Baptist Aid is instructive. We should

not follow their way completely but some of principles are general to keep an organisation in growth. The disciple of the mustard seed prevails. We should progress step by step. In many cases the opening toward new fields depends on our faith. In Europe, the Church needs the ability to renew and to reach the society. We should avoid becoming marginalised. That requires evaluation and finding new ways. This can cause tension. We often cannot measure the outcome at the beginning. But we can build upon the revelation that God will extend his rule in the world. Our efforts carried out under the leadership of the Holy Spirit can be part of this.

Contemporaneously the principle of “already but not yet” comes across. During the search for the right relation of different components of holistic mission we should continue our commission again and again considering what we do, why we do it, and what could we do better.

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Appendix I

Extract from the journal of Sándor Szency:

„It’s Thursday, just before midnight. I am *listening to CNN in the background*. I saw the first pictures of fleeing Afghans yesterday and I felt it immediately that it was time for me to set out again. Because there are always people escaping from somewhere and their tragedy is usually nothing but a short headline on the news broadcast, I am however much more concerned about them. I can’t remember how and when it all started, but whenever I see such scenes *I can somehow sense* the despair and fear of those involved physically as well.

After the morning devotion *I summon my fellow workers into my office*. No one is surprised at my announcement that I am travelling to the Afghan border of Pakistan tomorrow. Only my secretary with quite a practical mindset is wondering how to get the necessary visa and air ticket for me and arrange my journey with the local people within a single day. I am telling her that I have to go in any case.

Our organisations in London and Washington find my decision too sudden, but they don’t try to discourage me. Rather they provide the availability of the Christians in Islamabad for me. They also inform me that as far as they know all foreign missionaries have left the region of Peshawar at the Pakistani border. Then in the last minute my colleagues arrive with my visa and we also find a ticket – someone has cancelled his reservation. Now we only need the money, as the cashier of the social service is empty. The leaders of my church advise me to stay nevertheless they *support me with 3.000 USA dollars*. My wife says she knew it already in the beginning of the week that I would go. Her words imply encouragement although we both feel: she would do anything to make me stay. But she packs my suitcase without a word of objection. ‘Take only hand luggage’, she says. Meanwhile news appear on the web that *different churches all over the world are joining their hands in prayer* – for me and because of me. I remember the picture of the clock on our newsletter, the hands of which are looming towards 12 o’clock. *It’s only five minutes to midnight!* I feel a sense of urgency.

It is Friday and I am flying again. The journey takes a whole day with two changes. In Zurich I get a call from a friend reproaching me for travelling to the enemy. I turn off

my cell-phone. *Are the Afghan my enemy?* Or the Muslim? During the last five years I have been there in four wars and visited more than twenty refuge camps. In which ones did I meet enemies and where friends? And do the needy have a nationality at all? While waiting for my change I read my e-mails on a free web terminal. “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few...”, sends me someone as a word of encouragement for my journey.

In Dubai there is no Internet, but mobile phones still work. I send my last instructions to those at home and board the plane excited, *putting my trust in God*. Apart from a journalist, some cameramen, the volunteers of the organisation *Medicines sans frontieres* and me there is no other European on the crowded plane. In Islamabad several people are waiting for me: besides our Christian contact person a representative of the Hungarian Embassy, so it comes quite naturally that we drop in at the Embassy. The diplomat gives me a warm welcome. He thinks that the world press has exaggerated the issue and nothing is going to happen here. I am surprised at his words as 170.000 refugees have already arrived. Then I realise that we think differently: *me in refugees and he in military-political events* – both as our profession compels it...”

(Tihanyi 2003:30ff)