

*TOWARDS A NEW VISION OF THE LAITY AND THEIR MISSION:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE RESPONSE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH IN HUNGARY TO THE VATICAN II DOCUMENTS*

BY

MÓNIKA CSISZÉR

*Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
For the degree of*

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

In the subject
MISSIOLOGY

At the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: Dr. NICO A. BOTHA

JOINT SUPERVISOR: Dr. ANNE-MARIE KOOL

February 2006.

“I declare that *Towards a new vision of the laity and their mission: An exploration of the response of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary to the Vatican II documents* 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.”

i. Towards a new vision of the laity and their mission: an exploration of the response of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary to the Vatican II documents

ii. By Mónika Csiszér

iii. Degree: Master of Theology

iv. Subject: Missiology

v. Supervisor: Dr. Nico A. Botha

vi. Joint supervisor: Dr. Anne-Marie Kool

vii. Summary: The present study explores how the guiding principles and aspirations of the II Vatican Council concerning the theological status and significance of the laity and their involvement in the apostolic mission of God come to fruition in the ‘movement church’ within the Roman Catholic Church of Hungary.

The restoration of the lay status and function, distorted through the centuries in the Roman Catholic Church worldwide, is a crucial and indispensable task of the Roman Catholic Church if she wants to fulfil her prophetic, pastoral and holistic mission. This is indispensable for the Church to become what she really is, the eschatological people of God.

Two revival movements in the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary are studied: the Bokor Movement and the Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement from the perspective of the role of the laity.

viii. Key terms: *missio Dei*, apostolic mission, laity, restoration, II Vatican Council, conciliar reception, implementation, evangelisation, Bokor Movement, Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal/Movement, transition/crisis, community, hierarchy.

Frequently Used Abbreviations

AA	Conciliar document: Decree on the apostolate of the laity <i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i>
Acts	Acts
AG	Conciliar document: Decree <i>Ad Gentes</i> on the mission activity of the Church
Col	Colossians
1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Ecc	Ecclesiastes
Gal	Galatians
Gen	Genesis
DV	Conciliar document: Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation <i>Dei Verbum</i>
Jn	Gospel of John
KIO	Seek the Kingdom of God
LG	Conciliar document: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church <i>Lumen Gentium</i>
Lk	Gospel of Luke
Matt	Gospel of Matthew
Mk	Gospel of Mark
OT	Old Testament
1 Pet	1 Peter
2 Pet	2 Peter
Ps	Psalms
Rom	Romans

Table of contents

I. INTRODUCTION	1
<i>I.1. Setting the objective</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>I.2. Reasons for the study</i>	<i>3</i>
I.2.1. Personal interest	3
I.2.2. Who will benefit from this survey?	4
I.2.3. Connection of the research theme with other studies	5
I.2.4. The context of the research question	7
I.2.5. The significance of the research question	10
I.2.6. Defining the term mission and the theological context in which the survey has to be viewed.	11
<i>I.3. Method and structure</i>	<i>13</i>
II. PEOPLE OF GOD ECCLESIOLOGY	16
<i>II.1. People of God ecclesiology</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>II.2. The lay quality, the apostolate of the laity and its spheres</i>	<i>19</i>
III. THE RECEPTION OF VATICAN II BY THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HUNGARY	24
IV. THE TWO MOVEMENTS IN THE ‘MOVEMENT CHURCH’	32
<i>IV.1. General overview of the ‘movement church’</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>IV.2. The Bokor Movement</i>	<i>35</i>
IV.2.1. Historical overview	35
IV.2.1.1. Beginnings	36
IV.2.1.2. Stagnation and restart	37
IV.2.1.3. The period of expansion	41
IV.2.1.4. Conflicts	42
IV.2.1.5. The period of crisis	45
IV.2.1.6. Summary and conclusion	48
IV.2.2. The effect of the Bokor Movement on its members	49
IV.2.3. Missionary actions	55
IV.2.4. Summary	62
<i>IV.3. The Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal</i>	<i>63</i>
IV.3.1. Historical overview	63
IV.3.2. Missionary efforts of the present	70
IV.3.2.1. Emmanuel community	71
IV.3.2.2. The fire of sharing the Gospel. The Saint Andrew School.	72
IV.3.3. Present clerical estimations	77
IV.3.4. Towards greater effectiveness	78
IV.3.5. Summary	81

V. CONCLUSION	83
VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

I. Introduction

The Roman Catholic Church is passing through a new era of its history. A dramatic change in the history of ideas started at the II Vatican Council (1962-65) and has been chiefly expressed in the fundamental revision of the medieval ecclesiology that distorted the biblical view of the Church and of the early Christians. Being challenged by various movements, compelled by historical needs and struggling to face and answer the demands of the times, the Council Fathers faced up deeply to the old, institutionalised, “excessively triumphalist, clerical and judicial disposition” image of the ecclesiology of I Vatican Council (Kránitz 2002, 93). The challenge was no less than, in the light of the biblical revelation, thoroughly to reassess, restore and redraft the true nature and calling of the Church. The Council introduced afresh the central concept of the people of God. The essential elements of the renewed vision of the Church’s image – sacramental, trinitarian and *communio* – indicate the revolutionary shifts in the official-theological thinking. From this time on we can speak about a people of God ecclesiology that expresses the main theological perspective of and framework for most ecclesiastical happenings and transformations in the universal Roman Catholic Church. Beside many other natural consequences, one of the most significant effects of the radical change in the understanding of the Church is the new way of thinking and looking at the majority of God’s chosen people, that of the laity, and the unprecedented eruption of their activity throughout the world. As a natural consequence, a transformation of the concept of the lay paradigm and about the laity’s place and significance in the mission and ministry both in the Church and in the world is taking place mainly since the Council event.

I.1. Setting the objective

The central aim of this study is to explore how the conciliar guiding principles and aspirations concerning the newly understood theological status and significance of the laity and the urgency of their engagement in the apostolic mission of God come to fruition in the ‘movement church’ within the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary.

By rendering an account of concrete events in the Church, in the light of the promises inherent in the Council documents, the expected outcome includes having an insight into the post-conciliar period regarding the ecclesial issues, for the sake of outlining proper perspectives and projects necessary for the next decades in the ‘movement church’ in its special socio-cultural context. It is hoped to achieve, through the real stories, narratives of lay

members and written sources, an overview of the significance and contribution of the ‘movement church’ to the implementation and accomplishment of the conciliar *aggiornamento*.

Here, I would like to clarify the term: movement church. It is quite a novel term, used by the acknowledged sociologist of religion, Miklós Tomka (Kamarás 2003, 141), by which he distinguishes the institutional part of the Church from the movement one. The exact determination of the term is not easy to clarify – asserts István Kamarás –, because “the notions like institution and movement overlap each other. The movements in shorter or longer time more or less become institutionalised. However, within the institutional sphere of the Church, movements come into being or occur” (Kamarás 2003, 141). On the one hand, within the scope of this term, belong those movements, which possess an independent spirituality – for instance the Focolare and Charismatic movements –, in which the spirituality and the movement meet each other. These are the specifically spiritual movements. On the other hand, belong to those movements – for example Bokor –, organisms and small communities which are permeated by a kind of spirituality, having as one among their central aims the cultivation or promotion of the religious life (Kamarás 2003, 141-142).

Why has the investigation of the ‘movement church’ within the Roman Catholic Church been chosen in the present study? The answer is that the issue of the implementation of the Council’s reform programme in the entire Church with regard to the lay apostolate is extensive and complex. Also, this study, being brief, does not allow this issue to be dealt with in all its dimensions. Therefore I have chosen to focus exclusively on the movement aspect of the Church. In addition, the character and nature of the developments in the mission and ministry of the laity differ significantly in the institutional and movement part of the Church, necessitating in each case a special and different plan of research and method. At the same time, this actual survey is not intended to be exhaustive with reference to the significant developments and happenings within the movement church; it can only provide some mosaics.

Starting an exploration of the local actualisation of the subject under discussion from the movement part of the Roman Catholic Church is advantageous, because the realisation of the new lay paradigm and function is more demonstrable, measurable and perceivable here than in the institutional part (where also some impressive changes are taking place). This does not mean that the institutional part of our Church is ignored or has less importance. Nor does it mean that the movement church is more important and valued. Nevertheless, certain events in the life and daily struggles of these movements could be edifying in many ways for the whole Roman Catholic Church in Hungary, including the institutional part.

1.2. Reasons for the study

An investigation of the empirical actualisation of the Council's reform programme is timely and can be justified from many points of view.

1.2.1. Personal interest

At the roots of my interest in the matter at issue is the pain of my personal experiences as a lay woman in the Roman Catholic Church. From my childhood I have struggled with the question of what it means to be only a lay member of a universal Church. In the place where I grew up we scarcely had any possibility to undertake the various tasks and offices practiced within the institutional framework – by practising our special graces (charismas) distributed by the Holy Spirit, “which contribute towards the renewal and building up of the Church,” as it is formulated in the document *Lumen Gentium* (LG 12).

Like a lot of other people I did not hear, either in my family or in the parish, about the thoughts and guidelines of the Council. Nobody spoke to me about such highly significant happenings. I did not hear about the essential mission of my Church and about its relevant meaning. I did not know that my parish has to be present in society, among the people of the street, listening to and accepting them and communicating to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Nobody instructed me about these truths and facts. I was never told that I have a place, duty and responsibility in my Church's missionary life. I did not know anything about my charismas. My abilities were never needed. As I can remember I was only a passive, yet enthusiastic recipient of the means of grace through the priests' services and an obedient doer of their commands. Even in my adulthood I could see and experience that – as a general rule – we, as the lay members of our Church, have insignificant or no possibilities.¹

I could not understand a lot of things, but I experienced that my Church is not really the people, the family of God as presented and described in the Bible. It does not reflect the community of the Trinity itself. Perceiving for many years the exaggerated centrality of the pastor and the faceless, voiceless, submissive and infantile Christian masses of the faithful has, again and again, made and makes me think deeply. In the light of the biblical revelation,

¹ Everything depends even today on the mentality and attitude of the parish priest of the local church in terms of expressing and displaying our opinions, our way of looking at ecclesiastical things, for instance.

the condition and function of my Church does not mirror the will of God², nor does it enable ways of discovering appropriate modes of presence and dialogue with the society.

My concern here is not against my Church, but for it. I am convinced that my task is not to grieve over depressing facts, or to languish in the captivity of a hyper-critical, judgmental attitude. I feel responsibility to do something, to be at least one leaf of grass in a field of reformation. I would like to understand more comprehensively how certain happenings, developments and processes give a deeper insight into the actual condition of the Church, to find answers to some questions about which I speak later on and to meditate on potential ways of the future. For that very reason the actual survey, deriving from an open heart, is a spiritual and intellectual journey of exploration and a cognitive movement towards the new horizon opened by God through the II Vatican Council. The main concern is to scrutinise and face the real, empirical facts of the Church and to examine honestly the indigenous actualisation of conciliar aspirations.

1.2.2. Who will benefit from this survey?

1. As far as I am concerned, it will help me to have a deeper insight and understanding of the post-conciliar developments in various contexts in Hungary. Meeting the reality at grassroots level, through familiarising myself with the personal stories and experiences (from the perspective of this study's central aim) of certain movements of the '*movement church*' and of their lay members I may gather facts and witness developments which are not written in books, surveys or articles. I may become acquainted with feelings, repressed emotions, thoughts, meaningful conceptions, relevant and creative suggestions regarding the actual missionary crisis of the Church, which can only be known by listening to the voice of silent and ignored lay Christians, but which may be crucial to the present and future of the Church.
2. This study may benefit other lay members as well, chiefly those who live in isolated circumstances, in places where the effects of the Council could not be felt. These are situations, where lay men and women are reckoned as *objects* rather than *subjects*. They have distorted images of themselves as organic parts of God's missionary people, not being aware of their fundamental existence and of their apostolic mission possibly because they were never enabled to become what they really are. These people's Christian lifestyle consisted, in the majority of cases, in attending Sunday services and receiving the

² i.e. the alternative order and principles of His kingdom, a basic prerequisite for performing its mission in any kind of age.

sacrament. Their frame of mind is determined by a pre-conciliar understanding of the Church. However, they want to rediscover the true nature of their lay membership, their true place and significance in the mission of the Church (within the context of their local parish).

3. This survey may benefit Roman Catholic theologians who feel the need for restoring things to their true nature in practice, in the everyday life of the Church. They are the ones who are compelled by God's Spirit to redefine the theological foundation and motivation of the laity's place and meaning, as inherent in the nature and calling of the Church. They are also concerned for the embodiment and fruitful spread of the new theological perspectives into the daily reality of the Church. This survey may embolden and justify the work and efforts of those ordained ministers who are eager to discover and tread new paths and possibilities for integrating the crucial presence and activity of the laity in the Church's life as is appropriate.

This study may benefit also those doubting priests and other church leaders who are distrustful of lay members, being afraid to relinquish control from their hands for whatever reason. They attempt to do everything. They refuse to call for help. Presumably they are not yet convinced about the significance and indispensability of the laity and do not accept them as equal helpers (maybe because of bad experiences). The explored stories and voices of lay members at grassroots level may help to understand better their "world", their special situation in the Church and in the world as well as their frustrations, dilemmas and the way they feel, think and act. As a consequence it may contribute, from a novel angle for those who need it, to facilitate a change of attitude.

4. I start from the presupposition that the lay issue is crucial and relevant for all Christian Churches in the world. Therefore, this survey may benefit other historical churches as well, wherever the membership of the Church is not treated with care and thoroughness as a matter of specific theological importance or significance and wherever, although it contradicts stated theological principles, the stratification of the congregation happens and the faithful and their function are largely ignored. Therefore the rehabilitation of the place, responsibility and function of church members is an urgent and indispensable duty.

1.2.3. Connection of the research theme with other studies

Our research theme is closely connected to various other surveys which mutually suppose and complement each other. Hendrik Kraemer, for example, points out that the Reformers' thinking on the Church did not become fully biblical, as they wished to eliminate

all gradation of powers, rights and authority, and were determined to have done with the system of hierarchical gradation, and to identify the Church with the priestly-sacramental clergy. “Consequently the laity, although in a setting different from that before the Reformation, remained as of old, *objects*, and in no sense became *subjects* (italics author)” (Kraemer 1958, 64,67). Kraemers’s conclusion refers to the fact that the rehabilitation of the meaning, place and function of the laity in the Church presupposes a new way of thinking and looking at the very nature and ministry of the Church, a radical reorientation of ecclesiology as a whole.

Another connecting inquiry would be the structural issue of the Church. The question of a growing realisation of the apostolic commitment of the laity affects not only the doctrine of the Church in its totality, but also its actual structure, which needs to be rethought also from another significant angle, namely the totally changed structure and character of contemporary society. It is acknowledged that the inherited structure of our Church, generally speaking, does not encourage or give much scope to lay initiatives. The promotion and engagement of the laity in the ministry and mission of the Church and the integration of the ‘movement church’ into the institutional framework of the Church necessitates working out and developing new structures and forms through which the real nature and duty of God’s people can manifest itself in the contemporary world. The numerous experiments in our nation in new forms of real Christian fellowship and being the Church in new ways (house-churches, communal parishes and the basic communities of numerous spiritual reform movements) are heartening signs and show a serious attempt at renewing both the Church and its structure.

The allied field research would include the investigation of the significance and impact of the ‘movement church’ on the parish pastorate, i.e., the regenerative and determining affect of small communities on the institutional part of our Church. The valuable survey of István Kamarás in connection with this matter draws our attention to the fact that the quality of religious life of the parishes is weak and stagnant. The number of those members who fall away is significant. Traditional religiosity has become tired and fruitless. Yet, where there is a developing, well functioning, dynamically growing parish community, small communities are present and their fruitful influence is perceivable. Moreover, most of the priests of such parishes belong to one or another particular spiritual movement (Kamarás 2003, 116).

Another related study would be the examination of the relationship between and the mutual effect of the movement and institutional church from the angle of the interpretation of the laity’s status, place, significance and function in the mission of the Roman Catholic

Church. A survey of the similarities and differences between the two parts of our Church would be an illuminating inquiry.

Another piece of research would be the study of various incidents that take place at the meeting points of the “two churches”. We can refer here to the attitude and standpoint of the official leadership to the various lay activities of certain spiritual movements, and reciprocally the way of thinking and behaviour of lay small-communities (which belong to the movement church) to the institutional structures of the Church. The question could also be posed about how an active, enthusiastic lay member of a parish community, who represents a specific, less traditional spirituality (depending on which spiritual movement he or she belongs to) and an unusual way of living and carrying out the apostolic mission of the Church, could be incorporated into the more formal part of the church. Are they mutually open to learn from each other, to help and instruct one another, or act in unity with each other? The exploration and presentation of exemplary models would be a precious effort.

I.2.4. The context of the research question

The impact of modernity and the local ecclesiastical situation induces the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary to follow the path of renewal shown by the Council forty years ago. If it strives to be and become what it should be in its context, it would be indispensable to listen to and obey the endeavours and voices of the progressive-minded Council Fathers led by the Holy Spirit. When the Church looks sincerely and comprehensively to itself, at its actual condition, context, and relationship with society, it nevertheless has to acknowledge that a corporate turn and opening before the reformatory wind of the Council would be essential and cannot be deferred. The spiritual and rational reception of the Council’s teaching and the empirical actualisation of the indigenous progression would be timely from many points of view.

Crisis of the world.

We may be aware of the tough times we live in, of the storms (political, sociological, ethical, cultural and religious) of our contemporary settings and the accelerating changes, of the pluralistic, multi-religious and troubled individualistic currents. We may perceive the lost sense of security, which is dominant in the midst of various frames of reference, the tension between controversial value systems. The whole world is in a storm. Among these worldly

happenings and facts we may recognise the crucial need for a much more faithful presence and activity of the Church to its calling, mission and ministry.

Crisis of Christianity.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that not only the whole world, but even the whole Church is in transition, in crisis. The letter of the French episcopacy to the French Catholics covers the new trends of development. The shattering of the faith of French people, tearing with the Christian tradition, the vanishing and loosing of the Christian memory, the rending of the ecclesiastical “net” into pieces, the weakened deeds of faith, the crisis of Catholic identity are mentioned in this letter (French bishops’ conference 1998, 16-18). It needs to be said that those mentioned characteristics of the post-Christian area are indeed sensible and obvious even in Hungary.

The indubitable fact is – as Miklós Tomka asserts – that the institutionalised forms of the Church affect and are authoritative for a decreasing number of people in our country. Only one-seventh or one-eighth of the country are addressed from the pulpit and from the altar (Tomka 1995, 14). The question has to be propounded of what will happen with the rest of the Hungarian society, which has been disintegrated into many kinds of activities and human roles in life. How does the Church manage to be present on the sidewalks, in non-Christian environments: in schools, universities, the media, and subways, among the hard-working, the unemployed and in many other areas of life? How would it acquire the language of non-believers to communicate the Gospel, to share God’s redemptive story in a way and in a style that is intelligible and authentic to them? How can the Church as a hierarchical body with a feudalistic spirituality or as a deliverer of sacraments continue and communicate authentically the mission and prophetic message of Christ in our days? The times testify to the fact that there is no way. The fact that the world is in continuous change necessitates the continuous alteration of the structure and way of communication of the Church as well. If this changing dynamism (combined with a continuous maintenance of its core nature and final goal) of Christianity delays or falls behind, this state will elicit a crisis situation. The growth of a lack of priests (Máté-Tóth 1998, 3-4) is a characteristic sign of the ecclesiastical crisis, which makes the accomplishment of the task of the Church much more difficult and the aspirations of the Council regarding the lay apostolicity more relevant.

Crisis in the identity and relevance of the Church.

The aforementioned external symptoms testify to a problem which is hidden deeper and which cannot be solved only by reforms. The statements of Klaus Douglass concern and deal with the German general-ecclesiastical situation that also appears specifically even in Hungary. Douglass speaks about the crisis of relevance (which means that the Church has lost its contact with the contemporary world and it is not able to reach the man of the street) and about the crisis of identity (which means that the Church has lost its contact with its origin) (Douglass 2002, 24). For the healing, the recovery of the Church in its whole, trying to remove the aforementioned external signs is not sufficient. Douglass sees clearly and asserts convincingly that a new reformation is needed which implies the renewal of the whole churchly structure (Douglass 2002, 8).

Crisis in the individual.

On the one hand a continually strengthening individualism, worried withdrawal to the private life could be perceived in our age. In other respects a basic desire for the contemporary atomised, isolated and solitary people in the high technology and material centric epoch is to find and belong to a community where one can light upon their genuine value. It is heartening to see that the dominantly communal character of the Church image sketched by the Council, the stressed collegiality in the various levels of the Church meets the general need and desire of the man in the street as well. For the sake of meeting the basic need of human beings it would be necessary – as Péter Nemeshegyi considers – to shape the communal spirituality, which infers a human community, where the people know, care, endure and love each other (Nemeshegyi 2004, 17). The themes “community, building communities” both in the fields of theology and ministerial practice have got an increasing stress in the last decades – establishes Éva Bánlaky (Bánlaky 2004, 7). We are not surprised about the very reason of this fact. The relevance, actuality and significance of this issue scarcely have to be attested if we take into consideration the general crisis of the Church and its horizon as the crisis of the world and of the person. We have nothing more pressing to do than to seek and find communal ways, forms and possibilities to meet our Christlike mission in the streets, institutions, schools, etc. and make it a perceivable reality in an authentic way.

I.2.5. The significance of the research question

Taking into consideration the actual local and global context of our situation – namely, the radical transformation of the world and its current ideologies, the crisis of Christianity, which includes not only the Hungarian but the universal Roman Catholic Church and every other Christian Church as well, the crisis in the identity and relevance of the Church and the individual, – we can confidently state that a corporate turning and commitment to the epoch-making aspirations and prophetic perspectives of the Council are relevant and justified.

The Church faces many theoretical and practical tasks as well as challenges and obstacles. It is widely acknowledged that it needs basic reforms in many ways. There are various and quite often contradictory conceptions about the way of realising the reform programme concerning the lay apostolate. There can be no doubt that the ‘movement church’ has made and is making enormous efforts for the sake of implementing the reform programme of the Council. The willing commitment of lay members to mission definitely contributes to the renewal of the Church. It effects and shapes the basic principles and perspective of the parish pastorate. It opens the possibility of becoming the Church, of dialogue with the neighbourhood, with the people of this generation. Nevertheless, in the institutional part of the Church one can meet a significantly diverse state of affairs in our daily reality. I venture to say that every Roman Catholic believer – clerics and lay members alike – should know and understand what is going on, and why, within and through the reform spiritual movements of our Church. The existence and future of our community, penetrating and perfecting the temporal order as the prophetic people of God’s kingdom in a large measure depends on how the institutional part of the Church understands, accepts and integrates the ‘movement church’. The two parts of the one Roman Catholic Church are interdependent and it would be crucial for each to discover the other for the final aim of authentic mission.

The present survey is dedicated to this purpose. It may help to rediscover how each part of the whole Church mutually needs the other part, how new ways of co-operation have to be worked out with one accord, so that the Church may be the prophetic, authentic missionary people that God intends, a true bride which yearns for the second coming of her Lord.

1.2.6. Defining the term mission and the theological context in which the survey has to be viewed.

We deal with the detailed determination of the term mission for the sake of lighting up what has to be thought about the apostolic mission and ministry of God entrusted to the whole Church.

The reference of the Council's Decree on Mission (*Ad Gentes*) to the missionary nature of the church - "the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of the Father" (AG 2) – is followed by an interpretation of missionary activity which "is nothing else and nothing less than an epiphany, or a manifesting of God's decree, and its fulfilment in the world and in world history, in the course of which God, by means of mission, manifestly works out the history of salvation" (AG 9).

The missio Dei.

It is important to stress that mission is not merely an activity of the Church. Rather, it derives from the very nature of the Trinitarian God. It is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal the whole creation. It is a movement not from the Church but from God to the world through His Church (the Church is the instrument, not the source).

The eschatological dimension of missio Dei.

Another important aspect, that of the eschatological dimension of the church's missionary activity, is also underlined in *Ad Gentes*: "the people of God, marching along the narrow way of the Cross, may spread everywhere the reign of Christ, Lord and overseer of the ages (*Ecc. 36:19*), and may prepare the way for his coming" (AG 1). Based on this thought, it can be asserted that the final purpose of God's missionary presence and work in history through his Spirit and through the Church is to advance the second coming of the Lord: that His kingdom may be universally consummated, and the new earth and new heaven established (*Matt 24:14*).

This eschatological outlook is basic both for a proper and relevant missiology and for the missionary efforts of our Church. It is essential for the steadfast and immovable service of Christians, knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord (*1Cor 15:18*), even though we face severe hardship and opposition, and hear gloomy news as Paul did. Being

uncompromising and firm in God's eyes into the future and not conforming to the pattern of this world (*Rom 12:2*), we may finish our race with joy (*Acts 20:24*). The ultimate purpose, which always has to be kept in view, is the concern that every kind of missionary endeavour be done as a preparation for the second coming of the Lord.

Trinitarian nature of the missio Dei.

We have already referred to mission having its origin in the heart of God. This means that it is put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. David Bosch and Darrell L. Guder express it in this way: as God the Father sends the Son, and God the Father and the Son send the Spirit so there is yet another "movement", the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit send the church into the world (Guder 1998, 5; Bosch 1991, 390). It is important to stress that God's missionary activity through His Church in history is the activity of the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is basically the mission of a divine community, of which the church is called to be the agent (*Matt 28:19-20*). In order to fulfil this task it is essential to be incorporated into the being of the Triune God. God's mission as the mission of the Trinity challenges the missionary presence of the church and its effort by word and deed to manifest the mission of the Triune God in the context of a pluralistic, syncretistic, individualistic society.

Lesslie Newbigin is convinced that the presence of a new life with messianic values within the church's life, and in this way through the church's life in society, as the presence, foretaste and first fruits of the new reality of the Kingdom, its pledge (*arrabon*) in the Spirit³, defines the essence of mission (Newbigin 1994, 16,19). It is essential to emphasise mission as a presence of a new reality, that of the kingdom of God, since, despite a reassessment of the true nature of the issue, it is almost an everyday experience to speak and think about missions in the plural, which refers to an activity-centred understanding of mission as the sum of different activities. Anne-Marie Kool emphasises the significance of the spirituality of "being before doing," and draws attention to the pitfall of activism (Kool 2002, V/9).

The holistic dimension of the missio Dei.

These motivations for mission foreshadow three aspects of the holistic dimension of the *missio Dei* (this was the title of the Manila Congress on World Evangelisation, organised by the Lausanne Committee in 1989), *i.e.* that the whole church (this refers first of all to the

³ *Rom 8:23*.

significance of the clergy and laity in evangelism and also to the entire Christian church in an ecumenical sense) is to bring the whole Gospel (the Gospel of Jesus demonstrates God's concern for the whole person in the whole of society with all their needs, spiritual and material (*Lk 4:18-19; Matt 4:23-24; 10:1.7-8*) to the whole world.

1.3. Method and structure

In order to comprehend the basic motive of and the theological-ecclesiastical background to the movement church, the revolutionary way of thinking about the Church as a whole and the unusual and unprecedented theological interpretation of the lay apostolate – formulated at the II Vatican Council – has to be fully understood. In the second chapter of the dissertation, therefore, we seek to provide a summary of the new revision of the Roman Catholic Church's image and an overview of the new paradigm concerning the majority of God's people.

In the third chapter we intend to present various reactions and responses which have been given to the II Vatican Council's prophetic aspirations in Hungary, without providing a complete set of references. We do it in order to gain an insight into the character and features of the post-conciliar period in our country, thereby providing a background for the next and central part, namely for a close examination of two movements of the movement church.

In the fourth chapter we call attention to two movements, which, in the light of our assumptions, have contributed remarkably in Hungary to the actualization of the prophetic aspirations of the II Vatican Council, namely the involvement of the laity into the mission of the Church to penetrate and transform contemporary society by their prophetic and missionary presence and activity. The two movements surveyed are the Bokor Movement and the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

The Bokor Movement takes its origin in Hungary, and was founded by Piarist monk-teacher, György Bulányi in 1945. This movement is a network of small communities totally built on lay people, on everyday Catholics. At its central aim is the cultivation and promotion of the Christian life by the radical commitment of the members to follow Jesus' life and actualise his will, namely to build the kingdom of God wherever they are. The movement has a strong intellectual character. The members deal with theological and spiritual issues in high level. Therefore the movement mostly reached those lay Christians who are cultured or those who are susceptible and ready to study.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal takes its origin in the United States (the University of Pittsburgh in 1967) and it appears in Hungary from 1981-1982. Considering its missionary

activity and its effect on the life of parishes, for the moment this is the most effective spiritual movement in Hungary. It is present in villages, among low educated people and even among elderly persons. As Gábor Kovács considers, the theologian of the Hungarian Charismatic renewal, the aim of the movement is “the restoration of the normal Christianity because the actual condition is abnormal” (Kamarás 2003, 171). The members who belong to this movement are deeply committed to live up to their faith.

I chose these two movements because I suppose that in conciliar spirit they contribute significantly to the transition and rehabilitation of the lay status and the apostolic function in the Roman Catholic Church.

Other registered movements are the Cursillo, the *Házas Hétfége* (weekend seminars for married couples), the Regnum Marianum, the Focolare, the Kolping, and the Maria Legion Family movement of Schönstatt.⁴ Yet, I did not chose these because the limitation of available time and because the frame of the present study only allows a selective choice.

The following questions will form the focus of the study:

- What has actually been undertaken in relation to the conciliar reform programme in the life of these communities and when did it begin?
- How did the events happen? What were/are the reasons, motivations and impacts? Is it correct to speak about a conciliar effect?
- How can this effect be grasped? How has it touched the lay Christians of the movements in question?
- Can the evidence establish a rehabilitation of the function and indispensable nature of lay ministry? What do the lay members of the movements think about themselves and about their missionary vocation? What reasons do they give?
- What kind of local and global ecclesiastical and social factors have been at play, either positive or negative, which have significantly influenced and modified developments?
- What kind of impact have these movements had concerning the general situation of the Roman Catholic Church? How have they contributed to the re-establishment and the renewal of God’s Church as a whole, so that its presence through the apostolate of the laity may be more effective and authentic in the various spheres of our present society? How has it happened?
- What are the main projects, aspirations, conceptions and perspectives directed towards the future in the life of the movements?

I seek to find answers to these questions in two ways: in the first place by engaging in oral history, namely by interviewing the leader and other people of each movement; secondly,

by the exploration and analysis of written sources. I will look for published articles or studies on these movements as well in order to gain a real picture about them.

In the case of the Bokor Movement and Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal facts are provided by the written sources (the own books of the founder, other books, articles and studies) examined and by the analysis of oral history. As for the oral history the selection of the interviewees was based on the consideration that various geographical environments, both urban and rural, different age-groups (young people, middle-aged, elderly persons) and a variety of viewpoints would be represented. The research does not integrate the voices and the view of children because of the limitation of time, albeit this would also enrich and make the present study more complete.

I intend to test the following hypotheses:

- The II Vatican Council event has been of key influence in the history of the movements under review.
- The movements are stimulating resources for the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary, which contribute significantly to the implementation and actualisation of the conciliar process, namely the rehabilitation of the proper identity, place and apostolic function of the laity in the Church and in the world.
- The life and practices of the ‘movement church’ have an indispensable role to play in an authentic and faithful existence of the Church in the various spheres of our contemporary society, since the Church can have no function without the essential and prophetic participation of the laity in the calling of the Church.

The expected outcome of the study will be to gain a good understanding of processes of transformation at the grass-roots, by uncovering the actual reality of the communities’ lay participation in mission. Arising out of this research, it will be more feasible to outline proper mission perspectives and projects for the ‘movement church’ in its particular socio-cultural context. By examining the living reality of these movements it will be more possible to have an overview of the significance and contribution of the ‘movement church’ to the implementation and accomplishment of the conciliar *aggiornamento*, which actually means the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary in its wholeness.

⁴ For details see page 31.

II. People of God ecclesiology

II.1. People of God ecclesiology

The content of the substantial and theologically weighty document, the dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, and the decree on the mission activity of the Church *Ad Gentes* introduce us to the established basic principles of the Church's image. We attempt to summarize mostly those fundamental features which are momentous for understanding the changed way of looking at the lay people.

1. *To begin with the Church is seen as the people and family of God by the drawing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit* (LG 9).

The second chapter of the *Lumen Gentium*, "The people of God", explains those points, which are relevant to all members of the faithful. The family character of the Church has received a specifically strong emphasis. It could be no longer seen as a body of hierarchical authority, but it is given the first rank in the conception of the Church as a living community, as the family of God. Those who believe in Christ are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people... who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (*1Pt 2:9-10*). This messianic people has Christ for its head (*Col 2:19*), its state is that of the dignity and freedom of the sons of God. Its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us (*Jn 13:34*). Its end is the kingdom of God, which is to be further expanded until it is brought to perfection by God at the end of time (*Col 3:4*). This pilgrim people is not perfect, but it stands in need of being continuously reformed by the impetus of the Spirit. By the will of Christ some are made pastors on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ (LG 32).

We can frankly ascertain that the Council took the critic of De Smedt, a Belgian bishop seriously: "The three main problems of our Church are clericalism, juridicalism and triumphalism" (in: Nemeshegyi 1995, 60). Opposed to the clericalism (the state when the office bearers sustain all activities and rights for themselves, while members of the laity are reckoned to be only dependants for whom it is obligatory to be obedient), the Council reckons all faithful – clericals and laity alike – to be the children of God, who are equal in dignity and activity. Nobody is "out of action". The Church in its totality is called and responsible. Opposed to the juridicalism (the state when major stresses are on ecclesiastical laws and regulations rather than on the faith, hope and agape) the fundamental law of the Church is declared to be the love commandment of Christ. And finally, opposed to the triumphalism

(the state when the Church is seen as a perfect institution, others are only criticized), lapses and deficiencies are recognized.

2. *All members of the holy people of God share in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal office* (LG 10-12).

This thesis – which derives from the aforementioned statements – clearly emphasizes and elucidates the fact of the general priesthood, the prophetic mission and the royal office of all believers. Based on this declaration or detection the whole messianic people share the dignity to bear the authority, right and responsibility for being (and becoming) authentic representatives of the kingdom of God in all spheres of human existence. In practice, the common priesthood of the faithful, active participation in the Eucharist and Christian life moved and controlled by the Holy Spirit have a vital role. The Council does not speak in more detail about the sharing in the royal office of Christ. The most essential element of this office is seen as the service of unity. The theological rejuvenation lead the Council Fathers to the fundamental revision of the very nature and mission of God's people.

3. *The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God, the Father* (AG 2).

It is declared that the mission given by the founder of the Church determines its character and denotes its duty. The chosen people of God continue the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit. As a result, not only the missionary nature of the Church is rediscovered but the fact that the Trinity is made to beg the locus of its origin as well. This shift of awareness of what constitutes the Church is paired with a dramatic change in its missiological thinking. The mission is seen “no longer simply as a duty incumbent upon Christians, but becomes part of the very nature of being a Christian” (Schreiter 1994, 117). All members of the Church have to come to see themselves as missionary by their very nature. The Church has gone from “having missions” to “being missionary” states Schreiter (Schreiter 1994, 117). He further explains that mission was to be “something motivating the very heart of the Church, not because some command had been laid upon the faithful, but because by being missionary the Church was drawn into the life of the Trinity itself” (Schreiter 1994, 117). With a Trinitarian foundation, mission became more than an extension of the perimeters of the Church, but is bearing witness to the Trinitarian life, to the very life of God. In the light of these conceptual changes we turn our attention to the next point.

4. *All the members of the holy people of God are sent to preach the Gospel, so that “the kingdom of God be proclaimed and established throughout the world” (AG 1).*

The conception of preaching the Gospel is also rethought and put in the perspective of the aforementioned theological establishments. Since the whole Church is on pilgrimage in obedience to the missionary commission, preaching the Gospel, as a missionary activity became the general task and fundamental duty of all believers, involving a more complex combination of proclamation, witness, dialogue and service. The document on the mission activity, *Ad Gentes*, also emphasizes the eschatological dimension of the missionary preaching. At all times it brings about the presence of Christ, manifests God’s decree, and its fulfilment in the world and in world history, in the course of which God manifestly works out the history of salvation (AG 9).

One could not fairly stress – opposed to the misconception deeply entrenched in the ecclesiastical mind – the significance of the official recognition that the laity does not receive its commission to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the pope, the bishops or parish priests, but from Christ by baptism. By this declaration the way was opened before all the baptized to build up a solid missionary identity. We are not left alone to carry out God’s mission. The promise of Jesus Christ comes true. We have all we may need.

5. *The Holy Spirit distributes special graces (charismas) among the entire body of the faithful, to practice, which is a right and duty (LG 12).*

Down the Church’s history rarely was it mentioned that those charismas, abilities and services distributed by the Holy Spirit have continuity in the Church – ascertains Péter Nemeshegyi (Nemeshegyi 1995, 61). In every age there were individuals who were enriched by special graces, for instance those who founded different orders. Although, it was less emphasized that the Spirit enriches the entire body and “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute to the renewal and building up of the Church” (LG 12). The rediscovery of the Spirit’s activity, which affects the entire body – clergy and laity alike – elicits the reassessment and genuine task of priests (who had to do everything alone) and re-evaluates the significance of the other faithful.

Summarising our observation we can state that the basically changed thinking and perception of the Church of God was established on repentance and new commitment to the fundamental basis of Christian existence. Narrowing down the crucial elements of the new image of the Church we have pointed to its basic family and communal character, to the missionary, Trinitarian and apostolic nature of its existence and calling. We have seen that all members of the Church by being baptized into the priestly, prophetic and royal priesthood of

Christ are equally called to share the mission and ministry of the Church. As a consequence the apostolic and ministerial family of God as a whole is a charismatic community. All Christians are enriched with the various gifts of the Holy Spirit to be immersed in God's work of redemption, to be and continually become the authentic and powerful witnesses of the reign of God at hand at any time. In the light of the thoroughly new vision of the nature and calling of the Church, the substantial features of being lay, as the general direction of their mission in the Church and in the world, has been comprehensively reassessed. There is no other issue which returns so many times in the decrees and declarations of the Council, which indicates the intensity of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit at the council event.⁵ The fact that the attention of the Council Fathers incessantly turned to the crucial function and significance of the laity, to their manifold, richly varied duties and responsibilities was the sign of the rousing call for renewal that has ringed through the Church. In the following passage a summary of the new paradigm of the majority of God's people will be presented.

II.2. The lay quality, the apostolate of the laity and its spheres

In the decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* the Council sought to describe

“... the nature, character, and diversity of the lay apostolate, to state its basic principles, and to give pastoral directives for its more effective exercise. All these should be regarded as norms when the canon law, as it pertains to the lay apostolate, is revised” (AA 1).

The question, why such an effort was justified, could be posed. When one glances at the Church's history, it is obvious that the theological status of the laity was controversial over the centuries.

A united missionary awareness combined with a variety of duties and services characterised the spirituality of the people of God in the first century. At that time testimony about Christ in the world by words, confession and exemplary lifestyle permeated the whole Christian body. In the sea of paganism an entirely “other world”, a novel worldview and morality was presented owing to the self-sacrificing of Christ followers. Beginning with the

⁵ This subject is discussed in the II., IV. and V. chapters of *Lumen Gentium*. The decree, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, deals only with the apostolate of the laity. The I. and II. chapter of the constitution on the sacred liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, are also addressed to them (points 10, 11, 14, 47, 48 and 61). The pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, especially highlights their mission in the presence and the activity of the Church in the world of today. The Council reserves peculiar duty for the laity in the ecumenical endeavours of the Church in the 4-12 points of the decree on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*. The decree on the media of social communication, *Inter Mirifica*, and the declaration on the Christian education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, likewise underline the importance of their function. In the decree on the mission activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes*, points 9, 15, 21, and 41 negotiate the participation of the laity in the missionary activity. Moreover, their significance is also mentioned in the decree on priestly training, *Optatam Totius* (point 2), on the ministry and life of priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (point 9), *Christus Dominus* (point 13) and finally, in the declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate*.

Constantinian period, however, this situation started to change radically due to the influence of the state and culture of that time. On the one hand, the Church began to take pleasure in privileges of the secular domination, in other respects the dualistic way of thinking started to transform the mentality of the clergy. These many-sided impacts lead to the stratification of the one people of God. Substantially two different statuses were formed: that of the clergy and the laity. A continually strengthening separation of the clergy from the laity could be ascertained down the centuries. As a result of this questionable progression, the sense of the vocation of the whole Church became distorted because the clergy expropriated the responsibility for spreading Christ's good news. On the other side, being missionary and the awareness of the laity gradually disappeared, remaining only some residues, as germs of renewal in certain ages. By their state they did not partake in the ministry and mission of the Church. With few exceptions they had no right to meddle with ecclesiastical matters.⁶ Laity eventually formed a subordinate order in the Church.⁷

The established misconception about the situation and duties of the laity starts to change at around the turn of the 19th century. The fact that the Council *ex professo* deals with the situation of the laity – for the first time in Church history – the rousing happenings of the 1800s make it intelligible and justified (Tolnay 1966, 74). Pius XII emphasised the participation of the laity in the task of the Church and in the coming of God's reign, because only through them could the Church become the invigorating spirit of the society. He has not hesitated, especially as it may seem in the Church so supremely "clerical" in its core, to express this new, never-foreseen importance of the laity that they not only belong to the Church, but they are the Church; they make the Church (Horváth 2000, 446).

John Paul II in *Pontifical Council for the Laity* formulates the following:

"New demands and forms of lay participation emerged in Europe with the progressive disintegration of traditional rural Christian communities, the break between "throne" and "altar", the hostility and persecution of the Church due to the new secularism of political and intellectual élites; in face also of the profound social and cultural repercussions caused by the industrial revolution... At the end of the century, biblical and patristic studies, ecclesiological renewal, new charismas, new communities for the mission 'ad gentes', and the rebirth of Catholic associations, opened up new paths and reinforced the trends promoting the active role of the laity" (John Paul II 2002, 34).

⁶ "What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain. These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters, they have no right at all!" (Stott 1968, 31).

⁷ Imre Tolnay points to the fact that in the definition of the term "laity" the negative element was prevailing up to the II Vatican Council. This expression referred to the modest Christians opposed to the deacons and presbyters. They were defined by who they were not. They were neither priests nor monks – says Imre Tolnay (Tolnay 1966, 75). They were relegated to the role of passive dependants. Cardinal Newman complains, in one of his letters even in 1873, that the ambition of the clergy is to keep the laity from the duties and affairs of the Church (Horváth 2000, 446).

The many-sided progressions, changes and new problems of the contemporary age have immensely widened the areas for the lay apostolate, their expert attention and study.⁸ One of the most important developments of the 20th century was a result of the gradual maturing within the Church: a deeper self-awareness, not only regarding the mystery of the Church, but also her mission in our time.

This progression could be traced back to the period of ferment of the II Vatican Council when it was formulated that the laity by definition are those Christians who:

“...are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are made in their own way sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world” (LG 31).

The lay people are seen as those baptised, who, having their life under God’s control, prophetically speak and act in the name of God, who bear witness to the truth of Christ, and who not only spread the reign of God, but share it as well. Moreover, by the basically new way of looking at and thinking about the majority of God’s people another new aspect of the “laity” status emerges, that of the apostolic missionary consciousness. Laity could be no longer the objects of the clergy or of the apostolic activity of some impassioned lay members that actually characterised the ecclesiastical situation up to the II Vatican Council – states Lóránt Horváth (Horváth 2000, 445). It is acknowledged that they have a proper and indispensable role in the mission of the Church. They are destined for carrying out the mission of God both in the Church and in the world. We may not exaggerate if we state that the *missio Dei* depends on an apostolic laity in which the clergy and laity alike – although in various ranges of duties – share a true equality with regard to the apostolic work. The Council Fathers defined the vocation of the laity to the apostolate in the following way:

“The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth and to enable all men to share in His saving redemption. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate” (AA 2).

Furthermore it is formulated that they are not only recipients of the means of Grace, but:

“They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelisation and sanctification of men and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel” (AA 2).

⁸ The Office “Actio Catholica” set up by Pius XI, the birth of a series of organisations, the growth of institutions and movements for the promotion of “Christian holiness in the world”, the World Congresses for the Lay Apostolate, the new and varied forms of association that went beyond the categories of the Code of Canon Law, the new bodies created in Rome to... channel and promote this “historical current”, were all signs of “a new era in the age-old process of integrating the laity into the qualified organs and activities of the Church” (John Paul II 2002, 42).

The Council Fathers have pointed to some extremely crucial issues. The very reason why lay people deserve trust is not a pragmatic one. It is not because of the decreasing ordination rate or because, as a consequence, the overworked clergy are obliged to seek and accept the help of the laity. Apostolicity derives from being Christian. They are apostles by their very nature. Christians are Christ's personal ambassadors – as His disciples were – to spread His kingdom throughout the earth. This is a fundamental truth which should never be overlooked.

The Council also indicates the two main areas – the Church itself and the world – where the laity carries out their manifold apostolate.⁹ Their activity is seen so “necessary within the Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness” – asserts the Decree (AA 10), referring to the truth that the Church could only accomplish its mission she is entrusted with by God in her wholeness. With regard to the ecclesiastical sphere, it is not only a task of various assignments – e.g. active participation in the liturgical life of their community, sharing the apostolic works of that community, bringing people to the Church who perhaps are far removed from it, co-operating in presenting the word of God especially by means of catechetical instruction, ecclesiastical administration, or caritas-work – what defines this apostolate. Besides these there are other spheres of activities (see p. 18, footnote #6).

The real area of the apostolate of the laity, where their special mission can actually unfold, is the world. The Council was aware of the pluralistic society, but it was even more conscious of its mission to be addressed to this world. The truth is rediscovered and emphasised: if the Church wants to attain its goal, it has to take this world seriously and has to be ready and prepared to start a dialogue with it. It is this point where the building of a bridge between the Church and God's world can start. The Church is therefore called to be embodied and immersed in the world, in order for the temporal order to be renewed in Christ. The laity gets an irreplaceable function in this endeavour. Since, in our own times, new problems are arising and very serious errors are circulating, the document formulates that the laity are called

“...to be more diligent in doing what they can to explain, defend, and properly apply Christian principles to the problems of our era in accordance with the mind of the Church” (AA 6).

This magnificent mission demands from them special knowledge, professional virtue, spiritual openness and objectivity, social righteousness, brave-hearted and devoted service of the public welfare – a summary given by Imre Tolnay (Tolnay 1966, 78). It is obvious that

⁹ Different fields of action are the church communities, the family, the youth, the social milieu, national and international levels, to mention only the most important ones (AA 9).

“Pre-eminent among the works of this type of apostolate is that of Christian social action which the sacred synod desires to see extended to the whole temporal sphere, including culture” (AA 7). These recognitions and this opening towards the secular sphere is a priceless essential of the Council. It is actually the rediscovery of the holistic feature of *missio Dei* forgotten in the course of centuries.

In summary, we conclude that the core aspiration of the Council was to seek how the Roman Catholic Church could meet its Christ-like mission in contemporary times. Therefore the watchword of pope John XXIII *aggiornamento*, or, in other words, growing up to meet the demands of the times was characteristic of the basic aspirations of the II Vatican Council thus creating a new climate of action and spirit in the Church (Cserháti 2000, 12). For this sake the Church opened its doors and windows to the world in an attempt to elucidate its position and relationship with the modern world. It proclaimed the program of revival and modernisation and has formulated and pointed to the very nature and crucial importance of the lay apostolicity in the context of these aspirations.

III. The Reception of Vatican II by the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary

Various reactions and responses have been given to the reformatory aspirations of the Council in Hungary. This includes the new way of looking at and thinking about lay people and their involvement into the mission of the Church. Numerous articles, studies and surveys have been written and published about this issue. Meaningful and significant initiatives, attempts, events and movements have been motivated and inspired by the Council's spirit of revitalisation.

On behalf of understanding these happenings more comprehensively in this chapter we comment in the first place on the former political and ecclesiastical context for the Council's historical effect in Hungary, then we will present some reactions, trends and events, without providing a complete set of references, to give an impression about what has happened in the Church until our days.

The problem of delay.

Generally speaking, it is established that the intellectual and spiritual impetus of the II Vatican Council had left hardly any mark on the Hungarian Church until the middle of the last decade (Tomka 1995, 15). It is a fact, that the implementation of the Council's reform programme in the Church's life and the awareness of the Council's documents was delayed in our country¹⁰ (just as anywhere in Eastern and Central Europe). This problem was mainly due to specific political and sociological factors, i.e. the confinement and persecution of Christianity.

The Roman Catholics in Hungary – and other Christian communities or denominations likewise – were isolated from society until 1989 because of the forty-year totalitarian communist regime. The dominant ideology of this period strove for closing churches in ghettos, and making their social presence and role insignificant. Communication with the world was, under the dictatorship of the actual regime, inconceivable and meaningless. While the significance and participation of lay men and women in the Church's mission and their apostolic presence in the society were emphasised by the universal Church, the life and

¹⁰ Ferenc Szabó outlines that the Hungarian translation of the II Vatican Council documents was published in its integrity only in 1975 by the Szent István Társulat, ten years after the Council had finished. The governmental censorship did not permit the publication of certain documents for a long time (Szabó 1995, 832). These facts delayed the knowledge of the documents.

freedom of the movement of lay people in Hungary was limited considerably. There were no possible legal ways for acting. Those lay people and clerics, for instance the members of the Bokor movement, who resisted the governmental decrees and practised their mission boldly, were persecuted, condemned (in some cases sentenced to death) and imprisoned. Even the social existence of the clergy was characterised by a specific “encaging” or isolation from profane life – points out Miklós Tomka (Tomka 1995, 118). Because of the guardianship of the ÁEH (Governmental Agency of Church Affairs) a number of *aggiornamento* programmes like the apostolic mobilisation of the laity, or the practicing of the royal priesthood could not start (No author 1995a, 721).

The change of the political situation.

The political situation has changed today. The dictatorial suppression is over. In the past fifteen years Christianity has come out of its prison, which used to trample down life and spirit, and made efforts to become an integral part of the society again. At the same time the Church is challenged by new circumstances and conditions of the radically changed daily realities (for instance the relativistic and pluralistic nature of personal and religious orientations, or the marginal existence of Christianity). Today the Roman Catholic Church is in theory politically free to meet the imperative calling of the Council.¹¹

Nevertheless we cannot neglect the fact that although politically the Church is free, traumas and residues from the past still hinder the various developmental processes (No author 1995a, 721). Today it is obvious that in addition to the former oppressive political situation both ecclesiastical and inner psychological factors could be observed in the background of the delay.

András Máté-Tóth comments in relation to the Bokor Catholic Base Community that this problematical community threw light on an official leadership, which, on the one hand suffered under the communist oppression, while on the other hand insisted on the pre-conciliar Church image and was not regenerated by the spirituality of the Council (Máté-Tóth 1995, 766-771).

It is acknowledged that the strong hierarchical character of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary – partly due to the feudalistic effect of the middle ages, reinforced and utilised by the communist dictatorship – paired with the expropriation of Christian duties by

¹¹ As we could see this would be crucial for a new presence and dialogue between the Church and the world, i.e. the Hungarian society for the “penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel...” (AA 2). This reformatory direction is fundamental, if not indispensable for a pertinent and authentic

the clergy continues even today (Gyorgyovich 1995, 233). The desire for power and giving orders, the refusal of any dialogue with the laity, and the regulation or control of the parameters of thinking and activity are real temptations in our ecclesiastical setting (Végh 1995, 223). The danger of paternalism, the patronising attitude of the clergy towards lay believers considering them as infants, the lack of trust in them – these attitudes are sensible as residues from the controversial past. As a consequence, matters transform slowly. The mobilisation and initiation of the laity into the life of the parishes is urged, yet it is a slow process (Gyorgyovich 1995, 233). Therefore it is not astonishing that the demolition of clericalism and the initiation of skilled lay people into the governing of the parishes are issues that are stressed in our contemporary ecclesiastical settings (Gyorgyovich 1995, 234).

The power of habituation.

Another obstacle of the transformation can be habituation. István Krómer clearly reveals that the centuries-old inaccurate mental and behavioural reflexes – on the part of the clergy and laity as well – should be altered, which is extremely hard (Krómer 1995, 726). Over the centuries people in the Church were taught to be only second-class citizens, second-rate assistants to the clergy, and primarily maintainers of the institutional church. Their ministry was seen mostly as a means of supporting and strengthening the ordained ministers of the Church (Ayres 1962, 15;18-19). Today facing the reformatory wind of the Council we can also note some entrenched misconceptions. The boundaries of the identity, the distorted lay consciousness, or the inadequate, old way of thinking and acting became deeply ingrained both in lay and clerical minds. It is generally known that even in the last forty years “the Church” meant only the clergy; in this way it was easy to deter believers from their apostolic mission (Gyorgyovich 1995, 233).

It is important to know that, even though the reasons are different from the aforementioned ones, the problem of delay, the post-conciliar crisis, and the confusion of the Church in its wholeness was (and still is) not just a local phenomenon. The global situation of the universal Catholic Church is similar. Some of the catholic “grand-masters” of the Council regret that after a few years the text of the documents became nothing more than dead letters. “We stopped half-way” said Congar, and in this crisis he sees a broad social phenomenon (cf. Gánóczy 2004, 808). Twenty years after the Council J. Ratzinger says that “actually the time of the Council has not arrived yet.” Therefore, in one of his declarations he encourages

orientation of the Roman Catholic Church in the middle of a continuously renewing, democratic society of today.

ecclesiastical small groups to carry out a research work into the conciliar documents (Ratzinger in Gánóczy 2004, 809).

Other written reactions, trends, and events.

In addition to the problem of delay or post-conciliar stagnation, Attila Puskás establishes that it is the extreme polarisation of the traditionalists and progressives that has ruled down the decades (Puskás 2003, 315). The Church has been seeking the proper balance between the following two extremes: the cultivation of the spirituality of the Tridentinum, and secondly, fostering such theological, moral or church disciplinary innovations which would have introduced a religious reform only instead of fundamental and essential reforms (No author 1995a, 721)¹². Ferenc Szabó formulates that there were those naïve and fatuous progressives who denied all continuity with the Christian tradition (Szabó 1995, 834). By contrast László Végh stresses that any change has to be introduced by unveiling the essence of the traditions (Végh 1995, 222). Finding the adequate path of progress was not only impeded by this instability within the Church, but by superficiality, one-sidedness and autocratic selections concerning the interpretation and application of the Council's teaching have also overshadowed specific areas of church life down the previous decades. According to Attila Puskás the lack of an adequate reception of the Council could be noted as the cause of these phenomena (Puskás 2003, 322).

Attila Puskás (Puskás 2003, 312) makes general observations about the volume of essays and studies: *A II. Vatikáni Zsinat dokumentumai negyven év távlatából 1962-2002. A zsinati dokumentumok áttekintése és megvalósulása* [Overview and Realization of the Synodical Documents 40 years after the Council], was published for the fortieth anniversary of the official opening of the Council. Comparing this with the publication *A II. vatikáni zsinat tanítása* [The teaching of the II Vatican Council] – published in 1975 – one can observe conspicuous differences. While the authors of the commentaries in the 1975 publication were catholic bishops and priests exclusively, the authors of the 2002 volume show a greater diversity: bishops, diocesan priests, various kinds of monks, lay believers, and moreover, a Lutheran theologian. This significant change – namely that there was a lay believer among the authors of such a significant volume – testifies to the alteration of the local ecclesiastical

¹² It is well-known that even on a world scale the reception of the Council was not smooth. The divide between the traditionalists and modernists deepened more and more. There were some who wanted to turn back to the spirituality of I Vaticanum and the council of Trent, others started to urge already the III Vatican Council (Szabó 1995, 833).

mentality. Attila Puskás interprets it as the acquisition and the concrete realisation model of the conciliar approach.

The article with the title *Fórum az Egyházzól* [Forum on the Church] (No author 1995a, 721), published in the journal *Távlatok*, formulates that the main concern of the Hungarian Church should be the conciliar *aggiornamento* – mission directed outwards – which is unattainable without an apostolic laity. The lack of priests makes the general mobilisation of mature and skilled lay people even more pressing. Fortunately in recent years more and more bishops have made efforts to carry out improvements and effectively collaborate with the reform movements.

István Krómer (Krómer 1995, 738-740) starts a discussion and mentions some hopeful initiatives, like the theological and religious training of the laity, which could be the base for further developments. He says that some of these educated lay people are already taking part in the new evangelisation crusades of the local community. In this article the appearance and consolidation of various communal and spiritual movements of the youth, as well as the springing up of new local communities are mentioned as remarkably important phenomena of the recent years. He also refers to other momentous movements which have a strong lay communal character, such as the charismatic and the Focolar spiritual movements, the Regnum Marianum, the Bárka (The Ark) and the most problematic Bokor Movement. These remarks highlight the increased significance of the laity in the renewed evangelisation and the restoration of the communal character of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary. The process of the rehabilitation of the lay status is definitely perceivable.

Another reference to the importance of the lay apostolate is made in connection with the universal renewal of the Church. Attila György (György 1995, 745), pointing to different ways of renewal, expresses his conviction that small communities – mainly composed by the laity – have a crucial role in the fundamental regenerative work of the Holy Spirit in our Church. This observation is also supported by Ferenc Tomka, who stresses the fact that the instruments of Church renewal in any age are lay communities with a radical evangelistic lifestyle (Tomka 2003, 116).

In a period when the appreciation of the laity is going to be the general tendency, there are still reactions emphasising the difference, both in degree and in substance, between the general priesthood of believers and the ministry of the hierarchy (Várnai 2003, 104; Boros 1996, 762)¹³. For instance Father Bulányi and some of the members of his community are

¹³ It is noticeable that an instruction published by the Vatican Congregation in 1997 emphasises only the difference of service (Várnai 2003, 104).

condemned on these grounds. They drifted away from the official teaching of the Church, that is, the II Vatican Council as they do not agree with having two substantially different statuses and ministries within the one people of God (No author 1995b, 779).

Erika Boros (Boros 1996, 762-763) interviewed György Jakubinyi, archbishop of Gyulafehérvár (Alba-Julia) in Romania in the summer of 1996, and proposed the following question to him: how far could the activity of the laity be expanded in the life of the Church according to the *aggiornamento*? The archbishop referred to the official teaching of the II Vatican Council, namely that the ministry of the clergy differs from the ministry of the other believers essentially. In this light he asserted that “the laity has to do everything which is not limited to the ordained ministry of the clergy, and the supernatural power conferred to them through the ordination...”. It is obvious that the practical realisation of the *aggiornamento* points ahead to many issues to be clarified and tasks to be solved theoretically and practically alike.

The article with the title *Együttműködés a világiakkal a küldetésünkben* [Co-operation with the Laity in our Mission] (No author 1995c, 863) provides information on a part of the closing document of the 34. General Assembly of the Jesuit Order. For years the basic endeavour of the Society of Jesus has been to cultivate the co-operation with laity in their apostolic activity and to help them in its implementation. The Society of Jesus deems it extremely important to involve the laity in the life of the Church to a far greater extent and in a much more creative way than it is currently. This document states that in the last three decades an increasing number of lay people have been obedient to their calling.¹⁴ Their mission is seen as one of the most prominent ways the people of God can serve the world building up His Kingdom and making it perceivable on the earth. It is interesting that increasing co-operation with the laity has broadened the Society of Jesus’s missionary vision. The newly established partner relationship has also transformed the possible ways of its accomplishment. It appears that the leading function of the laity in the apostolic work of the Jesuits will expand in the future.

Yet, the general situation of the ecclesiastical settings in Hungary is much more coloured. The appreciation and embracement of the believers does not occur everywhere and it is not without difficulties. One of the most pressing and needed change is the initiation of the laity into the government and work of the Church. An article quotes lay members of various communities expressing their opinion about the issue in question. It is mentioned that

¹⁴ It is formulated in the same document that according to the clear signs of the times in the next millennium the Church will be called “the Church of the laity” (No author 1995c, 863).

in the diocesan councils the increasing significance of the laity has been recognized and formulated, but theoretical statements have been put into practice unfortunately only in a few places. Therefore trust in the laity still isn't very common. This article also touches upon the changing circumstances and motivations of the laity already engaged in mission (No author 1997, 60).

The brotherly community, called *Zsinati Kör* [Synodical Circle] produced a comprehensive study of the significance of the laity. Their expressed conviction is that we can reckon with a dozen of changes regarding their position in the Church (Kamarás 1995, 73). István Mészáros prompts the question of how the laity can be involved in specific, worthwhile ways in the dioceses of the Hungarian Church (Mészáros 1995, 81). Jakab Várnai deals with the clarification of the ecclesiastical aspects of various lay services in the Church. He considers it important that the co-operation of lay believers in the pastoral services be put in a proper ecclesiastical perspective (Várnai 2003, 102). Lóránt Orosz (Orosz 2003, 106) deals with the pastoral function of the laity. He investigates the matter of entrusting a parish to lay people (*commissae laicis*) (according to statistical data in 1999 there were seven such parishes in Hungary), and that of the lay pastoral subsidiary (this terminology appears also in the article with the title *Mindenki apostol* [Everybody is apostle] written by Ottokár Prohászka). In the background of this model or development he detects the increasing shortage of priests and the excessive burden on existing priests (No author 1997, 61). He refers to the dominical church service of the laity in the absence of priests and tries to discuss some potential dangers and canonical aspects of such progressions. He also points to specific contradictions between Church dogmas, the practical realization of the Council's program and the canonical terminology.

Ferenc Tomka (Tomka 2003, 114) contributes to our issue significantly. He emphasizes the increasing recognition of pastoral theology in the last forty years, and that only a living community could meet and answer the problems in every level of pastoral care. In the context of this theological clarification and the progression of the last decades, the restorative image and function of the laity will hopefully go through a similar reconceptualization.

The various approaches of authors, the different ways of looking at and thinking about the initiation of lay believers in the mission and ministry of the Church, the renewal movements mentioned, the enthusiasm and endeavours highlighted in written sources – all of these may convince us – although they may be less known – that essential and remarkable changes and progressions are taking place in the wide and richly coloured field of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary with regard to the changing paradigm of laity.

In accordance with the aforementioned issues we can frankly state that we need to stop and render an account, to reveal the impact of the II Vatican Council comprehensively. For the sake of launching a perceivably new era in the history of our Church, however, we have to learn the lessons from our virtue or reap the harvest of the errors of the last forty years. Under the essentially new circumstances of our days we need novel pastoral ways, renewed basic principles, and new means for evangelization. In compliance with this the rehabilitation of the lay status, its significance and duty is necessary both in the Church and in the world. Even the Council Fathers saw the evaluation of the questions under discussion extremely important in the different parts of the universal Church (Tolnay 1966, 28). Are we open to hear and do we obey the invitation of God – given to us both through the Council event and the basically changed climate of our contemporary age – to start contributing to a shift of paradigms in becoming a living community of living stones in our fragmented environment?

IV. The two movements in the ‘movement church’

IV.1. General overview of the ‘movement church’

Facts concerning the movement church are available as a result of various precious surveys made by the sociologist of religion István Kamarás and his workgroup. We base on their valuable results in order to provide a historical and general overview of this part of the Church.

Movement church was almost extinct between 1949-1965 (in the period of dictatorship) since the various fellowships, associations and organisations could not operate legally any more owing to the church policy of the state of that time. Underground movements continued their activities illegally, even though they were deprived of their institutions. Organically they were transformed into small groups and in many cases they functioned under the supervision of lay people instead of that of clergymen. The continuous harassment, threats, and later “show trials” made the underground movements almost cease to flow.

Miklós Blanckenstein (in: Kamarás 2003, 146) evaluates the semi-legal period between 1965-1973 (the determining political causes and background of which we can’t afford to elaborate on here) as an extremely significant era in the Church because this was the beginning of a new pattern of Christianity. It is at this time that the movement church starts to reawaken. It appears to be a less clerical line, having evangelisation among its central aims. A new subculture emerges. Small communities revive and develop contacts with the official teaching of the Church.¹⁵

From about forty movements within the movement church, with the exception of a dozen, the majority started or restarted their operation after the change of regime, between 1989-1995. At this time approximately 2500-3000 small communities could be reckoned with a membership of approximately thirty or forty thousand. The great majority of the movements consisted of 10-15 strong small groups or small communities. They realized, what played a significant role in their establishment, that the individualisation of Christianity, Christian life becoming impersonal, and the lack of genuine Christian communities is an undesirable state which does not meet Jesus’ intention.

¹⁵ Yet, in the survey of István Kamarás it is made evident that regrettably in the 1970s the movements and the institutional church scarcely met each other (Kamarás 2003, 146).

Yet, there were other facts at play as well like the acute need for communities in the civilised world, the Christian lay people's searching for their role and place, and the criticism of the clericalisation and centralisation of the Church. The forceful restrictions of Christian life and communities, and the abolishment of religious institutions and organisations also featured the determining atmosphere of the developments in Hungary (Kamarás 2003, 147).

It is quite a contradictory fact that in the climate of extensive freedom the number of the base communities did not increase during the period under discussion. One reason which could be mentioned is that a significant part of the religious elite found their place in such organisations, associations and communities where beside inwardness intellectualism also got a significant role. The appearance of other Catholic institutions¹⁶ provided further alternatives for partnership. The effect of the base communities and of the spiritual movement grew among seminarians, as well as in universities and colleges.

Another reason for this development was that numerous eminent lay leaders and members of small communities got a role in the public and ecclesiastical life.

The fact that the operation of communities became institutionalised and public was a change which had primarily numerous positive effects in themselves. Yet, there are many who feel that these changes resulted in losing the quality of inwardness.

However, certain alterations could be registered concerning the official ecclesiastical leadership at this time. The reason for this development was the active participation of the members of various small communities in the life of the parishes. Owing to this process the relationship between the diocesan leadership and movements, as well as between parishes and base communities became stronger. Despite of this fact, yet there are many who experience that the church does not take notice of the existence of small communities, and it does not lay claim to their ministry (Kamarás 2003, 149).

The brochure titled *Lelekiségek és mozgalmak az egyházmegyékben* [Spiritualities and movements in the archdiocese] registered 31 organisations. Imre Dániel, the editor, arranged them in groups according to their field of function in the following way: lay communities of monastic orders; movements working with families, married couples and the youth; charitable and prayer communities; charismatic communities; communities for specific groups; and other religious movements (Kamarás 2003, 142).

For various reasons the volume and extent of the movement church is difficult to estimate (Kamarás 2003, 128). The largest movements are the Bokor, the Regnum Marianum, the Charismatic Renewal and the Focolare movements. At the beginning of the 90s four

distinct types of small communities are outlined: those belonging to spiritual movements or to parishes, small communities that can be connected to a charismatic person and finally totally independent communities.

The features of base communities were summarised by Zsuzsa Horváth at the beginning of the 80s, and they haven't changed since then: 1. personal character, 2. commitment, 3. equality between priests and lay people, and between men and women 4. decentralised structure, 5. uniform ideology, 6. immediate horizontal relationships which are not characteristic of the institutional church, 7. building mutual contacts between individual base communities, 8. openness towards those who do not belong to any movement (Kamarás 2003, 150).

It is a commonly shared opinion in the Church that without the help and contribution of the spiritual movements the renewal of parishes is unimaginable (Kamarás 2003, 128). The Hungarian diocesan councils define the significance and task of small communities in the "leaven-function", the missionary commitment and the animation of parish life. Moreover, the participants of the councils appropriate a function to them in religious instruction, family pastorate and in the preparation of receiving the sacraments. István Kamarás points out that the discrepancy between practice and the Hungarian diocesan conciliar recommendations, defined between 2000 and 2003, is quite significant today. In the majority of parishes no trace of these guiding principles can be seen (Kamarás 2003, 129).

Yet, it is a growing empirical fact that wherever they appear spiritual movements ferment and bring fire to the life of the parish with their enthusiasm and catalyse the establishment of communal congregations. The parishes according to their features and characteristics adopt and implement the values of a certain spiritual current. The faithful who belong to one of them become spiritually demanding. They are the most reliable and most productive Christians with regard to the various duties of the parish. Ferenc Bindecs argues that they are the only ones who evangelise, even on the streets (Kamarás 2003, 125). Those who are concerned about and struggle for renewing the parish pastorate and seek possible means for it suggest among others the involvement of the spiritual movements into the parish pastoral approach.

This section is intended to provide a general overview on the development and struggles of the movement part of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary in the midst of a changing ecclesiastical, political and cultural environment which has significantly effected it. We have seen a new way of being Church, namely the establishment and intensive

¹⁶ Such as the Catholic institutions for adult education, religious exercises, meaningful entertainment and sport, and societies demanding less time and commitment, like the Scouting movement, clubs, courses, the youth organisations of Christian parties and others (Kamarás 2003, 148).

development of numerous small communities, also demonstrating the possibility and basic necessity to be and act in a new way as apostles of Christ. The opinion is shared that this process points to the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church in its wholeness, in which the spiritual movements will have a crucial place. In the following sections, therefore, two diverse spiritual movements will be analysed and discussed in order to reveal their contribution and importance in the ecclesiastical process towards a new pattern of Christianity, by which the laity may feel themselves a real part of the Church and its task in the world, which transition is unimaginable without an urgent ecclesiastical renaissance.

IV.2. The Bokor Movement

As has already been said, in this chapter of the study we intend to provide an overview of the significance and contribution of the Bokor and the Catholic Charismatic movements to the transformation of the lay status and active participation in the apostolic duty of the Church. The main purpose of this chapter is to reveal the implementation of the conciliar declarations concerning the lay issue in the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary through the examination and analysis of the aforementioned movements. This part is included here because it helps to expose further details with regard to the process and shaping of a new lay paradigm at grassroots level of the Church. In order to meet this aim the following themes will be touched upon: 1. historical overview from the beginnings; determinative ecclesiastical and political influences; 2. the impact of the Bokor Movement on its members and on the Church; 3. missionary conceptions and actions; plans and aspirations concerning the future; and 4. summary.

IV.2.1. Historical overview

To begin with, we will pursue to become familiar with the many-folded facts and events which have paved the history of the Bokor Movement, because we suppose that this endeavour will help us to trace back the development and shaping of the specific missionary thinking and activity characteristic of the movement, as well as its reasons and background. Moreover, this will contribute to our gaining an overview of the members' way of thinking about themselves as lay Christians in the Roman Catholic Church.

IV.2.1.1. Beginnings

The Piarist monk-teacher, György Bulányi, founder of the Bokor Movement, remembers the beginnings in this way: “in February of 1945 a Croatian Jesuit monk moved into the Piarist monastery of Debrecen. One day he came into my room. He could not speak Hungarian, I could not speak Croatian. Since I am a German teacher as well, we spoke in German. He told me that he had a small, working-girls group in *Nyilas* settlement, one district of Debrecen. Since these girls did not really know the German language, he invited me to visit his group to translate for him. I went there. Those teenagers were talking about boys, an issue which really interested them, in a liberated atmosphere. Thereafter, the monk came into my room and told me about a working-girls, a working-boys, a student and an intellectual group which he had also established there. Yet, he had to move to the Soviet Union and asked me to take over the student group. I asked him: for what purpose does this group exist? ‘Because – he answered, we became a Soviet area and in a short time the Church and the faith can be maintained only by becoming an underground movement and gathering in small underground communities’. He was the older so I believed him. ‘And what shall I do with them?’, I asked him. ‘I like literature and folk-dance very much and I can play the guitar.’ ‘These things will not be suitable’ – he said to me. ‘You have to reach for your theological notes which justify that God exists, the soul is immortal and there is eternal life’. In the next years I was trying to teach these issues, but the girls did not show any interest in this matter. They all had a traditional Christian background and due to religion-classes they were fed up with such abstract thoughts” (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

After three years involvement in small communities, due to a political change the school and every churchly property were taken away by the state in 1948. “Life compelled us to become an underground movement. Not the priests, not the Church, because the priests became “peace priests”,¹⁷ and were scared. [...] There was only one single priest in the Csonkavárad diocese who understood what we were doing. He would have joined us but was gripped by the fear from prison. Between 1948-1952 I conducted illegal, three-day spiritual exercises in at least twenty cities. These courses had a great impact on the participating youth. Even at midnight they were still discussing the subjects they had heard about” (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

Bulányi has given an example of this kind of deeply moving topic. “I was in agony because the suggestion of the Jesuit monk simply did not work, so I reached for the Gospel. For instance, on these spiritual days we meditated about Jesus’ words like ‘Love your

¹⁷ The term refers to those who agreed to serve the state’s interest during the totalitarian communist regime.

enemies'. We asked ourselves: what does this mean for us? How can we love our enemies when this seems to be nonsense and absurd?

What happened was that after seven years of theological study I finally started to take it seriously what Jesus had said. As a consequence this revolutionised the atmosphere around me. The youth recruited new people in this way: 'There is a catholic priest, who can tell us about more than the sixth command'" (Bulányi 08.16.2005). As Miklós Tomka says: "He used a familiar language which stunned them with its simplicity" (in: Kamarás 2002, 151).

We can see that in the early phase of the movement's history the Gospel of Jesus Christ got the central place. This development was partly generated by the poor efficacy of abstract theological thoughts and issues experienced by them. But the members, who were nourished and shaped by the Gospel's truths and spirituality and became deeply committed to follow the way showed to them by Jesus, became at the same time the target of hostile political forces.

IV.2.1.2. Stagnation and restart

Hardly had the life and activity of the movement started, that it almost totally broke up due to the resolution of the totalitarian communist regime to destroy the Church and primarily its active missionary communities. The Bokor Movement restarted only from the middle of the 60s. Bulányi defines the causes of this crisis in this way: "In 1952 all of the leaders of the Bokor Movement were imprisoned. The charge against us was that our organisation aimed at the overthrow of the political system. The public prosecutor sentenced me, as the leader of this conspiracy, to death by hanging. Eventually he agreed to life imprisonment owing to my mother's request. I was set free in 1961" (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

Máté-Tóth, who has a thorough knowledge of the Bokor Movement, asserts that the radically new self-interpretation of Bulányi and of the communities which slowly started to become reorganised after the years of prison was provoked not by the 1951 Bolshevik annihilation attempt against the society and the Church, but rather by the so-called partial agreement between Vatican and the Hungarian People's Republic in 1964 (Kamarás 2003, 151).

Thereafter the ecclesiastical policy and atmosphere in Hungary was totally changed, mainly due to the influence of the state. The members of the Bokor Movement had the growing feeling that the leadership of the Church had abandoned them, albeit they could already be reckoned as the pioneers of the renewal justified by the current Council. One of the members personally experiencing this change says: "We, as committed followers of Jesus and

faithful servants of the Church became black sheep in the eyes of our superiors” (Bulakai M. 07.31.2005). Bulányi reflects on these times: “Those who submitted, who joined the queue, became “peace priests”, later on bishops. This was the very moment that I asked myself: ‘Whose soldier am I?’ The result of this wrestling with myself was seven years spiritual work and the four-volume book with the title: *Keressétek Isten Országát* (KIO) [Seek the Kingdom of God].¹⁸ I cleared up for myself what Jesus had said. [...] We became revived owing to this study” (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

We can see that beyond the personal experiences quoted, and the wrestles and persecutions provoked by atheistic political ambitions and by the Church, dependent on the state, due to the impact of Jesus’ life and words the spiritual development of the movement and the formation of another pattern of identity in its members started. István Kamarás establishes that “instead of a *priest-centric and regional church the conciliar-evangelical communal church* became the determining element of the Bokor-identity (italics author)” (Kamarás 2003, 151).

However, in the light of oral history the use of the expression “conciliar” could be disputed in this statement. The notion of Kamarás suggests that the conciliar interpretation of the Church could be identified with the evangelical communal church. But in the case of the Bokor Movement the conviction concerning this issue is different. The view of Bulányi about the Council event, also shared by some members interviewed, is complex. It is appreciative, but at the same time highly critical concerning certain declarations of *Lumen Gentium*, as well as concerning the actual realisation of its reformatory aspirations. Looking at this question in detail we gain an insight into the attitude of the movement to the II Vatican Council.

The second chapter of the *Lumen Gentium*, providing the adequate base for a more faithful and authentic image of God’s community as a whole, introduces a new central concept: that of the people of God. The critical observation of Bulányi is that despite these heartening statements, the next chapter of the document presents the hierarchical constitution of the Church, which makes a sharp distinction between ordained ministers and the rest of the people of God. The standpoint of the Bokor Movement is that the conciliar interpretation of the Church’s image basically remained as of old – hierarchical and authoritarian – and it could not be harmonised with the biblical view of God’s Church. Owing to a systematic and absorbed study of the gospels and as a consequence of becoming familiar with Jesus’ will and way of thinking, however, the Bokor members could not agree with the conception that there could be two different statuses within the one Body of Christ – as the Council declares it. In

¹⁸ Seek the kingdom of God; further referred to as KIO.

addition it proclaims that these two, i.e. the common priesthood of the faithful and the hierarchical priesthood “differ from one another in essence and not only in degree” (LG 10).

For that very reason the general view of the Bokor Movement is that the conciliar image of the Church is fundamentally inconsistent with Jesus’ intention. With other words, it is not evangelical-communal concerning its basic character. Therefore they could not identify themselves with these statements. A woman, who used to be the leader of four small communities, is convinced that “... the twofold faithfulness, namely faithfulness to Jesus and faithfulness to the Church does not function. To be faithful to the Church does not mean to be faithful to Jesus, and inversely” (Bulakai M. 07.31.2005).

The Bokor Movement contradicts a statement which is fundamental in the conciliar explanation of the Church. It is logical therefore that their sharp critique, considered unjust by Church authorities, made the situation of the movement even worse within the Hungarian ecclesiastical frame. The “black sheep” turned even blacker. It is regrettable that this development undermined the possibility of productive collaboration with the institutional part of the Church in its strenuous process of transition and change.

Simultaneously, Bokor members acknowledge that the II Vatican Council emboldened them and partly legitimated their reformatory thoughts and efforts. It even justified them before the authorities of the Church, who persecuted and condemned them for their conviction and activities. A young man thinks that the increase in the number of lay leaders within the movement was a conciliar effect (Bajnok D. 09.01.2005).

Miklós Tomka points out that Bulányi frequently built on texts which had been written in a conciliar spirit (Kamarás 2003, 151-152). Bulányi tells us that they “read the conciliar documents with pleasure. Some of its statements are admirable, for example how the Christ-like way of life is outlined” (Bulányi 08.16.2005). For that very reason he is quite disappointed concerning the actual realization: “We have not experienced any change in the field that lay people could share in the various duties of the Church, as it is emphasised in the documents until now, twenty years after the beginning of our underground movement. We have experienced that some priests and nuns joined, others gave us a wide berth. The experience of the Bokor members was and is that believers are only allowed to clean up the building of the church and do odd jobs free of charge. The authorities were very concerned about the possibility that priests could be left without a means of making a living as a result of the appraisal of lay people”¹⁹ (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

¹⁹ We refer here briefly to the composition and life of small communities in this period. Although the members were devout Catholics from parishes where the priest belonged to the movement, small communities became more and more the seat of spiritual life and lifestyle. The meetings started with prayer; spiritual life first of all meant the examination of New Testament by means of a word-analysis method. In this spiritual-intellectual

The roots of the way of thinking of Bokor members about themselves and about their duty become clear to see while studying this period of the movement's history. The development of the Bokor-identity was primarily inspired and shaped not by the Council event, but by the continuous and comprehensive exploration of Jesus' words, by becoming familiar with the spirituality and way of thinking of Jesus Christ, through the absorbed study of the Gospel in a communal atmosphere.

The events sketched in this paragraph were important for us not only in order to provide an insight into the period of the Bokor history under review. Without becoming familiar with the political and ecclesiastical context, the attitude of the movement to the Roman Catholic Church, as well as its impact on it, could hardly be understood.

In this subsection we have pointed to the reasons for stagnation in the historical development of the Bokor, namely the crisis caused by the political objectives of the communist regime for annihilating the living communities of the Church and by the international ecclesiastical policy of the Roman Catholic Church, which took a stance against active missionary communities at that time. These facts convey the message that the ambitions for change and innovation in Church history arise through paths of painful struggles. On the other hand, light has been shed on the fact that the reasons for the crisis became the reasons for starting afresh. The radically new self-interpretation of Bulányi was provoked. The result of this inner transitional process was the fundamental book about the kingdom of God (KIO) written by him. This literature, after the Gospel, became the central spiritual nourishing source of the communities' members which significantly contributed to a next step in the transitional process with regard the new pattern of identity and duty of the laity.

We have also learnt that the Bokor Movement does not accept every conciliar declaration with regard the true nature of the Church nor, as a natural consequence, the resolution which makes a sharp distinction between ordained ministers and the rest of the Catholic baptised. The conclusion could be drawn that the conciliar event has to be critically received, its declarations must be carefully examined and tested on a biblical basis. This bold intellectual and spiritual attitude of the Bokor Movement is crucial for the authentic transition of the lay paradigm. It sheds light upon the fact that the restoration of the essential role and meaning of the laity in the apostolic mission, as an urgent task of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary, cannot and must not be based primarily on the II Vatican Council, but on the Gospel and restorative mission of Jesus Christ.

work KIO provided the basic help. In addition, various selected readings and the discussion of existing theoretical problems also stimulated the intellectual efforts within the groups from month to month.

Following the above glance into the beginnings, stagnation and restart of the movement under review, the period of expansion will be briefly discussed. The purpose, even in this section, is to focus on the significance of this period with regard to the central issue of the present study, that of the history of the emergence of a new lay paradigm in the Church.

IV.2.1.3. The period of expansion

András Máté-Tóth asserts that the great expansion period of the Bokor Movement was in the 70s and the early 80s, when about 150 community leaders and several thousand members belonged to the movement. Many consider that it was the high intellectual level, and the exacting and suggestive personality of Bulányi that attracted such a multitude of believers. Community leaders were required to “fish together” small communities of 6-8 members within one or two years. Beside the study of the Gospel, primary values were the organisation of the *communal apostolicity*, as well the personal and radical Jesus imitation, which was supervised by the community (Bulányi 1995, 78-81;129).

According to the narration of Kristóf and Dániel Bajnok, two young men well-informed about the Bokor Movement, it was common in this period right up to the 90s to deliver so-called *Szamizdat*'s. *Szamizdat* meant writings produced by the members of various small communities after working hours, which were illegal, therefore forbidden to be published and propagated (yet they were copied with carbon paper). These writings were the subjects of the meetings as well. The small communities at this time were serious-minded, spiritual and intellectual workshops, without a central control.

With the passing of the time this process lead to ramification, to serious emphasis displacements and differences. Several significant personalities stood out, who determined a particular tendency and whom certain members from the movement joined. For example the esoteric and demystificative (“Jesus did not die, his life and teaching is only a model”) lines, traditional trends and the camp of those members who rejected the exaggerated intellectuality of the 80s and were eager to see realised what they believed in (Bajnok K. and D. 09.01.2005).

The happenings of this period as well as earlier ones help us to see the developing characteristics of a new lay paradigm in the Bokor Movement. The movement established such a set of conditions and spiritual atmosphere which familiarized members with the absorbed study of the Gospel, critical thinking and with producing scholarly writings. They were incited to a personal and radical imitation of Jesus, and consequently to practice their apostolic mission. We have seen that the special method for the missionary task during this

period was drawing together small communities. It has become clear that the aforementioned characteristics may provide a proper perspective along which the features and profile of an authentic lay being could be determined in the future of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary.

In this section it has also become apparent that the absolute lack of central control concerning the spiritual and intellectual developments of this period led to the ramification of the movement, which process in itself should not be problematic. Nevertheless, in the long run this resulted in disintegration of the movement, inner conflicts between the diverse spiritual trends and a mutual lack of understanding. These symptoms could be revealed by a comprehensive study of the Bokor. Naturally, this fact did not aid the restorative work of the Holy Spirit in terms of the rehabilitation of lay being through the endeavours of this movement, nor did the other conflicts of differing character. Because the international (and in any case inconsistent) ecclesiastical policy of this time had a significant and powerful effect on the history of Bokor, these conflicts will be dealt with to a certain extent below.

IV.2.1.4. Conflicts

Based on the above thoughts, the aim of this section is to reveal the importance and effect of this period on the developing new lay paradigm which just had just begun to flourish.

The leadership of the Church with bishop László Lékai at its head, under the control of the dictatorship, launched a campaign against small communities in the 70s. When it became obvious that the Vatican supported spiritual movements, the Bokor Movement alone remained the target of attacks. A theological delegation, composed of Hungarian theologians, assumed that two writings of Bulányi were incompatible with Catholic doctrines. Despite Bulányi's professions of allegiance in 1982 the Episcopal conference condemned and deprived him from practicing the public priestly function (this resolution is still valid). The problematic point was that Bulányi, although referring to the Council, which emphasises the liberty of conscience, accepted the faith (doctrines) of the Church only on the basis of his conscience. The Church authorities could not tolerate this relative faithfulness to the Church, also characteristic of most Bokor members. The Church could not tolerate that they were thinking as 'home-protestants' in certain respects – as István Krómer refers to them (cf. Kamarás 2003, 154). Thereupon, various discriminations afflict not only him, but almost all members of the movement up to the present. Apart from a few exceptions, they are not allowed to fulfil various ecclesiastical functions within the institutional framework. Their service was and is

not accepted or recognised not even despite destitute pastoral conditions as it is claimed by István Kamarás (Kamarás 2003, 153).

The Bokor Movement is also ignored as a result of its biting Church critique, its hierarchical structure, its ecclesiastical leadership and its policy. Therefore Miklós Blanckenstein argues that although the majority of them are eminent Christians, yet they have left the straight and narrow path. This is why their catholicity has to be questioned (Kamarás 2003, 153).

There are various guesses as to the development of the strained relations between the Church and the Bokor Movement. Máté-Tóth considers that it was the “leadership of the Church, which had suffered under the pressure of communism, which made the Bokor Movement become a chancre for the Roman Catholic Church” (Máté-Tóth 1995, 770). Miklós Tomka does not agree with this statement. His view is that the development of the schism between the Church and the Bokor is primarily due to their refusal of the military service for reasons of conscience (Kamarás 2003, 152). In the time of communism conscientious objectors were sentenced to prison without being defended by Church dignities.

The problem was that the tameness and non-violence of their Jesus imitation, a fundamental value of the movement up to the present, contradicted the official Catholic teaching until the II Vatican Council. Being devoted to the refusal of military service for reasons of conscience, the movement objected not only the state, but its Church as well. István Krómer shares the opinion of Tomka, but acknowledges that today it is already clear that they had been right in this question (Kamarás 2003, 154).

The relationship between the Church and the Bokor Movement.

The attitude of the Church towards the movement just presented determined the attitude of Bokor members towards the institutional Church fundamentally, as well as their impact on its general situation. According to the narration of a young couple (both of whom were born into the movement) there are two major tendencies.

On the one hand there is the line of György Bulányi, who despite his personal rejection emphasises faithfulness to the Church and demands the same from the members, too. Nevertheless his next notion seems slightly contradictory: “The Bokor has had a relationship with the institutional frame since 60 years ago when the first priest joined the movement and as a consequence could implement the mentality and values of the Bokor in the life of his parish. The existence and reality of Bokor is not characteristically in contact and communication with the institution. What is characteristic is that small community meetings

are held every fortnight, where no distinction is made between the priests and the faithful. For example thirty years ago a woman became the mentor of a small community which also had some Piarist priests as among its members” (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

This process has changed to some extent during the last decades. By today the Bokor Movement is in contact with the institution not through the priests, but owing to the activity of certain lay members. Máté-Tóth calls them “sacristans”, who break away with the sharp Church critic generally characteristic to the entire movement, rediscover themselves and are active in the ecclesiastical ministry. A very good example for this is the history of a middle-aged man, who works as a teacher. Today he is the main co-ordinator of the parish in Nótincs (a small village in country Nógrád with a population of 1,600), where the priest died a few months ago.²⁰

The other line is represented by Lajos Kovács, who once went into the Church and became priest, but later changed his profession. He is a married man now, who works independently from the institutional frames. In the era of communism he used to gather together hundreds of young people. At his parish, which was one of the capital parishes, there was sparkling spiritual life. For instance, this place was crucial in the spiritual development of the aforementioned teacher in Nótincs. Naturally, the state did everything to stop and destroy his activity. As a consequence the leadership of the Church displaced him to a remote and solitary place. In the context of his past it seems reasonable that he distances himself from the Church and does not want to build any relationship with it.

In this section we have encountered the central conflict the Bokor Movement had to confront. That is the conflict with the official leadership of the Church, due to the relative faithfulness to the Church characteristic of most Bokor members. In practice, this meant the critical and partial acceptance of the official teachings and declarations of the Church, as of the II Vatican Council. For instance, they represented meekness and non-violence in the imitation of Jesus; they did not agree with the declaration of the Council with regard to the hierarchical structure and doctrine of the Church, of the two brands of Christians, the two substantially different kinds of ministry of the one missionary people of God.

We could also see how this attitude sealed the destiny of the members within the institutional framework of the Roman Catholic Church and their relationship towards it. They were not appreciated or respected, they were deprived of opportunities to fulfil their calling, namely to exercise their apostolate in the world as urged by the Council. This historical situation is largely responsible for why Bokor members had to earn a living and fulfil their missionary calling outside the official framework. It must be recognised that constructing and

²⁰ I will return to his story, thoughts and aspirations later on page 53.

shaping a new way of being and acting as lay faithful under such ecclesiastical circumstances which consider certain unalterable dogmas and doctrines normative and authoritative, means that every step taken is a painful struggle. This situation may well provide a channel for creative tension, as the essential generator of holistic ecclesiastical renaissance. The effects which seem to be negative and disillusioning in themselves may hide the necessary seeds of great possibilities. They may goad us on to familiarise ourselves with the terra incognita of *missio Dei* in the light of the society in which we live.

IV.2.1.5. The period of crisis

This section deals with the recent past and present of the Bokor Movement. The reasons for the present crisis and situation will be set out in order to draw conclusions and lessons in the context of the central topic under discussion, the rehabilitation of the lay status and function in the Church. Moreover, when planning wisely for the future, already in possession and awareness of precious lessons acquired from history, the task of elaborating a new kind of lay existence on the eschatological horizon will be crucial.

The political transformation made meaningful alterations to the typical character and everyday life of the Bokor Movement, as well as to the life of numerous other movements. Although the oppression of the state has ended, yet the Bokor's relation with the Roman Catholic Church has not got better. The sociological survey of István Kamarás makes it evident that their activities broadened and became legal. Now they can aid starving people in the third world through legal channels, they publish books and articles and studies in their private magazine. The effort of their ecological group is widely acknowledged. Their charitable activity is broadening (Kamarás 2003, 154).

In spite of the manifold developments and all the meritorious achievements there are various viewpoints represented concerning this period of the movement. József Merza considers that even today the movement is still in the stage of seeking ways and means (Kamarás 2003, 155). Máté-Tóth (in: Kamarás 2003, 155) diagnoses a "strong identity-crisis of the movement" and establishes that the movement decreasing even in numbers disintegrates into four branches of communities. He thinks that this period started back in 1982. He regards this stage as the prolonged period of crisis which could be characterized by the radical structural change and the searching for an identity.²¹ The conclusions of the oral

²¹ It appears to Miklós Tomka that as a result of the *churchly marginalisation*, group meetings became overburdened with the problems of conflicts. As a result, those members who found it difficult to bear the tension started to drop away, especially the priests (Kamarás 2003, 155). It is also part of the truth that after 1989 the Bokor Movement ceased to be necessary for the Church.

history explored in connection with this period are similar to the aforementioned opinions. The interviews made a significant contribution to our efforts to expose the background of the actual crisis more comprehensively.

Tamás Bulkai lights it up that while in Slovakia a movement of weekend seminars for married couples evolved owing to the encouragement of a Piarist Jesuit monk, in our country, owing to the attitude of mind of György Bulányi, who had been emboldened by the same Jesuit monk to establish underground communities in Hungary, the Bokor became a rather intellectual-rational movement (Bulkai T. 07.31.2005). Those who joined this movement, had to learn ancient Greek and other European languages to be able to read contemporary theological works, studies and books written in foreign languages. As a consequence, it was mainly those holding high spiritual standards who could integrate into the small communities of the Bokor. Tamás Bulkai says that there is no “factory worker“ or “farmer branch” within the movement. Moreover, in the majority of cases there were and still aren't any programs for children. The conviction which shaped this attitude was (yet marks of changes are perceivable in this issue nowadays) that only after the school-leaving examination is it possible to speak to the teenagers about the kingdom of God. Despite the fact that “families with many children” were among the fundamental values of the movement, children were largely ignored. They experienced so many times that their parents were over-occupied with the affairs of the movement and did not spend evenings at home, while during the meetings they were put into another room to stay there in silence (Bulkai T. 07.31.2005).²²

While focusing at intellectual issues exorbitantly other significant things were left out of consideration. Margit Bulkai remembers the gone decades in the following way: “We were all too intellectual and did not reflect enough upon ourselves. In the meetings there was no opportunity to mutually share and speak about personal problems with each other. It would have been evaluated as meaningless and unwise whining. We did not deal with our emotional life, nobody was interested in inner harmony. For instance, we saw that there were marriages in the community which were in crisis, but we did not speak about it. The movement did not deal with repressed problems. We did not pay enough attention to each other. Not the children and the family had primary importance, but service, study, and all the intellectual things. Therefore there is crisis in the life of our children. Bulányi did not consider personal problems to be an integral part of Christian life. Only intellectual products were really valued. The

²² Accordingly, it is understandable that the fourth generation (children and teenagers) can scarcely be found in the movement today. In the light of Tamás Bulkai's words we can indeed understand, why growing up the children of most Bokor parents do not want to integrate into the movement, and why belonging to the movement does not appear attractive to them.

atmosphere of the movement did not inspire us to serve to ourselves. This is one of the reasons why the movement is stagnating today” (Bulkai M. 08.19.2005).

The facts explored point to the perpetual truth that the lack of harmony between words and deeds, between basic values and the practice of life lead to crisis. Consequently healthy progressions and developments could easily come to an end. God’s purpose with His mission in the world is to restore the whole creation and the entire human being. Jesus was concerned about and focused at the whole person. Reductionism, which neglects the spiritual-emotional part of people, contradicts and paralyses the life-style and mission in Jesus’ way.

Another source of the crisis was the change of regime in 1989. Margit Bulkai describes the events in this way: “We have to be aware of the fact that the Bokor Movement was established in the socialist era and had a persecuted status. It was a faith community based on personal relationships. The hostile medium kept us together and strengthened us in our aspirations to build the kingdom of God. This meant naturally resistance to the regime of that time. After the political change light was thrown upon the missionary motives. It became clear that for a number of members taking part in various illegal missionary activities of the movement meant primarily only an opportunity to express their disapproval of the totalitarian political regime or their antipathy against the ruling political party. After 1989 these members slowly dropped away. Others who were central figures within the movement started to participate in the social sphere. They became members of self-governments or local authorities, which consequently left them less time for the various services in the Bokor. The presence of politics generated division among us. The members in the small communities sympathised with different political parties” (Bulkai M. 08.19.2005).

There were other factors which played a significant role in the development of the crisis: the uncertainty of existence and the market economy as a potential danger. It is a general truth that existence determines consciousness. From the 90s on families with many children in the movement started the struggle to create subsistence. This situation produced loosening relationships while general poverty, another basic value of the movement, was succeeded by the material differentiation of the members. Trust and honesty fell prey to self-interest (Bulkai M. 08.19.2005).

It becomes obvious that the changed political, social and economic factors (the expansion of wild capitalism) worked against the Bokor values and the communal type of existence. To Margit Bulkai and László Miklovicz it appears that while the movement used to function well in the atmosphere of oppression and persecution, in the medium of liberty and great possibilities it started to waver in its foundations. The current atmosphere, the lack of outside pressure has a negative impact on the apostolic aspirations of the movement (Bulkai

M. 08.19.2005; Miklovicz 08.18.2005). A crisis of values could be ascertained as well. Evangelical poverty, tameness and helpfulness are challenged by the thirst for wealth and power, and by individualistic ambitions. Bulányi establishes a decay of moral behaviour (Bulányi 08.16.2005). Later on we will see how the changed circumstances and consequently the crisis of values altered the missionary thinking and endeavours of the members, too.

The oral history, which may be reinforced or corrected by further research, uncovered that the movement is quite introverted in the majority of cases. Members are under the threat of isolation not only from the institutional part of the Church, but from other spiritual renewal movements as well – and first and foremost from society, from the man in the street. The number of those not attending Sunday services continuously increases. There are signs that other kinds of connections to the Church are also going to disappear. This situation became one of the sources of inner conflicts; the founder of the movement does not agree with these kinds of development despite the fact that a number of people are convinced about the appropriateness of the change. With an introverted spirit the movement is unable to meet current challenges.²³

IV.2.1.6. Summary and conclusion

In this section we have seen the background factors which caused crisis in the life of the Bokor Movement. Firstly, it was partly caused by the freedom and legalisation of the activities of the movement following the political changes in 1989. The members were not prepared for this alteration; consequently, they did not know which way to turn. Another source of crisis was the strained relationship between the Bokor Movement and the official leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, which had become permanent. Thirdly, we can attribute the crisis in the movement's life to its radical structural transformation and the search for an identity in the midst of radically changing conditions in society. During the oral history it also became obvious that the one-sided intellectual-rational character of the movement was another factor which produced crisis in the period under review. The problem was not the demanding intellectual emphasis within the movement, but rather the largely ignored emotions, personal problems, inner struggles etc. of the members and the neglected children

²³ In other respects, when gathering oral history it was surprising that most of the members I met – many of whom are leaders of small communities – had scarcely any knowledge of the well-known and widespread Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal nor any relationship with the lay people belonging to it. They showed almost no interest at all to establish connections with any other Christian renewal groups. They were chiefly occupied with the inner affairs of the movement or with different, otherwise noble aspirations and programmes. A middle-aged couple also perceived this problem of isolation. They complained that when they had began the

and younger generation. Finally, the basic values of the movement, for instance families with many children, become relative and are questioned by more and more Bokor members.

All these complex facts together are responsible for the stagnation and uncertainty of the Bokor Movement regarding the effects on laity in the near future.

Conclusions and lessons could be drawn in the light of the sketched historical overview of the movement. In the Gospel, in the revealed divine will is hidden the key for an authentic rehabilitation of lay status and apostolate, as well as for elaborating the urgently needed new lay paradigm of the Roman Catholic Church. In this process, openness – with an introverted spirit one is unable to meet current challenges – and sensitivity towards the needs and conditions of the continuously changing world around us play an essential role, since without this openness the proper new lay paradigm could not be developed in the future.

Light was also cast on the basic truth that the intellectual, spiritual and emotional needs of people have to be in focus in a creative harmony of any missionary endeavour. In the perspective of Jesus' missionary programme, the human being as a whole has to be restored and healed. Referring to the topic of this present study, only on this basis could one hope for the fundamental recovery of lay existence (as well as that of the clergy).

IV.2.2. The effect of the Bokor Movement on its members

After outlining the stormy history of the movement and the formation of the role and significance of the laity down the centuries, we now turn our attention to the examination of the effect of the movement on its members. We deal with this issue to provide a more comprehensive overview of how the movement contributed to the rehabilitation of the lay status and function among Roman Catholic Christians in Hungary.

Therefore in this part of the study we pursue to explore the cause and effect relationship between the Bokor members' way of thinking about themselves, their apostolic mission and endeavours, and the underlying factors without the intention to provide a complete set of references. For this purpose we focus on some guiding questions: Why did or didn't the Bokor members interviewed reflect critically on themselves and their apostolic mission?²⁴ And first and foremost: what was it that led them to think? Why do they think in the way they do about themselves and their missionary duty? What are the reasons?

The background and context of the effects could be traced back to various factors.

service towards homeless people in 1999, only the fourth generation (children and teenagers) helped them with the work from among the Bokor members.

²⁴ It is not a characteristic phenomenon among Roman Catholics to reflect on themselves or on their duty; neither do they show much interest in these questions.

Community model of agape.

In the first place György Bulányi, guided by the fundamental principles of a Christ-like holy order, elaborated on the community model of *agape*. This alternative structure of the movement ensured such an environment, where members could experience and acquire the alternative order of God's reign, which is actually the order of *agape*. To mention only a few features, this means the undertaking of service and the refusal of domination; the undertaking of establishing peace and the refusal of using violence etc. In the order of *agape* benefits or privileges are not known or tolerated. The person who thinks in a new and unusual way is accepted and respected. Diversity inevitably follows from the concept of *agape*. The function of *agape* is the prerequisite of having authority in the Church. Those who belong to the order of *agape*, want to be in community with all mankind. This actually incorporates the aim of uniting all humanity in *agape* (Bulányi 1989, 21-24). Practically, it was these theories that made the members Catholics, open to other denominations as well as towards people belonging to other, non-Christian religions. The community model of *agape* consistently leads us to the next point.

The elimination of the two categories: the reverend priests and believers.

Another effect of the movement on its members was the elimination of the two categories: the reverend priests and believers. The present hierarchical structure of the Church divides the people of God in two categories: clerics, who are responsible for guidance and people not belonging to the clergy, who are only members, deprived from the continuation of the fullness of Jesus' sphere of action. In the Christ-like community model however, outlined by Bulányi, these two categories do not exist. Everybody is considered to be substantially equal, only functions are different. Everybody is leader and subordinate simultaneously. We may remember that this way of thinking contradicts the declaration of II Vatican Council, which still divides the one people of God in two parts.

We can picture this situation better if we understand the specific, so-called "Bokor interpretation" of the term "lay", which is put into the context of Jesus' language. Bulányi reflects on this term in the following way: "Jesus was a lay person. He never made himself ordained to become a priest. He never reckoned his disciples as priests. These two categories of humanity were unknown to him. He knew only one category, namely that of the disciples (*mathetés*). Jesus lived as a lay member in life-community with twelve other lay people. His command was to "make disciples of all nations" in the way he did, gathering twelve people

around himself. He gave us a precedent. Historically the conventional social formula, by which I mean that there are priests and non priests, appeared at a very early stage” (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

He is convinced that “if we reckon the Twelve as people whose field of activity was not relevant for all of their disciples that would lead us to the theoretical division of God’s people into two parts” (Bulányi 1989, 30). Owing to this speculation, Bokor members cannot identify with the deformed teaching of the official Church about laity, and those who used to before joining the movement, went through a gradual process of mental purification.

The Bokor conception about the term ‘priest’ is also different from the official understanding, and even from the conciliar interpretation (LG 19-21). It does not refer to the servants of the sanctuary, but simply to Christ-followers, whose life is set in the service of Christ-like mission. In this manner, everybody is or could become a priest. All members share the same mission, namely the service of Jesus’ heritage to make disciples off all nations. As a consequence, Bokor members think about themselves as priests and pursue to fulfil their duty by establishing communities as Jesus did. Their purpose is to build the kingdom of God in the place and circumstances where they are.

We can conclude in the light of such aspirations that as long as the division of God’s people in two parts is the fundamental element of the current church order and Church authorities are not ready to completely reassess and reform their ecclesiology and its base (maybe at a III Vatican Council), the essential change of the lay paradigm and function remains an utopia within the institutional frame of the Church. The majority of Bokor members are quite pessimistic about this question. They confess that they experience almost no aspirations at all in this direction on the part of church leaders.

The specific teaching style of Bulányi.

The third factor in the background of the movement’s effect on its members was the specific teaching style of Bulányi, by which he taught members first of all to think and to teach others to think, too. He legitimised free-thinking (urged by the Council, yet not practised in the Church) and encouraged members to examine everything. Owing to this pedagogical method he intended to breed conscious Christians. His followers could understand that they shouldn’t accept and believe in everything they were taught. They became free to examine teachings carefully, including the doctrines of the Church, and able to reflect on them critically. This however didn’t and doesn’t mean transgression, disobedience or distrust as it may be considered by the Church office bearers. As a result “members in the

Bokor did not become infantile” – we are told by János B., a man familiar with many communities (Kamarás 2003, 151).

The confessions of certain members about their experience concerning the aforementioned pedagogical method make one think deeply. Margit Bulkai says the following: “He taught us to think and not accept things without examining them. God has placed intellect in every human being. You have to decide what you want yourself, relying on your conscience. I learnt here to measure myself to myself, to accept my boundaries. I was given teachings by which I started to live and bloom as a tuberose. I began to see clearly. I felt honesty beyond these words. I took part in great spiritual exercises held partly by Bulányi, partly by ourselves on his inspiration. He trained us to become partners in everything” (Bulkai M. 07.31.2005).

It is worth spending some time listening to the words of László Miklovicz from Nőtincs as well. He remembers the years of his childhood in this way: “I liked the atmosphere of the church. Traditional religiosity is the very base for becoming susceptible to the Bokor Movement. When I was a student in Sopron I met a Bokor priest on a Sunday, who asked me: ‘Why do you attend Sunday services?’ I was twenty-one at that time. I had been serving at masses for fourteen years, but I have never proposed this question to myself. The priest continued: ‘Who is Jesus Christ for you?’ It is needless to say that I had never thought about this issue either. There are many who go to the church every Sunday, but perhaps never ever face these kinds of questions in the course of their life. Hence they remain infant Christians. They never formulate it what things really mean for them. They never propose questions to themselves. The Church is partly responsible for this situation, since one usually only has a right to accept things and believers are not motivated to contemplate and reflect on crucial issues. The Church failed to make us know the Bible, teach us how to think freely and formulate individual opinions or personal convictions” (Miklovicz 08.18.2005). Meeting the specific pedagogy and teaching style of Bulányi, László’s Christian life was deepened, enriched and filled with new contents. He became a more conscious Christian and a more authentic agent of God’s mission.

Summarising the ideas above, we have dealt with the significance of the pedagogical methods and teaching style of György Bulányi in the context of the topic under investigation, namely the developing of a relevant and authentic lay paradigm. We may conclude that due to this effect the Bokor members shared the possibility of learning to think, to reflect freely and critically, for instance on their faith and missionary activities. Consequently, it helped them to become aware and mature Christians, disciples of Jesus, who are brave enough to break with senseless traditional religiosity and to shoulder the mission and role of pioneers in the

environments where they live. In this way they could even become the promoters of church renewal, as we could see in the case of László Miklovicz. It can be stated firmly that these characteristics should become a reality in the life and mission of lay people in the whole Roman Catholic Church in Hungary.

The study of the gospels and other subjects in nourishing communities.

Returning to the issue of this section, the fourth influence emphasised was the study of the gospels and other subjects in nourishing communities. László Miklovicz continues the narration about his spiritual journey in the 1970s: "...the priest asked me to visit him. A large number of people were gathering in his house. We opened the Bible and started to study it. We formulated interrogative sentences and searched for the answers together. I found it fascinating to search for answers and try to draft what a certain passage meant for me. We learnt to acquire the biblical mentality. For example, we became aware of the way Jesus had thought and had been concerned about people. He dealt with certain individuals intensively and after that he sent them out. The study of the life of Jesus was the very source from which we obtained our missionary identity. We understood that we have to turn outward and call others to follow Jesus' way as well" (Miklovicz 08.18.2005). The words of Miklovicz seem to be contradictory concerning an earlier statement of the inward looking movement. The fact is that the isolation and openness towards outsiders is present simultaneously in the Bokor movement. However, the former was and still is much more characteristic. The fact that the pure biblical teaching and model of Jesus' mission did not penetrate the everyday lives of the Bokor members is an unanswerable question even for Bulányi (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

The words of Miklovicz make it evident that these stimulating meetings and studying the Bible in community also contributed to the development of the missionary identity and apostolic function of the members. They understood what their duty was: to build the kingdom of God in the modern world by training the people in a nourishing communal environment so that they could become authentic and conscious disciples of Jesus.

Besides gaining a new understanding of their identity and duty living Christianity in such a way also contributed to the fact that they could grasp faith in a new way and become adult Christians with a comprehensive outlook. Small communities provided them an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas. They prickled and exercised their minds and prepared them for acting in a mature way. They also provided a place where people could initiate open dialogues with each other and partake in the common search for the truth about burning questions. Members could experience the free interaction of minds, which was of

great importance for taking the initiative in various fields. They ceased to feel themselves spiritually and intellectually powerless and illiterate.

Margit Bulkai reveals some other important details: “In a nourishing community there are no subordinate and super-ordinate relations. The essence is that you are a schoolboy. Your task is to catch up to a level of knowledge where you are already partner of the community’s leader. Simultaneously, you start to gather your twelve, just as Jesus did, where you are already the moderator, keeping the community together through love.²⁵ This is the community where you nourish and train others, who accordingly become partners and able to gather their twelve” (Bulkai M. 07.31.2005). She has happy memories of her apostolic work in the 70’s, in the period of communism: “As for myself, I established four communities. I had a great circle of acquaintance. Everybody enjoyed that it was possible to speak about our faith and about Christianity at all. We met in our house, which my mother wasn’t happy with because she knew that this was dangerous business” (Bulkai M. 08.19.2005).

Closing this part of the study we could draw the conclusion that the primary effect the Bokor Movement made on the identity and missionary conception of the members was: the recognition of the need for an alternative church structure on biblical bases opposite to the actual hierarchical structure (ie. community model of agape). As a consequence the two categories – that of the very priests and that of believers – lost their justification and were refused in the Bokor communities in the light of Jesus’ intention. This process resulted in a radically new reinterpretation of the two terms. Furthermore, the specific teaching style of Bulányi and consequently also of the Bokor Movement, which taught and trained members to think freely and in a critical way, was also significant. The study of the gospels and other subjects in nourishing communities applying the aforesaid pedagogical method had substantial influence on the members, too. We could also see that in the familiar atmosphere of such meetings ‘lay’ believers were encouraged and put on the way to the absorbed inquiry of Jesus’ life in its wholeness (His words and deeds). As a consequence, they recognised who they are, what their duty really means and where their place is in God’s mission to restore the whole creation. They have learnt to think about themselves as the disciples of Jesus Christ, who share in the continuation of the fullness of His sphere of action, namely to make disciples in every nation. As a consequence, Bokor members pursue to fulfil their duty by establishing communities as Jesus did, which is nothing else, according their conviction, but building the kingdom of God in the place and circumstances where they are.

They have also learnt to think only in one category within the people of God, that of disciples. Accordingly, they can look at themselves and each other as being equal with every Christ

²⁵ She refrains from using the term ‘leader’.

follower, even with priests and other church authorities. They have learnt that love and not domination has to be the prevailing idea – to respect other opinions and accept diversity.

Based on the development presented we may observe that there is a shift in the Church towards the direction of changing present distorted convictions and churchly standings. Yet, we must admit that this change is gaining ground quite slowly. Members are convinced that the clergy are anxious about losing their authority and position. However, in order to justify this hypothesis and the various reasons for the actual conditions, further comprehensive research would be necessary. The causes behind the situation may be more complex than one could judge them superficially. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that the Church rejects, neglects and lays no claim at all to the reformatory aspirations and efforts of this movement.

IV.2.3. Missionary actions

To some extent we have already touched upon the various missionary aspirations and activities of the Bokor members. In spite of the fundamental principles outlined in the former passage we have to note first of all that the signs of different missiological conceptions could be perceived in the movement primarily only in the last decade. Consequently, the conceptions of how to implement and realise the apostolic mission of every Christian do not show a uniform picture among the members. They are quite manifold and in a given case contradictory to each other. This established situation can be traced back to various reasons. Here we refer to the historical and political factors.

The missionary thinking of the members was developed and shaped in the period of persecution during the 45 years of communism. We could see that the diverse missionary endeavours and the propagation of Jesus' Gospel in public were simply illegal at that time. Only quietly and in a hidden way, through personal relationships was it possible for believers to have an impact both on the community of traditional Christians and on unbelievers. So their prophetic witness about the reign of God was realised through personal friendships. Owing to the specific political and sociological atmosphere a specific missionary pattern became widespread: that of building the kingdom of God by spreading the good news of Jesus Christ from person to person. But not only these conditions played a significant role in this process. We shall notice here that this kind of missionary attitude and manifestation characteristic of the movement was also reinforced by the pattern learnt and adopted from Jesus' mission. It seems that the church policy of the state promoted the rediscovery and the implementation of God's mission in a new way in a hostile environment.

Accordingly, we can state that during the time of persecution the missionary pattern of the members was shaped both by political and evangelical effects (those of the Gospel). As

we have referred to it earlier, this was manifested by belonging to a nourishing community where one was being trained and supported to become a mature disciple of Jesus Christ. The goal of everyone belonging to a community was to become able to establish another small community. With other words, to gather his or her twelve as Jesus did, where members could go through the same spiritual and intellectual development as their “leader” had. As György Bulányi referred to it, this apostolic aspiration could be disguised and hidden from the atheistic state to some extent.

Considering their past it is quite understandable that even the third, the young generation is largely accustomed to this pattern of Christian witness. But as I talked to some of them I could realize that they were less extraverted, less open toward the outside world. Social sensitivity is not highly characteristic of them (Bajnok K. 05.09.2005). They focus mainly on the patterns of living and behaviour established during the decades of the communist regime, when the possibility of being present and engaged in various social affairs was unimaginable (Bulkai T. 08.19.2005). Therefore, the majority of them do not pursue to deal with the various social problems or questions of Hungarian society. They largely focus on building up their small communities and spending time on intellectual issues (theological, sociological, psychological, literature and other subjects) which, besides the Gospel, constitute the subjects of the meetings.

We can assert it that today the generally accepted contemporary pattern of mission through words (evangelisation) is in fact foreign to the Bokor Movement and practice, while mission through deeds (social responsibility) is also rare among them (Bulkai M. 08.19.2005). The majority do not go to the streets to preach the Gospel and call passers-by to conversion. We can see them neither in subways, nor in larger squares. They do not take the opportunity to use the various means of advertisement, for example, they do not distribute leaflets, by which we don't want to imply that they should apply any of these methods. In fact many renewed and committed Christians of our days who evangelise in this way have to face the crisis and decreasing effectiveness of this pattern day by day. We only refer to the actual situation of the movement, as it is experiencing a crisis of the accustomed missionary model that used to function so well in the past. The burning question is if this kind of “preservation of traditions” is reasonable or not. These developments suggest that probably a paradigm change is needed even in the Bokor Movement, not only in the Roman Catholic Church of Hungary.

As Margit Bulkai sees it the missionary attitude and behaviour expected from every member to bring another person into the community has been hardly present since 1989. Today one can meet this phenomenon only occasionally (Bulkai M. 08.19.2005). There is also

another fact which makes one stop and think. As we already know, children's ministry used to be largely ignored in the past. By now those children have grown up and don't want to join the movement. Over the years the various businesses of the community took priority over them, as a result of which they feel hurt. This situation is a symptom of a deeper-lying problem. It seems that something has to be changed urgently for the sake of the movement's future. Conceptions about the significance and place of children in the movement's life must be weighed carefully. How could they be initiated into the various affairs of the movement? It would be vital to meditate on this issue more deeply and to make further investigations in this direction.

However, the circumstances and the composition of the society have changed radically since fifteen years ago, which challenges the movement to get acclimatised to the new standings. The challenge can be experienced from various directions. It seems that the same process of delay is taking place in the movement as in the whole Church. The Bokor is struggling with the problem of delay and becoming stiffened in the patterns of the past, which are not relevant or applicable any more in their wholeness under the changed circumstances. Members are also confronted with the problem of individuality and separateness in missionary actions. As Margit Bulkai recognises it, "we are fighters isolated from each other" (Bulkai M. 08.19.2005).

One young man is convinced that mission – by which expression he means going out into the streets and speaking about Jesus Christ to the people – was not characteristic of the Bokor Movement either in the past or in the present. "The often-heard slogan is: live in a way that outsiders may ask you: What makes your life so different?" (Bajnok K. 09.01.2005). Bulányi however made the disappointed statement at a Sunday service, held for teenagers in his house, that verbalism is characteristic of the movement today. He feels in this way because he is convinced and has experienced that there are great thoughts formulated by the members, but in reality almost nothing is accomplished (Bulányi 10.16.2005).

We can conclude here that the conception of and the way of thinking about 'mission' – i.e. to regard imitating the function and spirituality of Jesus and gathering disciples or friends as the means of achieving missionary aims – should be clarified, broadened and deepened. Hopefully, with more specialised and relevant missionary training the fear and aversion from opening up towards outsiders may be dispersed. At the same time, it may produce a shift in the minds and members of the movement may get nearer to non-believers and other Christians and communities alike.

Nevertheless, there are some noticeable efforts on the part of certain enthusiastic members to work on the crisis and uncertainty. The conviction of the founder used to be that

the kingdom of God necessitates people. Therefore the family with many children as a goal was overemphasised and overidealised. Yet on the other hand, as it has already been mentioned, children were largely neglected. They did not have any place or significance in the life and aspirations of the movement.

László Kovács, realising this mistake of the Bokor, made efforts to integrate the young generation into the movement. Within the framework of bible-classes he dealt with children until they graduated from grammar school. Among others he taught them the main ideas of the Bokor Movement as well. The two young men I met had according to their own confession grown up on these bible-classes. Owing to the efforts of Kovács many new communities were born which had children as their members. In 2001 he launched the Catechumenate, a three years training programme for young people aged from fifteen to eighteen. At present it is already the second generation that is taking part in this training. The conception of László Kovács was to confirm seniors after the final examination, but the Church did not give him an authorisation for this programme (cf. Bajnok K. 09.01.2005).

Owing to his influence, young people started to set up teenager communities for other young people. There was a demand for communion. Apart from a few exceptions no one was giving any attention to young people, thus they were just “loitering”. Dániel Bajnok initiated a small community for teenagers aged 10-13. They tried to imitate the model which they had got accustomed to in the movement. Because the apostolic actions directed outward were not typical in the past of the movement they started to read various books for homework and in the meetings they discuss and meditate on what they read. Occasionally they dispense pancake among the homeless and collect rubbish on the streets. Yet, such actions are sporadic. They aim at learning chiefly from books. Kristóf and his wife (leaders of another small community for young people) have joined a missionary association in Székesfehérvár (a regional city in Hungary). They visit and work with children living in children’s homes (Bajnok K. and D. 09.01.2005).

Tamás Bulkai and his wife represent an unordinary missionary conception. As he formulated it, his missionary conception has a universal character just as Jesus had, i.e. to make the world one so that mankind may be one. He is convinced that basically every religion is speaking about the same God and love; they differ only in colour. They keep contact with other denominations and non-Christian religious groups as well. They have Buddhist and Brahmin friends. They are in harmony with each other and organize common programmes like giving out food among the homeless at Christmas evening. They have brought this kind of openness and universality from the Bokor Movement, where for instance reading non-Christian texts on the Holy Mass was general practice (Bulkai T. 08.19.2005).

At the end of presentation and critical reflection on the missionary endeavours of the Bokor we suggest conclusions, which may also summarize guidelines necessary for elaborating the crucial elements of a new lay paradigm. One has to be aware of the human tendency to preserve senseless traditions and therefore become captive to delays. We are convinced that instead of being hardened in the missionary patterns of the past, which are already less useful in today's circumstances, we should be ready to change continuously and, by being sensitive to the society we live in and to God's prophetic voice through the changing processes within it, to rise to the needs of the present times. Moreover, – instead of peering into the glorious past and imitating well functioning models of it regarding the way of living and acting as disciples of Jesus Christ – one should be sensitive to the present work of the Holy Spirit which takes place in the members of any community or spiritual renewal movement, and which is the determining factor for timely missionary presence and apostolic work. One should take into consideration these factors when making efforts to determine an authentic and relevant lay existence both in the Church and in worldly circumstances. Another useful lesson is that a clarified and deepened missionary conception regarding biblical bases is indispensable for performing the things mentioned above.

We saw that the Bokor Movement focused mainly on intellectual, educated adults. Many Christians may share the conviction and acknowledge that the ignorance of children, the young generation and the less qualified people from the perspective of diverse apostolic efforts is a fundamental mistake. One has to seek opportunities to establish the conditions for integrating them into the family of God, as well as to help and train them to grow up and fulfil diverse missionary duties.

Another negative characteristic of the movement under review was, and still is, the verbalism. They are not alone in meeting with and giving in to the temptation of formulating great thoughts but not implementing or accomplishing them in reality. From the mistake of the Bokor Movement we should purify our thinking and attitudes toward the divine missionary concern. We should live in the readiness to speak to a single person about Jesus Christ instead of desiring to bring masses to Him, yet failing to bring anybody to Him in reality. These lessons drawn on the events of the past have to be in focus when one is looking into the future. In the next short section some conceptions about future plans will be presented.

Plans and aspirations concerning the future.

Plans and aspirations concerning the future are varied and show diverse tendencies in Bokor.

The conception of György Bulányi is to allocate half of the financial aid, which they have been spending on supporting starving people in India for decades, rather to the school of Hungarian-speaking natives in Moldavia. Moreover he is planning to establish life communities, the community of agape with families. “Jesus did not mean life communities to be communities where people gather together only occasionally. Only in a real life community can we do effective things for the people. Things like working with socially disadvantaged and mistreated children, with those addicted to drugs or gutter-children, teaching them writing, reading and calculating. This is the task of today’s generation” (Bulányi 08.16.2005).

The effect of the Bokor Movement on the Church.

Before concluding our examination of the Bokor Movement, our intention here is to explore the measure of the effect of this movement on the Church. This effect can be grasped first and foremost by looking at priests who used to belong or still belong to the movement. (Nowadays for the reasons discussed the number of ordained priests is very low in the Bokor Movement.) It would be the theme of a further research to investigate into the history of the Szent Imre (Saint Emery) parish community in Kaposvár, Hungary, led by pastor László Varga, a former Bokor priest. His local parish represents a promising ecclesiastical innovation, a realised utopia – asserts István Kamarás (Kamarás 1999, 418). He gives an authentic and prophetic testimony to the implementation of the synodical aspirations concerning the initiation of the laity into the process of building up the reign of God and making it perceivable in a specific, local context in Hungary. According to data from 1999, there are a lot of evidences for this: seven charismatic communities functioning continuously and gathering weekly; two groups composed of university and college students; the group for searching people; the bible class; a number of religious instruction groups for secondary students; the group for guitar-players; the ecumenical missionary group which ministers in prisons; the group of ministrants; the children’s community; the choir; the workgroup of teachers of religion; the community for married couples; the Christian social work; and the representative body of the parish (Kamarás 1999, 418). My hope is that the survey of this democratically functioning, communal parish inspired by the charismatic movement as well will significantly contribute to the deeper and more comprehensive exposure of our research theme. It could provide similarly edifying results if one examined how this community has progressed towards a new lay paradigm and mission in the course of rich and manifold events.

On the other hand, as I have referred to it, many of the Bokor members do not attend Sunday services or any other church events. Therefore their connection with the institutional Church is minimal or simply does not occur. Yet, there are heartening exceptions. It was a lasting experience for me to meet such seldom cases (Miklovicz 08.18.2005).

In February 1991 László Miklovicz and his family were searching for a place where there were stronger personal relationships between people. He was being led by the conviction that in a more personal environment one could perform the apostolic work in a more effective way. Budapest is a bustling place where the busy and strained lifestyle works against people, communities and against the agape of Jesus. Therefore they moved to Nótincs, a small village in county Nógrád. Their intention was to build up the kingdom of God in the intimate and more humane environment of the village. They arrived in a settlement in spiritual vacuum, where there was nothing. It is understandable that the spirited activity of László and his family moved almost the entire village. He began with the age-group of his children (attending the 6-8th classes). He gathered them and organised excursions and camps for them. At Christmas the community centre was filled with people who came to watch the nativity play. Seeing these happenings the mayor started to support the various activities of László. The culture centre proved to be a more suitable place for holding junior bible-classes than the parish, and even the aged local priest attended these meetings. László did not leave the parson out from anything. Whatever he did was preceded by discussion with father István, who gave him wholehearted support. They grew to love and develop a good relationship with each other and father István was very happy about having an assistant. He delegated more and more services to Miklovicz, like the liturgy of the Word, even on Good Friday, or administering the sacrament.

After three years of persevering efforts he was elected into the local government. Afterwards he became member of the ecclesiastical representative body, later on its president. He has initiated the development of a new Code of Operation and Organisation so that this body could become a catalyst of Christian life. "Those people are present in the body and support me today, who used to take part in the water camps years ago when they were young" (Miklovicz 08.18.2005).

We could see a parish directed by a lay man. The fact that he could have an impact on the Church was a result of the openness of the local parson and his attitude towards the institutional part of the Church. He was thinking that it was right to maintain relationships with superiors, to appreciate and turn with an open heart to each other. An investigation into the aspirations of László Miklovicz and his fellows in the next few years would provide an edifying study for the whole Church.

IV.2.4. Summary

The second part of the fourth chapter provided an overview of the significance and contribution of the Bokor Movement to the research theme of the present study: efforts towards the transformation of the lay status and function in the missionary apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church of Hungary, as one of the fundamental aspirations of the II Vatican Council, based on the documents of the Council in the second chapter of the study. To accomplish this purpose, we presented an historical overview of the Bokor Movement from its beginning up to the present. We noted the determinative ecclesiastical and political influences which played a significant role in the development of the way of thinking, living and servicing of Bokor members as disciples of Jesus Christ. The impact of the Bokor Movement on its members and on the Church was analysed, as well as the diverse missionary conceptions and actions integrated in the Movement. Finally, we mentioned some conceptions and aspirations concerning future plans.

The merit of Bulányi is that he established a framework of communities based entirely on laity. He invited lay members to participate in the work of thinking together and in the analysis of KIO. He treated them as partners in everything. By the application of the avant-garde pedagogical and teaching style he created an atmosphere which made the development of a new self-identity of the members possible. Owing to the absorbed and comprehensive analysis of the gospels and the study of KIO, they could acquire a certain kind of missionary thinking. They could learn the steps of becoming disciples of Jesus Christ and making others His disciples as well.

We cannot assert that there weren't and aren't any failures in the aspirations and convictions of the Movement. There are some distortions in spite of precious efforts. One can see signs of structural rigidity such as the conviction that children are incapable of understanding the marvellous words of Jesus. Yet, it is unquestionable that the direction of their basic efforts dating back to 60 years ago, the period of the communist regime, to change the distorted standings of the Church and of the lay people. They may have got tired; the signs of general indifference and crisis appear in the movement. Nevertheless Roman Catholics, clerics and lay people alike, could learn from them a lot. Not only from their achievements, but from their mistakes as well. The renewing Spirit of God has something to say to us – to the Church and even to other denominations – through the history of the Bokor Movement. It may tell us that we have to be bold in taking the yet unknown directions in which the Holy Spirit wants to lead us. The conclusion could be drawn here that the Bokor members found and trod a narrow, but prophetic path, walking down on which the history of *missio Dei* could

be followed in human history. The question to answer is if we are ready to listen to the story of God beyond the history of the Movement, however this remains the task and responsibility of contemporary and following generations. To capitalize on the experience of the past, the reasonable attitude towards the Movement would not be neglecting and excluding, but rather embracing it and showing readiness to search together for new ways and means to fulfil the mission we were left as an inheritance. We conclude that, despite failures and mistakes, the Bokor Movement made much progress in the implementation of the guidelines of the conciliar documents, that is the appraisal and rehabilitation of the lay status and mission which had been distorted down through the centuries of the Roman Catholic Church's history.

IV.3. The Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal

The third part of the fourth chapter intends to provide an exploration of the significance and contribution of the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal²⁶ in Hungary to the implementation of the basic concern of the II Vatican Council to involve the lay people into the apostolic mission of the Church. The importance and purpose of this chapter is to explore the theme of the key research of the present study, namely the ecclesiastical progression towards a new vision of the laity and their mission, from the new perspective of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The chapter will deal with the historical developments, with various missionary efforts, with some present clerical estimations regarding the renewal movement and finally, there will be given some suggestions towards its the great effectiveness.

IV.3.1. Historical overview

The overview of the historical development of the Charismatic Renewal is not intended to be exhaustive nor could it provide exact historical data in many cases, for instance the exact duration of the periods described since the history of the Hungarian Catholic Charismatic Renewal has not yet been processed on an academic level. The actual presentation is partly based on the survey made by István Kamarás, yet mainly on the narration of a lay couple, József and Erzsébet Marik, who have been determining personalities in the movement almost since the beginnings and people of great influence as pioneers steering the movement towards the unknown and uncertain future. This choice is reasoned by the basic orientation of the present study to let the lay members of the Church themselves speak about their experiences, views and endeavours. On the other hand, the present survey

²⁶ Or the Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement. Both expressions are used.

does not allow a broader and more detailed discussion because of its limited size. Nevertheless, we will spend time gaining insight into the historical affairs as long as it helps us to reveal the contribution of the renewal movement under review to the rehabilitation of the lay status and function more comprehensively – and not only within ecclesiastical frames, but broadening the picture also in the restoration of the *missio Dei*, in which the Roman Catholic Church is invited to be prophetically and relevantly immersed in its wholeness.

The lay couple distinguishes between certain periods concerning the historical developments of this renewal movement (Marik J. and E. 11.21.2005). These will be briefly sketched on the following pages.

First period.

In Hungary the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (publications refer to it using the expressions “renewal” and “movement” separately as well) started spontaneously as a grassroots organisation at the end of the 70s. By the Church it was tolerated, but the state regarded it as an illegal renewal movement in those days. Its core characteristic feature was and is the Pentecostal experience, or with other words, the baptism in the Spirit. The ensuing functioning of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (charismas) in the life of the believer, meeting Jesus Christ in a living and personal way as the resurrected Lord and universal Saviour of humanity, and the radical conversion to Him are other basic features of the movement. Wherever charismatic small groups and prayer communities have been established in Hungary since the beginnings, they have been followed by these spiritual experiences and brought about fundamental changes in the lives of those affected (in some cases immediately, while in others gradually).

The beginning of the movement in our country is closely related and could be ascribed to two influencing factors: on the one hand to the appearance and efforts of foreign lay missionaries and Catholic priests who came to Hungary from different places in the world (mainly from the United States) to share and spread the renewing wave of the Holy Spirit with the people; on the other hand to native renewed charismatic Catholic priests, who also generated and nurtured the developments as spiritual fathers of the charismatic renewal in Hungary.

Those members who were affected by these spiritual events experienced things which had been regarded as extreme behaviour or mere residues from past centuries, but which gained now new content and meaning in their lives. The words of the Bible, which had seemed incomprehensible and uninteresting dead letters, became understandable and

fascinating, while the fundamental doctrines of Christianity living truth for them. This led to a new awareness and the purification of minds concerning the very nature and significance of being a Christian or Christ's follower. The work and presence of the Holy Spirit also became a living and perceivable reality as never before. His various gifts started to function and could be experienced: speaking and singing in tongues, spontaneous prayer, joyful worship, the healing of the sick through intercession, prophetic words and instruction etc.

Sketching on this process of change we have to refer to other wonderful works of God's Spirit as well. Things which are usually considered to be no more than petrified traditions became revived in these communities. An example for this is the prayer-life of the members. One who could not move her- or himself to pray earlier now experienced the joy and power of praying both alone and with others even for one or two hours. The Holy Mass became full of life. The Holy Spirit made practices thought to have become outdated for long alive again. Even the sacraments, like the Holy Communion, were put into a different new light and became the sources and means of meeting Jesus. To mention another example: people experienced that after a sincere confession of their sins they were truly renewed and purified. They managed to get rid of recurring wrong habits, behaviours and actions. The correct priorities of life (God-family-work etc.), as well as their relationships with family members, friends and fellow-workers started to become settled and got a new deepness. Naturally, in most of the cases we have to think in – sometimes time-consuming and patience-testing – processes. But anyway, the restoring missionary work of God is unquestionably present in the life of the lay members of the Roman Catholic Charismatic movement.

József Marik, continuing to outline the historical progressions, affirms that along these spiritual events small communities started to be established. The Charismatic Renewal spread rapidly throughout the country. Outsiders could for sure realise that something had happened to these people. Some who had been down-hearted and gloomy were now delighted, although their circumstances had not changed at all: they had not become richer, and neither had their spouse become more honest and helpful or their children less rebellious. If outsiders with similar difficulties see such an inexplicable change in somebody they may ask from themselves: 'How can they rejoice and smile despite the depressing facts?', and realise: 'I need this, too!' So did it happen that those showing an interest were invited to somebody's house who belonged to the movement, where they prayed together for difficulties like physical or spiritual healing etc. As a result of this charismatic prayer groups started to emerge throughout the country practically without any specific central organization. These events happened in the first period of the Charismatic Renewal, between the late 70s and the early 80s.

We may conclude on the basis of the aforesaid issues that at the very beginning of the movement's history, which had its ultimate source in the missionary nature of the Trinity, the apostolic nature and character of the movement becomes manifest in a very spontaneous and natural way.

Second period.

The second period of the Charismatic Renewal was the beginning of internal regularization. The fundamental spiritual experiences started to be dealt with, harmonised and integrated both into the basic Christian truths, as well as into the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. This was the purpose the newly launched Holy Spirit Seminar served all over the country. During this course participants meditate usually every seventh or eighth week on the bases of the Christian faith and are encouraged to revise their lives in the light of these truths. The course is closed with a comprehensive confession disclosing every spheres of life, followed by baptism in the Holy Spirit. This spiritual event provides in the majority of cases the first decisive and life-changing experience of the loving God and a personal encounter with the resurrected and living Jesus Christ. The purpose of this seminar is to send forth newly converted Catholic believers on their Christian way; to lead them to maturity where they can cope with the struggles of faith effectively; to raise a new awareness of the missionary duty in them; and to offer them help for further spiritual development.

József Marik emphasises it enthusiastically that the so-called 'Pentecostal experience' has been paired with strong missionary vocation and sensitivity from the very beginning. The small communities of that time – similarly to those of our days – strove to make the restoring work of God "common property". They were eager to share the work of the Holy Spirit they had experienced with others, although they didn't know how to do it appropriately. They were inexperienced, unpractised and unskilled in this respect, which became the ground for many mistakes and extreme behaviour. Consequently, this produced antipathy to the events not only on the part of the clergy, but of traditional Catholic believers as well (the residues of this phenomenon are still perceptible, though to a lower extent).

But at the same time in its first two periods the movement had a strong ecumenical character. Renewed Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran, Pentecostal and other Christian believers came together to pray without having any problem with each other personally or as a result of their diverse convictions in some issues. It would be a worthy endeavour to explore why this feature of the movement became shallow and weakened by today.

Owing to the influence and effort of the charismatic priests the renewed Christians started to practice their apostolic mission in a more conscious and skilled way. Around such priests further groups were organised. The priests' major concern was to train leaders for small communities.

Besides these events and the spread of the Holy Spirit Seminar further determining persons arrived from Germany, the United States etc., who brought various evangelisational programmes, practices and methods into the country. Their main contribution to the development of the Hungarian renewal was that they stimulated, encouraged and strengthened the existing small groups and their missionary activities. They organized gatherings where they invited outsiders as well. Thus, these meetings quickly got an evangelisational feature and also produced a recovery or strengthening of the spiritual consciousness in Charismatic believers. It was the time of rediscoveries, for example: "It is possible to preach even for me although I am not an ordained priest. If I have something to share with others I can feel free to do so" (Marik 11.21.2005). As a consequence of these events József Marik and his small community started to hold spiritual days "officially" in open parishes where they were invited. They worshiped the Lord, prayed together with the local Catholic people and gave them a teaching as well. József Marik affirms that the great impact of this team was due to their authenticity. They lived what they were speaking about.

Today, even the official Church teaches that in the first place and in the majority of the cases it is the laity's duty to preach the Gospel. It is the task of lay believers to address their neighbours, colleagues and the members of their family (LG 33,35,36).

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning some words about the attitude of the local parishes towards the movement in this period. The middle level of the hierarchy, i.e. diocesan bishops, parsons and priests, followed the developments suspiciously. In the opinion of Marik clerical arrogance, which is perceivable even in our present days, derives from a centuries-old mentality, namely that priests are the exclusive bearers of grace and the only ones authorised to pass it on to the believers. Believers are, consequently, no more than passive receivers of this grace and naturally have to remain silent. Those however who had been socialised within an ecclesiastical atmosphere of strong feudalistic character (as it was the case for most of them) were at a loss to understand what was going on in the Church (when for example a lay man or woman came up to a parson or priest and said to him confidently: 'You must repent!'). It is also true, as we have referred to it earlier, that in the first period of great enthusiasm there were numerous excesses on the part of renewed charismatic lay people, which naturally increased the resistance of the clergy. József Marik and his wife, Erzsébet remember these days in this way: "... we did not know how to act, but we knew that something had to be

done. Therefore we went on and did something. The hierarchy of that time could not tolerate our mistakes” (Marik J. and E. 11.21.2005).

The gathering initiated by the Board of Bishops meant a milestone in the history of the Hungarian Charismatic Movement at the end of the 80s. The Board of Bishops called together all the leaders or representatives of the existing renewal movements within the Roman Catholic Church and all the diocesan bishops. The representatives of the movements outlined where they came from, what their duties were, and which functioning charismas had paved the way for their endeavours. The result of this meeting was that the bishops took notice of, accepted and acknowledged the movements as being valuable parts of the Roman Catholic Church.

After this event the suspicious attitude of the clergy towards the renewal trends within the Church changed notably. The central problem from then on was that spiritual movements and Charismatic small communities likewise were in most cases established and developed independently from the institutional frame, i.e. outside the structure of the local parishes. As a result, their members were also reckoned as outsiders and alienated from the Church. Therefore those priests, parsons and local Catholic believers who went on thinking and living in a more traditional way were rather afraid of them.

Consequently, a process of integration started in the Church, which was generated significantly by the meeting and conversation of and the exchange of views between the Hierarchy and the Charismatic movement. It would be interesting and edifying to study and examine both this process and the actual standpoints more thoroughly. Anyway, it became clear to the Hierarchy that every local parish should be a “community of communities”, i.e. it has to receive every spiritual movement and its duty is to encourage and support them in the actualisation of their missionary vocation. The practical realization or completion of this very healthy objective is indeed a time-consuming process. It necessitates much patience and tolerance to learn to create and maintain a peaceful coexistence of various spiritual trends within the same ecclesiastical frames. In the light of the historical developments of the Charismatic Renewal we can see great opportunities open up.

The Marik couple remembers a priest who organised spiritual days once a month for a year, where he invited different spiritual movements. This official initiation played double meaningful roles. On the one hand, it provided opportunity for the various movements to get to know and learn from each other. On the other hand it was a good occasion for ordinary Catholic Christians as well who attended only Sunday services and did not belong to any movement or small community. They could see what wonderful things were going on in the Church. Moreover, they got a chance to join one of these movements whichever they could

identify with the most. “The same priest organised similar meetings for priests as well, where he invited us to tell the participants who we are and what we are doing” (Marik J. and E. 11.21.2005).

Owing to these monthly spiritual days charismatic small communities started to show a growing desire to share their experiences with each other. For the first semi-official meeting fifty leaders of prayer communities came together in Jászszentlászló from different parts of the country. Here, besides other programmes, they were thinking together and attempted to determine their fundamental duty: “We wanted to be like leaven in the dough, which in our interpretation meant the Church. We meditated on the possible ways of being immersed into “the meal” – the Church. Because it was obvious to us that up to that point we had been leaven mainly outside the Church, we started to search for the most appropriate way of affecting now the inner life of the church” (Marik J. 11.21.2005).

The first Charismatic Meeting was organized in 1991 in Hungary. “The basic conception and purpose of this initiation was to help us find our mission within the Church. We started to encourage charismatic believers to make an effort to establish official connections with the local church or diocese, no matter how difficult it would be. We offered our service to the Church. Every renewed charismatic believer shall be ready to start carrying chairs or cleaning the rooms” (Marik J. 11.21.2005).

The Charismatic Catholic lay people made remarkable efforts to integrate – both personally and as a community – into the institutional frames and to reform it from inside. Only those charismatic groups stayed alive, affirms József Marik, which possessed a kind of missionary consciousness and strove to carry out this mission in certain ways – i.e. to share their personal experiences with the living Jesus Christ with others, and invite them to follow Him, too. Other small groups, however, which remained mainly passive, introverted and withdrawn, grew tired and collapsed. The conclusion can be drawn therefore that it is the fundamental missionary character of the movement – the fervour to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others – that keeps this movement alive and preserves its intensity and efficacy.

Third period.

In this period of the movement some committed communities were established. These started to search for a specific form of expression for their charismatic spirituality. This process resulted in their official acknowledgement on the part of the bishops.²⁷ They worked

²⁷ Such communities were in Hungary the *Hét Láng* (Seven Flames), and communities with foreign charismatic roots like the *Emmanuel* from France, the *Regina Pacis*, or the *Nyolc Boldogság* (Eight Blessings) (Marik J. 11.21.2005).

out a communal regulation in line with which the given community could be established. Furthermore, the special graces, the missionary purpose, the shared objectives in life and strategies which help to carry out these were also formulated. These communities all possess their own spiritual style. Their members absorb a kind of communal-missionary consciousness and adhere to the objective of their community. For example, the community Emmaus committed itself to hold Holy Spirit Seminars and establish small groups for newly converted people. The aim of the community Emmaus (just as of almost every charismatic prayer group in that time) was to renew baptised Catholic believers who did not or only superficially practise their Christian faith. Later on some members from this community, who were particularly energetic and radical in their apostolic mission, as well as in their evangelisational style, form and character, established another new charismatic community, the New Jerusalem. They were convinced that their missionary duty was to reach people outside the Church, too, who had never heard about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They invited and received whoever they met, including sceptical or homeless people. We will deal with this community later on.

Some conclusions can be deduced from the historical development of the Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement. The Roman Catholic lay people are indeed sensibly and open to the function of the Holy Spirit. They are hungry to experience the presence of God through His Spirit and share in His gifts. To be witness to the Good News in the world and also in the Church towards those baptised Catholics who have never heard about it without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is highly difficult and even unimaginable. In this regard, the Roman Catholic Church, in order to develop and elaborate a new vision of the Church's duty, as well as of the laity and their mission, must be deeply grounded in the workings of God's Spirit. With regard this ecclesiastical process the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal may play a fundamental role in the next decades.

IV.3.2. Missionary efforts of the present

Today the Charismatic Movement organizes various forms of training courses, chiefly adopted from foreign countries (Marik J. 11.21.2005). These courses are: the already mentioned Holy Spirit Seminar, the courses of the KeKaKo (Kerygma-Charisma-Coinonia) from Italy, the Alfa-course from Great-Britain, and the various courses of Emmanuel from France, etc. (Marik J. 11.21.2005).

IV.3.2.1. Emmanuel community

The Emmanuel community for prayer and evangelisation was established and is led by József Marik himself, a surgeon by profession, who had been inspired by his brother, Tamás Marik, a Franciscan monk. As for the membership of the community, there are single lay men and women, monks, people with a family, and also priests and seminarians among the members. They evangelise on the streets and in Roma districts, organise worship in parishes and prayer meetings for the youth, encourage the worship of the Heart of Jesus and Marian devotion, hold spiritual exercises and are active in promoting the genuine ecumenism among various denominations. Emmanuel has living relationships with other communities of different movements as well. In this respect it is different from the Bokor communities which, in the majority of cases, do not make any significant effort to establish relations with the communities of other movements, as we could see this in the former chapter.

Concerning the near future, the leader of the Emmanuel community will be the main co-ordinator of a foreign initiative partly encouraged by Hungarian charismatic Christians, namely the Mission for the City, which will be organised in 2007 in our country, in Budapest. This initiative has arisen from the recognition that the big cities like our capital have become secularised and therefore need to be evangelised. The renewed evangelisation of cities like Paris, Vienna, Lisbon, Brussels last but not least Budapest is being planned under this inspiration.

The preparatory time for this huge collective crusade will be one or two years long. It is heartening that all the parishes and spiritual renewal movements of the Roman Catholic Church have already started the necessary preparations. Last year Péter Erdő, the cardinal of Hungary, called upon the local parishes to organise a missionary week. They were also admonished to recognise their own missionary vocation; to find out what they could do and how they as a community could contribute to this missionary movement; and to organise their own local parochial mission in preparation for the main event. It would make another interesting study if someone examined, elaborated and evaluated the experience and happenings related to this unprecedented endeavour in Hungary.

After this two-year long joint preparation will the missionary week take place in Budapest. Missionary conferences will be held continuously at an emblematic scene and simultaneously the parishes of the capital will organise missionary actions all over the city. Another significant purpose of this initiative is that after the missionary week local parishes would carry on their apostolic mission in their neighbourhood. Every parish member should

recognise that they have a duty not only towards those attending Sunday services, but towards the people living in their settlement as well.

We may live in the hope that besides its priceless contribution to the spiritual and moral rise of the country this involvement could promote the unity, meeting and a closer, mutual knowledge of the official and the movement part of the Roman Catholic Church.

IV.3.2.2. The fire of sharing the Gospel. The Saint Andrew School.

The Saint Andrew School (hereafter referred to as SAS) is a foreign pastoral programme which partly originates in Italy, partly in South America. It is the answer of the Roman Catholic Church of these two countries to the challenge of renewed evangelisation. It also integrates the Charismatic Renewal to some extent and has great impact onto the life and spiritual development of the native Catholic charismatic communities. The main purpose of this pastoral project is that the Gospel be proclaimed in everyday situations and the reign of God made perceivable wherever Christians live. Therefore, it strives at the lay believers' becoming mature and completely immersed in their Christian lives. It also creates great opportunities for them to develop in various spiritual services and acquire necessary skills. The school integrates various courses like that on the history of salvation, Philip, Paul, Jesus, John, Asaph, Timothy, Moses, the mystery of Paul and others. These courses have been adopted by several Hungarian charismatic communities since the middle of the 90s, for instance by the New Jerusalem and the Emmanuel. In a few years these courses will have spread rapidly throughout the country, today they are held by numerous teams wherever they are invited. These programmes gradually introduce committed Catholic Christians to the lifestyle of evangelisation (Csiszér 10.17.2005). This influence reached the country through the members of the Roman Catholic life community San Giovanni Battista (Saint John the Baptist) from Italy. This community was partly the founder of Saint Andrew School (Csiszér 10.17.2005).

László Csiszér, one of the first members who were present when this project was launched in Hungary, is the leader of a missionary group which on the one hand directs and organises the work and function of various other teams in the country holding the courses of SAS, while on the other hand it provides SAS courses and organises missional-evangelisational trips among Hungarian communities of the neighbouring countries as well, e.g. in Romania (Transylvania), the former Yugoslavia, Sub-Carpathia or Ruthenia, Slovakia and Austria. He will introduce us to some extent to their apostolic aspirations and perspectives, which will be sketched in the next paragraphs.

The already mentioned “Philip course” incorporates besides other issues teaching on the Holy Spirit and His wonderful work. Then participants are encouraged and prayed for to gain a strong experience of His presence (for most of them this is the first real and living encounter with the Holy Spirit). After this spiritual experience, where hands are laid on them, everybody is sent out to the streets to share their fresh experiences with the people, i.e. their living encounter with God and His Spirit.²⁸ By this method the participants of the course gain first-hand experience in sharing and speaking about God to the man in the street. The aim of the course under discussion is not only to help the participants to have a strong sense of the presence of God, but to challenge and confront them with the fact that they have to share it as well just as the apostles did. Subsequently, they are put under the care of their own small communities (provided that there is a pastoral community in their place of living).

In the case of certain courses the examination of conciliar documents and other encyclicals is an organic part of the programme, too.

For example the “Debar course” seems to be one of the most appropriate means for bringing the Word of God closer to those who never or only occasionally read it, as well to arouse a desire for its everyday use as the basic source of spiritual nourishment. In the course of this programme participants study *Dei Verbum*. Thus, they can meet the changed thinking of the Ecclesiastical Teaching Office personally, which clearly emphasises that the Bible should be read by all lay Christians: “The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all Christian faithful ... to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the “excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ” (*Phil. 3:8*)“ (DV 25).

The conciliar documents provided encouragement, strength and at the same time defence for this group of ministers during their apostolic work. “When Christian believers²⁹ ask us how we can perform such a missionary work and be brave enough to carry it out, or when we meet resistance at a parish we joyfully refer to the actual declarations of the Ecclesiastical Teaching Office and the prophetic voices of the documents of popes,³⁰ which have greatly incited us in our efforts for Church renewal” (Csiszér 10.17.2005).

“While we encourage and inspire people to participate in this missionary work we emphasize that even according to the official teaching of the Church it is not enough for Catholic Christians to cling to their faith in Jesus Christ, but they shall also proclaim it. We are strengthened by the actual disposition and resolutions of the Church, which give us authority as well for our missionary work” (Csiszér 10.17.2005).

²⁸ It is important that they are not yet sent out to evangelise, this expression is not used yet.

²⁹ Catholics and non-Catholics as well.

³⁰ The quotations see at pages 80-81.

On their mission trips, members of the group distribute leaflets among the people containing quotations from apostolic exhortations, letters and the speeches of popes like John Paul II and Paul VI. These quotations are significant in the context of research theme of the present study because they present the renewed conceptions of the official Church known to 'ordinary' Catholic Christians with regard the practicing their apostolic mission both in the Church and in the world. The introduced quotations are as follows:

“The due time of new evangelisation has come... Only an evangelised Church could evangelise... Evangelisation means proclaiming a person: Jesus... The aim of new evangelisation is to help the people to make a personal decision by Jesus Christ... The time has come when the Church has to devote all its power to the new evangelisation... The new evangelisation done with new enthusiasm infers strong faith. This enthusiasm be the seal of your apostolic duty... The indispensable condition of the new evangelisation is to be many and educated those who proclaim the Gospel... The complete, gradual and permanent training of the laity has to start by such organisations, which help the training of the trainers... The new evangelisation makes the pastoral conversion of whole Church necessary” (John Paul II 1989).

“... Let us therefore preserve our fervour of spirit. Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow. May it mean for us as it did for John the Baptist, for Peter and Paul, for the other apostles and for a multitude of splendid evangelizers all through the Church's history- an interior enthusiasm that nobody and nothing can quench. May it be the great joy of our consecrated lives. And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world” (Paul VI 1975, 80).

“Today we must courageously face a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and demanding, in the context of "globalization" and of the consequent new and uncertain mingling of peoples and cultures. Over the years, I have often repeated the summons to the *new evangelization*. I do so again now, especially in order to insist that we must rekindle in ourselves the impetus of the beginnings and allow ourselves to be filled with the ardour of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost. We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (*1 Cor 9:16*) This passion will not fail to stir in the Church a new sense of mission, which cannot be left to a group of "specialists" but must involve the responsibility of all the members of the People of God. Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves, they must proclaim him. A new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as *the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups*” (John Paul II 2000, 40).

“The Gospel of hope, received and assimilated by the Church, calls for daily proclamation and witness. This is the proper vocation of the Church in every time and place. It is also the mission of the Church in Europe today....

...Although the Gospel to be preached is the same in every time, *this preaching can be carried out in different ways*. All are called to “proclaim” Jesus and their faith in him in every situation; to “draw” others to the faith through models of personal, family, professional and community life which reflect the Gospel; “to radiate” joy, love and hope, so that many people, seeing our good works, will give glory to our Father in heaven (*cf. Mt 5:16*) and be won over; to become “a leaven” transforming and enlivening from within every expression of culture.

Europe calls out for *credible evangelizers, whose lives, in communion with the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, radiate the beauty of the Gospel*. Such evangelizers must be *properly trained*. Now more than ever a *missionary consciousness* is needed in all Christians, beginning with Bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated persons, catechists and teachers of religion: “All the baptized, since they are witnesses of Christ, should receive a training appropriate to their circumstances, not only so that their faith does not wither for lack of care in a hostile environment such as the secularist world, but also so that their witness to the Gospel will receive strength and inspiration...” (John Paul II 2003, 45,48,49).

“Mission is *the joyful proclamation of a gift* meant for all, and to be offered to all with the greatest respect for the freedom of each one: the gift of the revelation of the God who is Love, the God who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son' (Jn 3,16)... The Church therefore cannot forgo her missionary activity among the peoples of the world. It is the primary task of the *missio ad gentes* to announce that it is in Christ, "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life' (Jn 14,6), that people find salvation" (*Novo Millennio ineunte*, n. 56). This is an invitation to all, it is an urgent call that deserves an immediate and generous answer. We must set out! We must set out without delay...” (John Paul II 2001, 5).

By distributing these reflections of popes in print this missionary group makes the renewed aspirations of the official Church known to ‘ordinary’ Catholic Christians, who have perhaps never heard about these issues and who may not be aware of the fact that despite contradictory experiences the Church starts to think of and look at them in a new way. The involvement of these texts in every invitation and exhortation emphasizes the responsibility of all. Every member of the People of God – or to formulate more specifically: laity and clergy alike – has to come into genuine contact with Christ, because only in this way is it possible to radiate the beauty of the Gospel. Those reading these quotations also meet the challenge that all are called to become credible evangelizers, who shall view the proclamation of Jesus Christ as an everyday commitment and responsibility.

The ideas expressed in these quotations may sound in some cases new and unfamiliar even to some of the priests reading them. Some may realise that they are not completely aware of these truths. For instance it is part of their duty to improve a properly contextual trained missionary consciousness in all Christians, emphasised in the above quotations from popes. They still treat the faithful entrusted to them in such a way that they adhere to the old and inaccurate pattern of the past rather than the current work of God’s Spirit, who is restoring the lay status and function in our days. Continuing our argument, we could see that this group does a service not only to the lay masses of the Church, but to the clergy as well. With their strenuous efforts they contribute to the accelerated implementation and realisation of the conciliar aspirations in the Hungarian ecclesiastical context by confronting priests and parsons with these authoritative thoughts, and last but not least with the current work of Holy Spirit. They stir up a new sense of mission in the Church.

As for the practical methods of this lay group of ministers and their attitude towards the official part of the Roman Catholic Church, one can observe serious attempts at the integration and implementation of the official teaching and disposition of the Catholic Church in their missionary endeavours. Thus they set an example to any lay members or communities of the movement church working at the renewal and restoration of God's people in its wholeness.

László Csiszér travelling with his team to many places countrywide experiences that the number of those parishes which are slowly becoming open and sensitive towards the radical missionary ambitions is continuously rising. This progression is partly due to the activities of the SAS, László Csiszér explains: "Two seminarians who at first participated in our courses, then held the courses together with us, have by now become parsons of parishes of 4000 and 5000 believers respectively. They are making serious efforts to build up the life of these parishes in the light and atmosphere of the appropriate missionary and renewal aspirations in that given neighbourhood and we stand by them in their struggles. They are planning to establish a local school of evangelisation, which could be the base for cities and villages on the periphery, where lay people could not only develop and strengthen in their faith, but also be trained to launch and do missionary work in their own environment. Our utmost intention is to build and renew the Church and to avoid building up another church beside the Roman Catholic Church" (Csiszér 10.17.2005).

By renewing the Church he means providing assistance mainly for nominal Christians, who – owing to the incomprehensible work of the Holy Spirit – can return to Jesus Christ and enter into living relationship with Him, while their lives are restored and placed on a biblical base thus enabling the unfolding of the various gifts of the Spirit. Finally, it also means that the kingdom of God becomes perceivable in the environment where they live, because "it is the mission of every Christian to build up his or her neighbourhood, so that it may become more and more filled with life through the existence and presence of God. History shall be shaped by us instead of our being shaped by history" (Csiszér 10.17.2005).

When asked about his notions regarding his duty within the body of Christ he formulates as follows: "I cannot separate my new life in Jesus Christ from sharing it with others by all kinds of means at my disposal. I try to pass on this attitude to others as well. Everybody should find his or her unique form in which one could blossom. Reading the Word of God on a regular basis reveals and purifies my way of thinking and conception about my personal duty, which is strengthened both by the conciliar documents and by papal exhortations" (Csiszér 10.17.2005).

The objective of the missionary group under discussion for the near future is that missional parish communities be established and built up. They are planning to launch a one-year long missional training programme. One of the main intention of this missionary group is to train community leaders who acquire not only pastoral skills, but a missionary attitude as well. Another conception relates to the pastoral care for the youth. “We meet open and energetic young people in numerous places who lack the adequate milieu where they could grow spiritually after they have heard and received the Gospel of Jesus. Thus, they can get to know and acquire neither the biblical way of thinking and living nor the fundamental declarations of the Roman Catholic Church, which however should be known to everyone. “Our desire is to establish a group responsible for the training of missionary leaders”, says László Csiszér closing the sketching of their farther plans (Csiszér 10.17.2005). This is a lay conception of how to form missionary parishes in Hungary radiating the beauty of the Gospel towards and sharing it with those who are open to receive it. In a few years we may know more about the outcome of these large-scale ambitions.

IV.3.3. Present clerical estimations

István Kamarás made a survey on the evaluation of the Charismatic movement by the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary of our days. From the perspective of the present survey it is essential to deal with this issue shortly, as the official standpoint of the Hierarchy and the attitude of traditional Catholics towards this renewal movement significantly determine the realisation and fulfilment of the apostolic mission of lay Catholic Charismatic Christians both in church and secular contexts.

Many members of the movement perceive it that the majority of believers are against them. Many leaders feel that “while the Holy Father and other Catholic leaders reckon the Charismatic renewal as a bailer of the Church’s renewal, in our country this is hushed up, and when it is discovered about somebody that he or she is charismatic they can watch the consequences” (Kamarás 2003, 174).

Although it is established that the movement’s relations with the Church have improved significantly by today, their official “acknowledgement is still far away from the optimal” (Kamarás 2003, 174). “We pose a considerable challenge which is difficult to tackle” – declares Gábor Kovács, one of the first charismatic priest leaders (Kamarás 2003, 174). Rural priests almost always feel aversion for them, while others express diverse opinions about them. It is worth considering the following views because they may help the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to be more effective and authentic in the future.

Gyula Márfi acknowledges the virtues of the movement, yet he warns against its exaggerations. He is convinced that charismatic people should beware of the arousal of feelings. He further establishes that the identification of charismas with spectacular manifestations causes damage. He sees a source of danger in the segregation of charismatic members from non-charismatic Catholic believers (Kamarás 2003, 174).

Lajos Pápai evaluates the movement in quite a harsh manner: “The movement attracts neurotic psychically unstable people.” He sees that its members adopt the practice of the evangelical churches and sects, as a result of which we find immediatism, the expectation of miracles, fundamentalism, and excessive introversion among their characteristics. “In my opinion this is only a trend, sooner or later it disappears” (Kamarás 2003, 175). “A priest from the *Regnum Marianum* asserts that their experiences are often excited only rather than spontaneous” (Kamarás 2003, 175).

These various reflections are worthy of consideration, others necessitate mutual communication between the two sides for the clarification of misunderstandings or conceptions and opinions based on inadequate information. It would be important to examine the background knowledge of the aforementioned individuals as well, i.e. to explore to what extent the official representatives really know the movement from inside to form such judgments as quoted above.

IV.3.4. Towards greater effectiveness

It is indisputable that there are some areas which have to be improved in the future if this renewal movement wants to contribute to the rehabilitation of the lay status and function in the Roman Catholic Church in a more productive way and become a more effective instrument in God’s restoring and prophetic mission in the Hungarian Church and society.

1. To begin with, it is generally admitted that the majority of Charismatic members are theologically undereducated (Kamarás 2003, 170). There are only few who consider further or higher education important. This makes personal and communal development and expansion difficult and also explains why charismatic believers often stagnate or even regress in their Christian lives. It is understandable that for those well-trained and demanding it is often difficult to find their place within the movement.

2. We should also mention here the impact of the consumer society responsible for the consumer mentality and attitude of the members. It is generally known that the number of people with emotional problems is relatively high among those joining the movement. The fact is that after their recovery and inner healing a significant part of the believers does not want to engage in any service. It poses a serious challenge for the leaders of charismatic

communities to encourage their people to change their consumer way of thinking and living and start serving others instead (Kamarás 2003, 173).

3. There is a tendency to overemphasize charismas. There are individuals and communities that place the functioning of the charismas into the centre of their endeavors instead of listening to the Holy Spirit continuously. Actually, the gifts of the Spirit should remain mere instruments for the greater aim of redemptive mission. Gábor Kovács is right in his observation concerning the name of the movement: “Renewal in the Holy Spirit’ would be a better name, because not the charismas themselves are the goal, but rather the personal commitment in faith” (Kamarás 2003, 171).

4. Another important issue which should be considered for the greater efficacy of the renewal movement in the future would be that there are still scarcely any Charismatic communities in Hungary with a strong commitment to social problems. In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for example groups made up of young people laid stress on the study of the social teaching of the Church. At the beginning of the 60s under the name *Ação Popular* (Popular Action) these groups initiated a democratic-socialist gathering which urged the social rise of the poor – the majority of *Brazil* inhabitants (Benkő 2004, 53). Angelo Rossi, bishop of a rapidly developing industrial region, organised a *Popular Catechism* and entrusted lay people with its management. Archbishop Eugenio A. Sales tried to help the destitute and illiterate inhabitants of a region hit by drought through the radio. The radio became the “schoolroom”. Some people from small farms and settlements able to write and read were trained to become “instructors” within the frame of a short course. These people started to teach their neighbours writing and reading with the help of programmes broadcast on the radio. They also gave them advice in healthcare and agricultural matters and lead them to a deeper knowledge of God (Benkő 2004, 53-54).

The above mentioned examples of Brazilian lay and Episcopal initiatives could be edifying for the Church authorities and lay Christians in Hungary, too. They point to the truth that the social responsibility of charismatic Christians (and of other Christians as well) should be more emphatic. They point to the significance of social care and may give us ideas as to how the social presence, i.e. the contribution of the Church to the improvement of certain social problems could be broadened and made more effective with the involvement of animated lay men and women (and of clergymen as well). Only in this way can the objective and prophetic perspective of God’s people formulated by the Council be accomplished, which is “to penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the Spirit of the Gospel” (AA 5).

5. Many of the active participants in the apostolic duties of many parishes have completed the Holy Spirit Seminar. Taking this into consideration it is not surprising at all

that in their fresh enthusiasm these believers want to bring about fundamental reforms in the Church they belong to. It has to be dealt with this phenomenon if the Charismatic Renewal wants to become a more effective leaven within the institutional frames of the Roman Catholic Church.

We shall notice here a significant difference between the Charismatic and the Bokor movement concerning the official attitude towards them and vice versa: concerning the attitude of the members in the two movements towards their Church. We may remember the disposition of the clergy in relation to the Bokor members, who are forbidden to “act as leaven” within institutional frames. Opposed to this, Charismatic Catholic Christians integrate and engage to a large extent in the life of the Church in different ways. The majority of them participate in the various duties of the parishes. Others establish new functional frames and as pioneers search for novel possibilities, as we have seen in some examples earlier.

The fact that we can ascertain is that the aversion and suspicion on the part of the official Church towards the Charismatic Movement, which used to be very strong in the past decades, has subsided by today. Consequently, the members of the movement get more opportunities to take part in the ecclesiastical services, so they are not forced to establish a peripheral or alternative Church beside the official Church. Naturally, there are opposite examples as well. However, the role and significance lay members get in the Church varies from place to place. There are parishes where lay people are welcome as assistants. In the majority of such cases they act as implementers of the priest’s ideas. We could say that they are cheap and excellent workforce.

The destiny of charismatic communities or individuals chiefly depends on the disposition of the priest of the parish they belong to, but also on their attitude and adaptability to the traditional frames of the Church. Yet usually this latter means the minor problem.

What happened in the last decade in the village of Vámosmikola situated next to the Slovenian border is quite a rare phenomenon. The leader of the local small community, Enikő Kovácsné Janeskár narrated their stormy history. The beginning of the community goes back to 10-13 years ago. The priest of that time launched a Holy Spirit Seminar in the village. There started a renewed communal life in the parish with some active and enthusiastic small groups for prayer. These communities had evangelical Christians among their members as well. Some of the members started to attend the *Pázmány Péter Roman Catholic Theological University* in Budapest and the priest asked them to hold religion classes in the local school. They gathered the children of the village and organised evangelisations once a month. However, the people did not come: they were afraid of them because “by that time the rumour had spread about us in the village that we were a sect” (Kovácsné 10.14.2005). Their destiny

was sealed with a far too bold step. As Enikő said “this time the father went too far” (Kovácsné 10.14.2005). They regularly held Holy Spirit Seminars, and on one occasion the father’s request was to finish the Seminar within the frame of the Holy Mass on Sunday. The church was crowded with people. When they started to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the crowd was shocked and almost everybody ran out. It was after this event that the sufferings and tribulations for the local charismatic Catholic Christians started. They were slandered by the inhabitants. The father was moved to another place. A young priest was placed in the village whose official commission was to restore order there. When he arrived every charismatic member was dismissed from the parish. He proclaimed that ‘there would be no circus here’ (Kovácsné 10.14.2005). “We weren’t even allowed to enter the parish. We had been teaching religion in the local school on commission, but we were immediately sent away. Sect members mustn’t be allowed to teach religion. We were threatened by him that if we did not stop doing “our things” we wouldn’t be allowed to share in the Holy Communion. He uttered that he identified neither with us nor with the ‘Karitás’z’. Thus, we were left alone, separated from the parish.” The dispersed charismatic believers are still serving in the church, “but they are afraid to identify with us” (Kovácsné 10.14.2005).

As the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Hungary shows the universal tendency of seeking integration into the institutional frames of the Church and aims to accomplish the *missio Dei* entrusted to them in unity with the latter, their progression towards greater effectiveness and legitimacy significantly depends on the clerical disposition and attitude as well, just as the previous example pointed to it. If the institutional Church was free from prejudices and open-minded in its attitude to get to know this movement more comprehensively, furthermore, if they showed readiness to help, train and enable its members so that they could manifest Christ’s message in intelligent and skilled ways that would radically change the developments of the next decades for sure.

IV.3.5. Summary

It is an indisputable fact that the Catholic Charismatic Movement, wherever it appears in the Roman Catholic Church of Hungary, raises and develops a kind of missionary sensitivity in the members. Specific programmes and certain methods are employed to introduce the newly converted into the missionary lifestyle.

We could also see that the priests who had experienced renewal both personally and concerning their vocation became the generators of charismatic developments from the very beginning. They recognised that the mission of the Church could be accomplished only in cooperation with their lay people, so they gathered small groups around them. This was of

great importance as for lay Roman Catholic Christians it had been impossible to do anything officially in the Church at that time (in some places this situation has not changed until now).

It is another fact that the framework of small communities belonging to the Charismatic Renewal provides an exceptional place where the lay people – in the spirit of II Vatican Council – can actively participate in the life and mission of the Church, i.e. in sharing the Gospel with baptised but inactive Catholics and with non-Christians. Weekly meetings create a strong experience of fellowship in the members and have great impact on the development of their Christian life. The frequent encounter with a God who loves and knows them personally produces inner health in many cases. There are many who recover from depression, learn to smile and laugh again, while their emotional problems or bad habits gradually vanish. The people who belong to this movement start to live an absorbed Christian life, which means that they are very energetic, dynamic, and motivated to share with others (mainly with non-Christians) as well their personal encounter with the living God – i.e. the Good News about Jesus Christ.

V. Conclusion

‘To restore all things in Christ’ – this has always been the Church’s motto. This survey has pointed to the core fact that the desired restoration, i.e. the expansion and growth of the kingdom of God in individuals, families and the society, where the civilisation of a given era radiates the will and order of God in each of its elements fundamentally depends on and necessitates the gradual restoration of the Church in its wholeness. The actual study chiefly focused on the lay question and problem, which is a basic factor of the necessary ecclesiastical rehabilitation serving the final divine purpose.

Therefore, the empirical actualization of the Council’s reform program is indeed timely. We can perceive in the actual developments and trends in Hungary that a new period is in the making in the history of both the universal Roman Catholic Church, as well as in local parishes inspired and launched by the epoch making Conciliar event forty years ago. Examining two movements of the Roman Catholic Church, however we could generally establish that the conciliar guiding principles and aspirations concerning the newly understood (yet not totally biblically based) theological status and significance of the laity in the apostolic mission of God and the urgency of their engagement into it started to come to fruition and get specific forms, methods and features in the Roman Catholic Church of Hungary. 1989 was the beginning of a new period in this process of ecclesiastical transformation and change, when the Church was set free from the destructive policy of the forty-year totalitarian communist regime; and when the Church being challenged and compelled by the accelerated, wide-ranging transition and crisis in society, in the Church itself, as well as in individuals started to slacken the stiff clinging to the pre-conciliar conceptions with regard to lay masses. The recognition permeates the Church, having a growing influence on its pastoral projects and ministry, that every baptized member should share in the cause of the holistic divine mission, in which the propagation of the good news of Christ is integrated with various forms of social action.

Some developments explored and discussed related to the movement part of the Church, results of passionate and resolute endeavours of lay Christians and open-minded clerics, are the sources of creative power and determining spiritual force in the Church. We could also become convinced that the processes and aspirations presented – in the beginning in most of the cases as humble initiatives met with numerous difficulties – quietly permeated the petrified, meaningless and untimely traditions and the atmosphere of the Church with their prophetic voice proclaiming and manifesting God’s relevant will and challenge. The

transformation of the traditional structures in this critical period is the prerequisite for the fundamental renaissance of Christianity.

The radical and progressive transformation of lay Christians' lives, including their spiritual awakening and gradual recognition of their place, significance and responsibility in the apostolic mission of God are the marks which make us state firmly that the 'movement church' significantly contributes to the slow and gradual rehabilitation of lay existence (status, identity, duty) in the Church, which process will hopefully lead to the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary. The renewal of each individual in a congregation actually means the renewal of the congregation itself. And this is exactly the fundamental precondition for the actualisation of the *aggiornamento* required by the Council – that is Christianity's becoming of today.

The renewed and mature Christians of today are the witnesses and promoters of such an ecclesiastical age in which a new way of thinking, atmosphere and pragmatic culture is shaping the Church. We could see some guiding examples when lay Christians and priests, though scarcely discernibly in the majority of the cases, started to get closer to each other mutually, to view and understand each other from a new spiritual horizon: that of the divine cause of mission entrusted by God to every Christian.

In the present study we tested three hypotheses.

1. The first hypothesis was that the II Vatican Council had a key influence on the history and development of the two movements examined: the Bokor Movement and the Charismatic Renewal. Generally speaking we shall conclude on the basis of our enquiry that the Council event was and remains a crucial spiritual event, the spiritual background and promoter of an unprecedented rejuvenation of Roman Catholic lay believers in Hungary. The significance of this event is indisputable if we consider the fact that the participation and engagement of laity in the mission and ministry of the Church slowly got remarkable and unprecedented appraisal both within the Church and in the world. There is no doubt that this is the beginning of a new area in Church history.

Nevertheless, our expectation regarding the immediate key influence of the Council on the lay movements could not be demonstrated. The key influences are varying. The basic motivating factor for the historical developments of the Bokor Movement was reality – that is the circumstances of life under the totalitarian communist regime. The thorough study of the Gospel involving both arduous spiritual and intellectual work determined and shaped the particular spirituality of the members, as well as their interpretation and practicing of Christian duties. And, as some members of the movement have acknowledged, the Conciliar event has only accelerated the process of the engagement of the faithful in various duties in

meaningful ways. The conclusion could be drawn that it is first and foremost the Bible that provides a unique base and proper source for the rehabilitation of the lay status and role in the mission of God.

As for the estimation of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal from this same point of view we shall mention the immediate key influences of foreign missionaries, and various evangelisational programmes, styles and forms. It would be the theme of another study to reveal the significance and presumable influence of the Council beyond the endeavours of these zealous missionaries.

2. According to the second hypothesis we can state that the lay movements examined, although in different ways and forms, are contributing significantly to the development of an authentic, Christ-like missionary way of thinking and living, the paradigm change of the lay Catholics and to the rehabilitation of their identity and apostolic function in the Church and in the world, which had been distorted down the centuries. These developments have however at many occasions evoked a censorious attitude, mistrustfulness and resistance on the part of the official leadership.

We can not be surprised at this kind of clerical reactions. The Bokor Movement e.g. aspiring to shape and manifest a new lay paradigm on biblical bases disagreed with certain fundamental ecclesiastical doctrines formulated by the Council fathers. This daring and heresy-like stand of the movement points to the future, to the necessity of an effective universal Council, which – along with the reassessment of the actual ecclesiastical doctrines – will hopefully also mean another crucial step in the rehabilitation process of lay people's status and function in the universal Roman Catholic Church. In essence this step would facilitate the liberation and purification of the theological thinking from the idea of the two essentially different statuses – namely that of the consecrated clergy and that of other faithful members still held within the Church – and would produce a radically new period regarding the evaluation of lay men and women. The concept that there is only one status within the Church, the status of being a child of God, a disciple of Jesus – which makes clergy and lay people substantially equal in every respect –, may gain ground and determine the decades of transition towards a new lay paradigm in the Roman Catholic Church.

However, while Bokor Movement is not deemed authentic, but is rather ignored and pushed on the periphery within the Church – partly because of the aforementioned reason –, most of its members also distance themselves from the Church and can not identify with it. For these reasons the communities of this movement can hardly be viewed as stimulating resources for the Church with regard to the transitional process under discussion. At the same time it cannot be left out of consideration either that certain individuals from the Bokor

Movement have adjusted to a certain extent to the meaningless traditional features and the present difficult condition of the Church, yet courageously engage themselves in various apostolic duties and create the conditions for this work where necessary.

In the case of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal this study revealed and pointed to another significant factor in the process of the restoration of the apostolic nature and function of lay existence. In the case of this renewal movement it can be firmly stated that despite stormy and laborious beginnings mainly caused by the reserved and suspicious attitude of the clergy and traditional lay believers³¹ charismatic communities represent stimulating resources for the Church and play a fundamental role in the present-day transition towards a new lay paradigm. The charismatic movement promotes not only the recognition of a continuous re-conceptualisation of lay existence, but also the reassessment of the nature and function of the ordained clergy.

3. Based on the outlined developments and efforts of the two movements some light is thrown on the third hypothesis of this survey. The facts explored and discussed make it evident that the communities or to be more exact: the members of the movements, indeed, have an indispensable role to play in the authentic presence of the Church in the various spheres of the contemporary Hungarian society. When this becomes reality it gradually changes the lives of people in every aspect. Baptised Catholics, non-Catholic Christians, and numerous non-believers have been able to experience the reality of God's love and the unquestionable fact of Jesus' resurrection through the missionary-evangelisational ministry of these communities. Consequently, the faith of lay people and priests touched by these ministries becomes alive; they gradually recognise and gain an understanding of the true nature and significance of being a Christian, as well as of the real meaning and the final purpose of any kind of missionary endeavour. Despite contradictory examples, which coexist with the promising developments, renewed Christians as the prophets of God's holistic concern convey and present an attractive and life-like picture of Christianity to the society, which is close to the daily life and struggles of people. The various efforts of committed lay Christians and priests is expected to make way for an intimate meeting of God and non-believers and thus enable the transformation of the Hungarian society.

Summing it up however, it can be stated that the members of the movements studied have made certain mistakes as well while pioneering new ways to create new opportunities even at the expense of confrontation with the medieval or pre-conciliar spirituality and traditions. While they were striving to live as lay Christians within the Roman Catholic Church in a radically new way compared to the past, they also tried to remain faithful to

³¹ The anticlerical communist regime made the beginnings even harder.

God's plan at the same time, but not without failures. This is because the process of restoration also has its own temptations and traps, such as becoming a slave of a Christian value or cause; the trap of service getting primary importance and attention instead of the person; or the trap of creating the similar conditions to the ones we are protesting against. However, their aspirations and struggles, as well as the effects and results of these are indispensable treasures to the Church, whether acknowledged and appreciated or not. If the institutional part of the Church opens up without reservations, but in a healthily critical way before these facts, adopting and integrating them more faithfully and to a larger extent than before that could mean a new chapter of this clerical movement growing towards a new lay paradigm among the stormy conditions of today's churchly and worldly conditions.

Future prospects.

At the end of the present survey we undertake to meditate on the crucial steps which should be taken in the future for the sake of further progressions concerning the lay issue. Some thoughts, meaningful conceptions, relevant and creative suggestions, potential plans, projects, and dreams of certain lay members, ministry groups or communities have been presented. Our intention here is not to outline appropriate missionary perspectives and projects for the next decades with regard to the specific socio-cultural context of daily realities. These must to be born in the hearts of mature Christian individuals and in the collective mind of Christian communities, which remains a mystery. We only try to sketch some basic directions.

However, to be able to look into the future with confidence and confront the missionary concern and its unforeseeable challenges, to expect successful and fruitful progression towards a more authentic lay existence and function both within churchly and worldly frames one cannot avoid the process of criticism, study and acceptance of the past of the movements in their reality including sometimes also the "naked truth" besides precious results. To formulate what has been done rightly and to seek proper answers to questions concerning what should have been done differently and how would be a crucial task for each community within both movements. To become aware of failures and distortions, and to draw conclusions based on meaningful lessons of the past as well as on present and future conditions should be a priority for communities and individuals alike. Another important thing would be to verify the relevance and timeliness of certain missionary methods, styles and activities. These may have provided sufficient answers to the given challenges of past decades in their socio-political and cultural atmosphere, yet the vital question is if they are

still relevant and proper solutions for the changed circumstances of daily realities in the world, or more closely: in the Hungarian society. Are the apostolic answers and solutions of yesterday still appropriate and effective ways of reaching the people of today? The accomplishment of *aggiornamento*, the basic aspiration of the II Vatican Council, within the frame of the movements discussed and of the lives of individuals, i.e. taking Hungarian realities into consideration is a challenge for every charismatic and Bokor member.

The free atmosphere of development and creation would be another necessity. For the sake of a promising future it would be crucial that those Roman Catholic Christians (either lay members or representatives of the hierarchy) who rediscover themselves and their duty and are eager and passionate to accomplish it, be given opportunities, freedom, professional help, advice, and guidance from the Church. The establishment and broadening of the already existing ecclesiastical conditions remains the duty of the present and the next generation. Iron rules, forms of activities that have lost their content and meaning, barren routines and the futile insistence upon them, as well as attitudes with a destructive effect on the spirit and the creative intellect must be done away with.

A development into this direction is certainly imaginable, but only through mutual advance and dialogue (mainly between the movements and the institutional part of the Church), through their patient and attentive listening to each other, and when understanding diverse viewpoints, convictions and emphasises. Thinking in two levels of over-educated experts and infantile, uninstructed and uneducated lay masses must cease. We hope that the next generations might be able to say proudly that the new missionary revolution has taken place short after the abolishment of the two statuses, the unauthorised and unjustified division of the one people of God.

Returning to our roots of being and acting in our daily lives as Christians and trying to understand the core meaning and nature of this kind of existence is a priceless and indispensable endeavour and opens up a new perspective for the future. It could be deemed indeed a holy act, in the course of which believers will hopefully follow the proper direction indicated by the compass of *missio Dei*. This trend of development will in the long run essentially alter the basic character and structure of the Roman Catholic Church, consequently the lay status and function, too. Quoting the words of Yves Congar: eventually it will become the community of communities, the *communauté de communautés* (in: Nemeshegyi 2004, 805).

VI. Bibliography

Ayres, Francis O. 1962. *The ministry of the laity. A Biblical exposition*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Bánlaky Éva. 2004. *Bevezetés* [Introduction] in Bánlaky-Karczub. *Pszichológusok és teológusok a közösségről* [Psychologists and Theologians about the community]. Budapest: Faludi Ferenc Akadémia, Katolikus Pszichológusok Baráti Köre.

Benkő Antal. 2004. *A brazíliai közösségek életéből* [From the life of the Brazilian communities] in Bánlaky-Karczub. *Pszichológusok és teológusok a közösségről* [Psychologists and Theologians about the community]. Budapest: Faludi Ferenc Akadémia, Katolikus Pszichológusok Baráti Köre.

Boros Erika. 1996. Interjú Dr. Jakubinyi György gyulafehérvári érsekkel [Interview with Dr. György Jakubinyi, the archbishop of Alba-Julia]. *Távlatok* vol 6, pp 762-771.

Bosch, David J. 1991. *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission. The American Society of Missiology Series, No. 16*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Bulányi György. 1995. *A Bokor lelkiisége* [The spirituality of Bokor]. Bokorliget Kiadó.

Bulányi György. 1989. *Egyházrend. Erény-e az engedelmesség?* [Church order. Is obedience a virtue?]. Luzern: Egyházforum Könyvei 3.

Cserháti János. 2000. *Általános bevezető a zsinati dokumentumokhoz* [General introduction to the conciliar documents] in István Diós. *A II. Vatikáni zsinat dokumentumai* [The documents of the II Vatican Council]. Budapest: Szent István Társulat.

Douglass, Klaus. 2002. *Az új reformáció. 96 tétel az egyház jövőjéről* [The new reformation. 98 theses about the future of the Church]. Budapest: Kálvin János kiadó.

French bishops' conference. 1998. *A francia püspökség levele a francia katolikusokhoz* [The letter of the French episcopacy to the French Catholics].

Gánóczy Sándor. 2004. A II. Vatikáni zsinat előzményeiről [About the preliminaries of the II Vatican Council]. *Vigilia* vol 11, pp 802-809.

Gergely Jenő-Kardos and Ferenc József-Rottler. 1997. *Az egyházak Magyarországon. Szent Istvántól napjainkig* [Churches in Hungary. From Saint Stephan to the present days]. Budapest: Korona kiadó.

Guder, Darrel L. 1998. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Edited by Craig van Gelder, *The Gospel and Our Culture Series*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Gyorgyovich Miklós. 1995. Gyermekkeresztség-Laikusok-Cölibátus [Baptism of the children-Laity-Celibacy]. *Távlatok* vol 2, pp 232-234.

György Attila. 1995. A megújulás útjai [The way of the renewal]. *Távlatok* vol 6, pp 744-746.

Horváth Lóránt. 2000. *A zsinati megnyilatkozás szükségessége* [The necessity of the conciliar manifestation] in István Diós. *A II. Vatikáni zsinat dokumentumai* [The documents of the II Vatican Council]. Budapest: Szent István Társulat.

John Paul II. 1989. *Apostolic letter of John Paul II to the Catholic people of Hungary for the conclusion of the "Hungarian Millennium."* Retrieved November 11, 2005, from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf.

John Paul II. 2000. *Novo Millennio Ineunte./Apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II to the bishops, clergy and lay faithful at the close of the great jubilee of the year 2000*. Retrieved November 11, 2005, from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf.

John Paul II. 2001. *The Holy Father's message for world mission Sunday 2001*. Retrieved November 11, 2005, from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf.

John Paul II. 2002. *Pontifical Council for the Laity*. Retrieved February 20, 2004, from [http://www.vatican.va/roman curia/pontifical councils/laity/documents/rc pc laity](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_pc_laity).

John Paul II. 2003. *Post-Synodal apostolic exhortation ECCLESIA IN EUROPA to the bishops, men and women in the consecrated life and all the lay faithful on Jesus Christ alive in His Church the source of hope for Europe*. Retrieved November 11, 2005, from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf.

Kamarás István. 1994. *Bensőséges bázisok. Katolikus kisközösségek Magyarországon* [Intimate base communities. Catholic small communities in Hungary]. Budapest: Országos Közoktatási Intézet.

Kamarás István. 1995. *Vágyak, remények, forgatókönyvek* [Desires, expectations, screenplays]. *Távlatok* vol 1, pp 73-79.

Kamarás István. 1999. *Egyházközségeink 1997-98-ban* [Our congregations in 1997-98]. *Vigilia* vol 6, pp 415-422.

Kamarás István. 2003. *Kis magyar religiográfia* [Small Hungarian religiography]. Pécs: Pro Pannónia Kiadói Alapítvány.

Kool, Anne-Marie. 2002. *Egyén és közösség az átmeneti időszakban. Releváns missziológia feltárása Magyarország számára* [Individual and community in transition. Exploring a relevant missiology for Hungary]. Habilitation dissertation (unpublished manuscript). Debreceni Református Hittudományi Egyetem.

Kraemer, Hendrik. 1958. *A theology of the laity*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Kránitz Mihály. 2002. *A II. Vatikáni Zsinat dokumentumai negyven év távlatából 1962-2002. A zsinati dokumentumok áttekintése és megvalósulása* [Overview and Realization of the Synodical Documents 40 years after the Council]. Budapest: Szent István Társulat.

Krómer István. 1995. *Lélekben újulunk meg!* [Renewing in spirit]. *Távlatok* vol 6, pp 725-743.

- Malota László. 2004. *Szentségtelenek* [Unholyness]. Várpalota: VSP Nyomda Kft.
- Máté Tóth-András. 1995. Bokorból vadonba? [From the shrub into the wilderness]. *Távlatok* vol 6, pp 765-772.
- Máté Tóth-András. 1998. Laikusok az egyházban [Lay people in the Church]. *Vigilia* vol 63, pp 3-4.
- Mészáros István 1995. Utópiák és valóság [Utopias and Reality]. *Távlatok* vol 1, pp 80-82.
- Müller, Alois. 1992. *Kereszténység. Gettó vagy kivonulás?* [Christianity. Ghetto or exodus?]. Budapest-Luzern: Egyházforum.
- Nemeshegyi Péter. 1995. A II. vatikáni zsinat egyházképe [The ecclesiastical conception of the II Vatican Council]. *Távlatok* vol 1, pp 59-68.
- Nemeshegyi Péter. 2004. *A kommúnió pszichológiája* [The psychology of the communion] in Bánlaky-Karczub. *Pszichológusok és teológusok a közösségről* [Psychologists and Theologians about the community]. Budapest: Faludi Ferenc Akadémia, Katolikus Pszichológusok Baráti Köre.
- Newbigin, J.E. Lesslie. 1994. *The Logic of Mission* in James A. Scherer and Bevans B. Stephen. *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization II: Theological Foundations*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- No author. 1975. *A II. vatikáni zsinat tanítása. A zsinati döntések magyarázata és okmányai* [The teaching of the II Vatican Council. The documents and explanation of the conciliar decisions]. Budapest: Szent István Társulat.
- _____. 1997. Hol tartunk? Egyházi (kis)közösségek az evangelizálásban [How far have we got? Base communities in evangelisation]. *Távlatok* vol 1, pp 60-68.
- _____. 1995a. Fórum az Egyházzól [Forum about the Church]. *Távlatok* vol 6, pp 721-724.

_____. 1995b. Beszélgetés P. Bulányi mozgalmáról [Dialogue about the movement of P. Bulányi]. *Távlatok* vol 6, pp 773-783.

_____. 1995c. Jezuita rendgyűlés. Együttműködés a világiakkal küldetésünkben [Jesuit order conference. Co-operation with the Laity in our Mission]. *Távlatok* vol 6, pp 863-865.

Orosz Lóránt. 2003. Kánonjogi szempontok [Canonical view points]. *Vigilia* vol 2, pp 106-111.

Paul VI. 1964. *Lumen Gentium*. Retrieved January 10, 2005 from <http://www.vatican.net/archive/historycouncils/IIvaticancouncil/documents>.

Paul VI. 1965. *Ad Gentes*. Retrieved January 10, 2005 from <http://www.vatican.net/archive/historycouncils/IIvaticancouncil/documents>.

Paul VI. 1965. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. Retrieved January 10, 2005 from <http://www.vatican.net/archive/historycouncils/IIvaticancouncil/documents>.

Paul VI. 1965. *Dei Verbum*. Retrieved January 10, 2005 from <http://www.vatican.net/archive/historycouncils/IIvaticancouncil/documents>.

Paul VI. 1975. *Evangelii Nuntiandi. Apostolic exhortation to the episcopate, to the clergy and to all the faithful of the entire world*. Retrieved November 11, 2005, from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paulvi/apostexhortations/documents/hf.

Prohászka Ottokár. 1997. Mindenki apostol [Everybody is apostle]. *Távlatok* vol 1, p 41.

Puskás Attila. 2003. A II. Vatikáni Zsinat dokumentumai negyven év távlatából 1962-2002 [The Synodical Documents 40 years after the Council]. *Credo* vol 3-4, pp 312-324.

Schreiter J. Robert. 1994. *Changes in Roman Catholic Attitudes toward Proselytism and Mission* in James A Scherer and Bevans B. Stephen. *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization II: Theological Foundations*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Seidman, Irving. 2002. *Az interjú mint kvalitatív kutatási módszer* [The interview as a qualitative method]. Budapest: Műszaki Könyvkiadó.

Stott, John R. W. 1968. *Clergy and laity in God's Church. One people*. London: Falcon Books.

Szabó Ferenc. 1995. A zsinat – harminc év után. Egyházunk a korfordulón [Thirty years after the Council. Our Church at the epochal event]. *Távlatok* vol 6, pp 832-839.

Szakolczay Lajos. 1989. *Páter Bulányi* [Father Bulányi]. Debrecen: Új Idő Lap- és Könyvkiadó Kft.

Tolnay Imre. 1966. *A zsinat. A II. vatikáni egyetemes zsinat története tanítása és szelleme* [The Council. The history teaching and spirituality of the Universal II Vatican Council]. Róma: Zsinati Bizottság.

Tomka Ferenc. 2003. A laikusok szerepe az egyházban [The role of the laity in the Church]. *Vigilia* vol 2, pp 112-116.

Tomka Miklós. 1995. *Csak katolikusoknak* [Only for Catholics Budapest]. Budapest: Corvinus kiadó.

Várnai Jakab. 2003. Laikusi szolgálatok az egyházban. Egyháztani szempontok [Lay services in the Church. Ecclesiastical view points]. *Vigilia* vol 2, pp 102-105.

Végh László. 1995. Egyház, hierarchia, megmaradás [Church, Hierarchy, Remaining]. *Távlatok* vol 2, pp 220-228.

Interviews:*Bokor Movement*

Bajnok and Kristóf Dániel: 09.01.2005.

Bulányi György: 08.16.2005.

Bulkai Margit and Tamás: 07.31. and 08.19.2005.

Miklovitz László: 08.18.2005.

Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Csiszér László: 10.17.2005.

Kovácsné Jancsák Enikő: 10.14.2005.

Marik József and Erzsébet: 11.21.2005.

Szabó Csilla Mária: 10.14.2005.