

A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELIZATION

This lecture was prepared to address the problem of non-theological, so called “practical“ approach to evangelization that avoids difficult theological questions uses marketing techniques and focuses on making men “happy“ parts of the perfect organization called “church“. I hope to show, that this kind of “evangelization“ is an contradiction of terms, because the very word is only meaningful if it has its New Testament theological content.

I will begin with the obligatory definition of the term: The word *evangelization* is derived from the verb *to evangelize*, created by adding the suffix *-ation* which comes from the Latin and is “forming nouns denoting (1) verbal action, (2) instance of this, (3) resulting state, (4) resulting thing, an activity“.¹ In the Greek this verb can be found in two variations: the active voice: - εὐαγγελίζω, and the middle voice: - εὐαγγελίζομαι, which is taken from the noun εὐαγγέλιον.² Both words (active and middle voice) mean *to bring good tidings, to bring joyful tidings*, but the middle voice of this verb as is used in the New Testament seems to be the *terminus technicus* for telling about Jesus Christ. THAYER characterises it as *to proclaim glad tidings` spec. To instruct (men) concerning the things that pertain to Christian salvation*.³ The relevant term used in the OT is כָּשַׁר (Pi)⁴ and appears 30 times. S.T. HAGUE in NIDOTTE says that “In essence *bsr* amd *b^esora* involve good news... there are occasions when the new is very exalted...”⁵ Isaiah and the Psalms use this word in cases when the Lord wins over His enemies and comes to release prisoners (Ps 68:12; Isa 61:1).

Common modern understanding of the term *to evangelize* is defined in the Oxford concise dictionary as *preach the Gospel or win over (person) to Christianity*. J.I. PACKER presents the following theological definition: *To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men can⁶ their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church*.⁷ In the New Testament and in the modern sense evangelization means to bring *news with theological content* which announces the facts about Jesus’ life with their Christian

¹ The Concise Oxford Dictionary, p. 54.

² With Homer this term meant the reward given to messengers. The term meaning „good news“ belongs to a later era. The frequent use of this word in the NT as opposed to it hardly being used outside of the bible shows that we must study its meaning in specific christian use. (Mounce in Elwell, p.472)

³ THAYER, J. H. *A Greek/English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 256.

⁴ Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, (כָּשַׁר to be fresh, i.e. full (rosy, fig.cheerful); to announce (glad news): - messenger, preach, publish, shew forth, (bear, bring, carry, preach, good, tell good) tidings).

⁵ HAGUE, S.T. כָּשַׁר in the New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. Vol. 1, p. 1413.

⁶ J.I.PACKER amended this word in this definition taken from the committee of the archbishop 1918.

⁷ PACKER p.38

interpretation and requirements. This is why we can say that evangelization is a definite type of *theological witness about Jesus Christ.*

1. EVANGELIZATION AND THEOLOGY

In spite of what we have said about theology and evangelization belonging together, it seems that from historical reports about their relationship that they did not actually get on very well together at all, (if we express ourselves carefully). Professionals in theology were not usually the best evangelists and vice versa. Particularly since the age of Rationalism and Enlightenment we can see the opposite. Who hasn't heard a story about some fired up theology student preparing to evangelize who „cooled off“ behind the desks of theology school?! The result of this for many is the effort to minimalise the content of theology in the practice of preaching or to at least avoid difficult questions during the preparation of evangelists.

We all know of exciting stories about new believers whose intuition replaces theology and their immediate success is often much greater than that of the learned preachers and missionaries. The problem though, is that this successful intuition starts to fail after a while. We can see in the New Testament how the apostles were already forced to lean on the logical explanations of theology which they put up against the intuitive theology of the members of the church.

In spite of this, it seems to me that it is an *a priori* truth that evangelization without theology loses its content and theology without evangelization loses its *raison d'être*.⁸ This is why I would like to start this lecture by reminding us that evangelization without its basis in „heavy“ theology is unthinkable, and I hope that in this present age of marketing and pragmatic approaches, (when we do not ask: *why?*, but only *how?*), it does not sound trite.⁹

First, I will speak of the indispensability of complete Christian Dogmatics for Evangelization

Thesis: Evangelization depends on theology and directly flows from theology. Its basis and motivation cannot be any other than theology.

Evangelization is not a result of the study of the problems of humanity in the first place, it is *not* the answer to the problems of the world, but is a means by which God reveals *himself* to man. This is why the theology of evangelization must come out of the revelation about the Author of the Gospel which has the title *the Gospel of God*.¹⁰ This

⁸ It depends, of course, which kind of theology and which kind of evangelization are to be conjoined. I have neither the space or time to go into details here, but I am broadly thinking of the Evangelical theology of the Reformation, of the Pietist and Revivalist type – if we can put it together like this!

⁹ A note about the „difficulties“ or „depths „, of theology necessary for Evangelization: It is clear that the evangelistic message cannot explicitly dissect difficult theological problems. But it has to contain them implicitly in such way, that the evangelistic message does not contradict them, and in the case of questions, the messenger (preacher) will not be found being theologically unprepared.

¹⁰ Rom 1:1; Rom 15:16; 1 Thess 2:2; 1Pet 4:17;

It is the Gospel of God, inasmuch as God is its author, its interpreter, its subject: its author, as He has purposed it in His eternal decrees; its interpreter, as He Himself hath – declared it to men; its subject,

claim may seem provocative but in my opinion this affirmation lies at the essence of the Gospel. Although the Gospel is able to solve the problems of man and the world, and we can consider it as a part of its purpose, its real purpose is incomparably higher and points to the eschatological fulfillment, which will be realized *after the problems of this world have ceased to exist*.

Also, why it is called “the Gospel of God” is clear, when we realize that:

(1) The Gospel is from God: The author of the Gospel is God, and the Gospel is an expression of the attributes of God. Evangelization without theology would be proclaiming the Gospel without knowing God.

(2) The Gospel points to God through the reconciliation in Jesus Christ: Evangelization turns man to God through faith in Jesus Christ. Evangelization without theology amounts to proclaiming the Gospel without knowing the reconciliation in Christ.

(3) The Gospel is made real to the listeners by God through the Holy Spirit: Proclaiming the Gospel is not a usual form of human communication which can be realised without the direct activation of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit. This is why the New Testament stresses the personal role of God in the proclamation of the Gospel.¹¹

Now let us turn to the problem of determination of theological spheres, that are important for evangelization. If we have agreed on that evangelization without theology is nonsense, then we have before us another question which results directly from the title of the lecture: What kind of theology or which part of it is evangelistic? Is it or should it be different from the classic Christian Dogmatics? Or we can put it differently: Which part of theology is naturally and reliably leading to the genitive expression *theology of evangelization*? Or it is necessary to add something to general Christian teaching to create theology of evangelization?

That the *whole* of Christian Dogmatics is important for evangelization I summarize in the following thesis:

Classical conservative Christian Dogmatics does not have even one important theme that would not critically influence the evangelistic message of the church.

If we just take a short glance at the classical Christian Dogmatics, we find in each part, themes which markedly condition and determine evangelization. (The order in which they come is various, the following order does not have any specific purpose.)

Fundamental theology – e.g. teaching about the tri-unity of God is the *condition sine qua non* for Christian evangelization. For example, the Christian Gospel cannot exist without the the message about the Son of God and the Holy Spirit sent to reveal him through preaching.

Bibliology – teaching about the Bible as God’s word. How can we answer the question why we preach from the Bible and why do we place Bibles in the hands of Christians? Answer to these and similar questions are impossible without Bibliology.

because in the Gospel His sovereign perfections and purposes towards men are manifested. (HALDANE – Commentary to the Romans 1:1)

¹¹ e.g. John 15 – 26

Cosmology – a description of God’s creation in which we find the addressee of evangelization. Czech theologian HROMADKA named his work on creation *The Joyful Message about the Creation of the World*¹² to express the close relationship between the two doctrines. How can we explain good God without the doctrine of *good* creation?

Anthropology – basically gives answers to the question, „who is man?“. It is obviously basic precondition of evangelistic approaches and activities. For example if we do not know the doctrine of man as *imago Dei* we lose the dignity of evangelistic enterprise.

Demonology – teaching about the origin of evil and the spiritual battle which man finds himself in. We need not have developed detailed teaching about these evil beings but how can we preach the Gospel, if we do not know they are there to oppose us?

Harmatology – the Gospel is addressed to sinners, but how can it speak to them if it has not defined the concept „sin“? Defective doctrine of sin and sinfulness affects our understanding of human plight and also the results of evangelization.

Christology – Christ is the author of salvation, and He is the true content of the Gospel.

Soteriology – salvation and the Gospel are already linked in the definition.

Pneumatology – Evangelization is only possible if it is initiated and supported by the work of the Holy Spirit. The theology of Evangelization draws attention to this reality, justifies it and interprets it.

Ecclesiology – Evangelization is realised within the church and points to the church. Evangelization without ecclesiology is like a maternity hospital without a nursery unit.

Eschatology – Classic Christian evangelization gives the answer to the question “Where do we go when we die?” and calls people to make a decision about the future world. It is unimaginable without eschatology.

It seems to me that none of the above mentioned can be left out of the theology of evangelization. The evangelistic “digest“ of Christian Dogmatics are those doctrines, that the current and concrete unbeliever needs to hear the most. (Even if it is right that Christian teaching as a whole in its nature is related to evangelization it is not right to insist, that it should be used explicitly and preached at one and the same time.)

This leads me to another thesis:

Evangelization demands Christian Dogmatics to be arranged in such a way that the listener is found while he is turned away from God, presented with help in Christ and called to turn to God.

For this reason we cannot arrange the Dogmatics evangelistically once and for all time. It is obvious that it will always contain themes about *sin, Christ, and the way of salvation* roughly according to schema: illness → physician → cure.

The Evangelistic *presentation* (evangelistic *arrangement*) of Christian dogmatics is such an “order of doctrines“ that is best suited to address the unbeliever. Although Christian teaching is, in itself, evangelistic, even the most relevant choice of themes will not easily speak to men in need of the Gospel if it is not *presented in the spirit of the Gospel*. It is like quality goods without quality advertising. It is reached for by those who have already shown an interest in it, or by those who come across it by chance.

Out of this comes my further thesis:

¹² HROMADKA p. 99

The theology of evangelization is not only concerned with the content of the message but also the means by which the message reaches its listeners.

The evangelistic impulse of evangelization cannot only remain in its content, but must also be in its form of presentation. Therefore the theology of evangelization has to study the compatibility of the content of the Gospel with its rendering in the forms given to it in different cultures. The present trends – de-westernisation, contextualisation and similar cannot be uncritically accepted and we must be very careful when we label certain elements of the Gospel as say “white man’s culture”.

Now, just a few words about the relationship between evangelization and practical theology. If we restrict ourselves to naming just few disciplines of practical theology (e.g. homiletics, catechetics, pastoral counselling, missiology, liturgics...), we can immediately see that the relationship between evangelization and practical theology is quite similar to that of evangelization and dogmatics. All parts of it influence evangelization, though in different ways.

2. THEOLOGY FOUNDATIONAL TO EVANGELIZATION

Up till now I have spoken about the theology *in* evangelization, or as it is “used” by evangelization. Now I would like to discuss the theology that *conditions* evangelization, or as it *sets the foundations* for the evangelistic enterprise. There are various possible approaches here but it is obvious that in the given space we cannot consider all the basic themes of the theology of evangelization. Therefore I have attempted to use some kind of order, according to which I will choose the themes. I have chosen an order which seemed interesting to me and in which the circle of the themes discussed is given by the word *evangelization* itself. As the word “theology” is in first place in the title of this paper, and it is in the nominative form, we have a tendency to use it in this conjunction as defining. In reality, of course, logic demands that the defining word should be “evangelization”, which imposes the conditions of the content of the concept “theology”.

The word “evangelization” is made up of three parts: prefix “ev-”, stem “-angeli-”, and suffix “-zation”. Each part allows a theological explanation. The prefix *Εὐ*... defines the theology of evangelization as the *theology of joy*. The greek prefix *εὐ* comes from the word *εὖ* which is the neutral form of the word *εὖς* meaning *good, nice, honest, noble*. In conjunction with the words *πράσσειν, φέρεσθαι, προσφωονεῖσθαι* it means “happy” or “joyful”.¹³ Together with the Hebrew concept in the OT which contains this idea of joy, (see above), the need for a *theology of joy* is open to us.

The Greek word *ἀγγέλλω* bespeaks the theology of proclamation. Evangelization is the act of proclaiming initiated by an invisible God. Relationships between (1) the Sender and the message, (2) the Sender and the messenger and (3) the Sender, the messenger and the listeners demands a *theology of proclamation*.

¹³ BENSELER, p. 315

Suffix “-(z)ation” can lead us to a *theology of cooperation* between man and God. As you remember, this suffix creates noun of *verbal action*. The verb here is “evangelize” and the suffix -ation may be taken to mean repeated action and in this way also “to make it happen” - it is “the act of proclaiming the Gospel”.¹⁴ It flows from the courage to initiate proclamation, organize evangelistic event and repeat what God said. How do we dare to do this? The *theology of cooperation with God* (or being his envoys) answers the question of *in what right*, and *according to which rules* can someone “organize an encounter” between men and God.

Now I have three genitive expressions that can be taken from what I said above: (1) Theology of joy (2) theology of identity (3) theology of cooperation with God.

2.1 A Theology of Joy

The Gospel as joyful message has to be presented with joy. The theology of joy is theology influenced and motivated by joy of knowing God, his works and reconciliation with God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The source of all joy is God. Firstly, God rejoices in his works (Ps 104:31). This divine creative joy is the foundation of all other joys in the universe. The joy we talk about during evangelization is God’s joy in the return of of his creation - above all man.¹⁵

The theology of joy is also *joyful theology*, or BARTH’S “joyful science”, which is grateful for its subject which is Emmanuel,¹⁶ it is joy that comes from the knowledge of God and his Word. It is a theology of jubilation and celebration of God for His work in Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament links the very notion of *life* with joy. *Life* is not simply having existence, but it is well-being, health and joy. “Life is the ability to exercise all one’s vital power to the fullest; death is the opposite. The verb חָיָה (chájá – to live) involves the ability to have life somewhere on the scale between the fullest enjoyment of all the powers of one’s being, with health and prosperity on the one hand and descent into trouble, sickness, and death on the other.”¹⁷

The theology of joy answers the question which the psalmist was given “Who can show us any good?” (Ps 4:6) His answer is wrapped up in poetry: Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound...” (NIV). Surely this is the goal of evangelization – making “his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (2 Cor 4:6, NIV)

Joy is the basic element of Christianity, the Gospel, and the aim of Christian work. To quote just two of the Evangelical revivalists: WESLEY wrote that the basic feature of Christianity is joy¹⁸ and he characterised this joy as the kind of joy only found in

¹⁴ *The Chambers Dictionary*, p. 582.

¹⁵ Luke 15:7

¹⁶ BARTH, p.183

¹⁷ TWOT I/279-280

¹⁸ WESLEY (Notes on the Bible) Matt 4:23 The Gospel of the the kingdom – The Gospel, that is, the joyous message is the proper name of our religion: as will be amply verified in all who earnestly and perseveringly embrace it.

Christianity.¹⁹ And EDWARDS presents joy as one of the marks of true religion, and quotes 1 Pt 1:8. Paul in 2 Cor 1:24 indicates that the motive for his work is the joy of his listeners.

When we talk about good news and evangelization linked with joyful acceptance of the message, we are not only interested in the joy arising from the acceptance of the good news, but also in the theological *reason* of the *legitimacy* of this joy, the right for joy to exist in a world full of pain, poverty and need. Joy which is linked with the good message of the Gospel, is above all joy of salvation, therefore it is *individual*, but the theology of joy has to see a fuller and more complex joy in the presence of many perplexing questions, than “just” personal benefits of being saved.

To accomplish this, theology of joy must build on at least three theological truths: (1) God’s abundance, (2) God’s care and (3) God’s future.

God’s **abundance**. Everyday life in the face of limited resources leads to cares and anxieties. This necessarily teaches us to think economically – to count, to save, to choose priorities. This way of thinking is an expression of the fact, that there is scarcity of resources, which is part of our earthly existence.²⁰ If we wanted to describe the theology of joy against the background of this “scarcity thinking”, we would say that *it is the study and reception of God’s abundant resources*. This theology, of course, cannot only take into consideration earthly resources. The concept of “richness” (πλοῦτος – sufficiency, abundance, luxury) is clearly linked with the preaching of the Gospel.²¹ In the letter to the Romans chapter 5, the apostle repeats four times the words “how much more!” The salvation of man is not achieved by our hard work, or by using up the last resources. God has more than enough of grace and Jesus Christ’s sacrifice is more than sufficient for all the sins of the world. Evangelization has to become the theological knowledge of this *superabundance* of God’s resources for the salvation and preservation of man.

God’s personal **care**. God’s care for man was most extravagantly expressed in Jesus Christ. His eternal existence, earthly life, death and resurrection are the central witness of the Gospel. This gift is indescribable (2Cor 9:15). God’s care for us carries on from eternal interest in our life (salvation in Christ) to the details of everyday life. God’s care is reflected in Jesus’ appeal of “Do not worry!” (Matt 6:25), or in the apostles’ assurance “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” (1Pet 5:7, NIV). God’s reign in the world, his providence, means God’s working for the good of every believer who loves God (Rom 8:28). How to fit suffering, failure, illness and other sorrows into God’s care is notoriously difficult task. In spite of this the eyes of faith are able to see God’s hand in the midst of the greatest sufferings of personal life (Job) and historical cataclysms (Daniel).

¹⁹ WESLEY: *Works V*. p.142 First, that this is not a natural joy. It does not rise from any natural cause: Not from any sudden flow of spirits. This may give a transient start of joy; but the Christian rejoiceth always. It cannot be owing to bodily health or ease; to strength and soundness of constitution: For it is equally strong in sickness and pain; yea, perhaps far stronger than before.

²⁰ “Economy is, in essence, the study and practise of assigning scarce resources to various purposes”. C. BEISNER, p.xii

²¹ “riches of his kindness” (Rom2:4), “riches of his glory” (Rom 9:23), “richly blesses all” (Rom 10:12) “riches of his glorious inheritance” (Eph 1:18), “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph3:8 – all NIV)

Specific problems how to understand (not *explain* in the full sense) God's management of the world are put to theology by stochastic processes as studied in physics. If however theology gives up in this field it gives up on God. **God who is not everywhere, is not anywhere.** God who does not reign over everything does not reign over anything.

For the theology of joy, here is the argument to leave worries behind not cheap and in an easy, but essential way.

God's future. In the New Testament, hope for the future is linked with joy (Rom 12:12). The future has already started with the preaching of the Gospel - the last times have started (Acts 2:17), the earnest²² guaranteeing the inheritance of the future is the Holy Spirit, who is often linked in the New Testament with joy²³ and the appearance of a joyous future. However much the care of the present and future earth might be in the forefront of our attention, (and the situation in the world is pushing us towards it more and more), the theology of joy cannot build upon the quality of life (even spiritual life), within the human history. Its gaze is towards the unseen things which are eternal (2 Cor 4:18). Evangelization has to lean upon the biblical claims about seeing God (Mat 5:8), being with Christ (Phil 1:23), and following the Lamb (Rev 14:4). If similar statements seem naïve to the modern man or he takes them as an escapism from reality, he cannot expect from the Gospel the joy which it offers.

2.2 A Theology of Identity

A theology of evangelization must clarify the problem of identity²⁴ of the messenger, his relationship to God and the the addressee of the message. Maybe the most important today is the position of the messenger (preacher, evangelist) – how does he dare to speak in the name of God? Is it possible to claim, what the apostle said about himself and his co-workers: “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf...” (2 Cor 5:20, NIV).

BRUNNER says that the crisis of the church is most likely in the crisis of preaching: “...the very phenomenon of preaching as such is strange and even from the outset uncongenial to the contemporary independent-minded and therefore critical man...”²⁵ John STOTT doesn't see this problem of preaching only outside of the church (in an anti-authoritative stance of the modern man and the cybernetic revolution), but also in the church, and that in the loss of faith in the Gospel.²⁶

This poses even more serious problem for evangelization, because the very existence of church is defined in it. “Preaching...is the peculiar task of the Church. The Church is not one of a number of agencies ...The Church is a special and a specialist institution a this is a work that she alone can perform.”²⁷ If the church is not sure about proclamation, it loses her very reason for existence.

²² 2 Cor 1:22; 2 Cor 5:5; Eph 1:14.

²³ Acts 13:52; Rom 14:17; 1 Thess 1:6

²⁴ The word *identity* is used here in the sense of “the distinguishing character or personality of an individual” (*The New Penguin English Dictionary*, p. 568), not in the sense of “being a specified person” (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, p. 495.)

²⁵ BRUNNER p. 100

²⁶ STOTT, p.83

²⁷ LLOYD-JONES, p.32

These facts, when placed side by side, point to the absolute need for a theology of identity of the evangelist that will be foundational to his/her right to speak in the name of God to men.

The theology of messenger's identity is a theology of relationship between the sender and the validity of the message. We can begin with the importance of relationship between God and his Word that is at the basis of this identity. In this sense Jesus identified drinking of his blood and eating his body with listening to his words (Jn 6:61) – the attitude to his words meant the attitude to his person. Psalm 138:2 compares God's Word with God's name.²⁸ These and similar parts of Scripture show the *functional identity*²⁹ of the *person of God* and the *Word of God*. In this sense apostle says "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart" (Rom 10:8, NIV) – ie. you can meet God in his Word. The theology of messenger's identity begins with the reliance on the Word which is present in the words of his message. The "dimensions" of this Word can be guessed at in the naming of the Son of God *Logos* (Jn 1:1). Even though we can misunderstand (in the end who can understand it well?), the inspiration of the Bible and the relationship between God's word and the preaching of the church or God's word and talking to people, we can never have enough respect for the Word of God however we come to understand it. *The theology of words (explained and proclaimed) has at the same time to be theology of the Word (exalted and obeyed).*

This *functional identity* is always making the Gospel fresh, and a real *news*. Evangelization is not just a report of historical events, it is an *encounter in the present time*. This is why the theology of evangelization has to include the theology of man meeting with God in the Word of the Gospel. Even today the Gospel must resound with the words: "The Kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt 3:2, 4:17, 10:7) – otherwise we are only left to fall into the two thousand year abyss between the bygone culture of Palestine under the Romans and today's world.

The preacher of the Gospel is standing in Christ's place. Abuse of this kind of doctrine is possible – from individual representations of Christ in the church hierarchy to all the way to a kind of charismatic *guru*. In spite of all this, losing this *functional identity* between the sender and the messenger leads to the loss of the authority of preaching.

The theology the addressee's identity answers the question "who is the contemporary listener of the Gospel", or simply "who is contemporary man"? BARTH addresses the problem of "modern man" with the words: "The solemn seriousness, in which we anxiously affirm that we are taking man seriously confirming him in his independence, is not serious at all, but an empty masquerade. We do not take him seriously in this way. We make a fool of him. Both for the sake of its object and for the sake of the true and only salvation of man, the proclamation of faith and the Church must start out in all strictness from the fact that there is no independent man as such."³⁰ This simply means that the culture or the preferences and prejudices of the receivers must not determine the content of the message but rather the Gospel has to address these preferences and

²⁸ "you have exalted above all things your name and your word" – NIV; but LXX and Jerusalem Bible: "your promise is even greater than your fame".

²⁹ By *functional identity* I mean such relationship, where contact with one entity has the same character as the contact with the other.

³⁰ BARTH II/1, p.167

prejudices changing them, if necessary. Creating interest and the right questions in the listeners is also a result of the message of the Gospel. The Gospel not only satisfies spiritual hunger but also makes people hungry.

2.3 A Theology of Courage

The theology of working with God is the theology of *obedience* and the theology of *courage*. “Evangelization is man’s work, but the giving of faith is God’s.”³¹ The courage to work together with God comes out of the sense of calling, and knowing God’s faithfulness – Rom 10:15; Lk 11:8). The fear of misusing the awareness being called by God is often so great that it hinders usefulness and leaves us with the overcautious attitude to our position as heralds of the message from God and the result of this attitude is presenting all of God’s commands with words like “maybe”, “I guess it is so”, or “possibly”. The theology of evangelization has to give the evangelist doctrinal certainty and assurance that God calls *man* to speak to *man* in the name of *God*, and that God has called him (the evangelist) to do just that. This is not so because of his intrinsic qualities, but it is the grace and mercy of God.

Similarly it has to contain the teaching of *God’s faithfulness* to his Word. The courage to work together with God can only be there, where there is assurance that God always fulfills his part of the work.

The courage to confront man in his sin is becoming more and more rare among the learned theologians today. PACKER says: “If you are not... seeking to bring about conversions, you are not evangelizing...” or “The message begins with information and ends with an invitation”³² To confront someone who is an intolerant advocate of tolerance, a totalitarian fanatic of pluralism, and who is absolutely convinced of the relativity of all truths is, it would seem, an ever more difficult task. But it is a difficulty that is not only rational putting the question of how to communicate, but also emotional – how to confront. In spite of this the theology of evangelization cannot, with the so called *humility*, doubt the uniqueness and exclusiveness of its subject and listen to man more closely than to God.

The theology of evangelization must not ever forget that proclaiming the Gospel is at the same time, judgement on the man who rejects it. (Jn 3:18). This courage can only be based on God’s love to man, who did everything to prevent the judgement from taking place. The theology of cooperation with God must teach the evangelist what is God’s love like – that it is unconditional but at the same time it does not admit resistance.

The courage for pastoral affirmation of faith is my final point in speaking about the theology of courage. Trust in God’s working through his Word has to be expressed in the pastoral affirmation of those who repent and meet God during an evangelistic event. New Christians are to a great extent formed by the words which they hear at that moment, as the experience tells. Evangelization does not end with the conversion and counting the “those who made decision”. The Gospel continues to speak to the believer as he/she grows and has doubts, as he works in church and in the world, and gets to know God. The

³¹ PACKER p.40

³² PACKER p. 41, 92

theology of cooperation with God has to continue in evangelization in the same way that the work of the apostle Paul continued, who wrote letters that are full of theological teaching. The Gospel is not just good news about entering the Kingdom of God, but about the life in it.

I hope I have shown, that theology far from being impractical or hindering evangelization is its only content and true foundation. The three themes of the theology of evangelization – joy, messenger's and addressee identity, and courage – are in my opinion key to a successful preaching of the Gospel in our times.

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