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An Overview of the Special Nexus Between Progressivist Theorems and Mainline Christian Churches in Hungary

Pregled posebne povezave med progresivističnimi teorijami in glavnimi krščanskimi Cerkvami na Madžarskem

Abstract: The so-called Christian conservative political turn and allegedly anti-LGBTQ legislative measures in governmental politics in Hungary have affected the mainline Christian churches, as well. Critical Western progressive theoreticians and opinion leaders claim that the churches tend to legitimize and merely serve the objectives of politics, particularly in Hungary. The study analyzes the various clerical doctrines and statements concerning the new, progressive challenges, particularly the gender-related topics and the issue of church recognition blessing of same-sex marriage. It also demonstrates the biblical fundamentals and doctrinal rigor that the mainline Christian churches in the West, and, especially in Hungary formulate and tend to base their dissenting stance in these highly controversial matters.

Key words: progressivism, secularism, traditionalism, LGBTQ issues, Christianity, Hungary

Povzetek: Tako imenovani krščansko-konservativni politični obrat in domnevno proti LGBTQ usmerjeni zakonodajni ukrepi vladne politike na Madžarskem zadevajo tudi osrednje krščanske Cerkve. Zahodni progresivni teoretiki in predstavniki javnega mnenja so do Cerkve kritični, češ da se nagiba k legitimizaciji teh sprememb in služenju ciljem politike, zlasti na Madžarskem. Prispevek analizira različne klerikalne doktrine in izjave v zvezi z novimi, progresivnimi izzivi, zlasti temami, povezanimi z vprašanjem spola in cerkvenega priznanja blagoslova istospolnih porok. Prikazuje tudi svetopisemske temelje in doktrinarno strogost, ki jih glavne krščanske Cerkve na Zahodu in zlasti na Madžarskem izpričujejo in na katerih svoje odklonilno stališče v teh izrazito polemičnih zadevah običajno utemeljujejo.

Ključne besede: progresivizem, sekularizem, tradicionalizem, vprašanja LGBTQ, krščanstvo, Madžarska

1. Introduction

It is a commonly shared political wisdom that ideas and interests rule the world, since the impact of ideas lasts longer and tends to be more persistently influential on the fabric of society, culture, and policy-makers, as well. The post-Cold war period of the late 20th century resulted in the realm of secularism, liberalism and postmodernism, as far as the mainline Western civilization has been concerned. In the era of the digital post-postmodern age (Nealon 2012) we could also experience the so-called revenge of God or the revisionism of classic and new forms of theism and religious revivalism, a strive for transcendental experiences among the alienated consumerist individuals of the Western and post-communist European countries. The rather gloomy instances of over-politicized religions as per the effect of *la revanche de Dieu* (Kepel 1991) as well as the plethora of pseudo-religious forms of faiths, would immediately remind us of the various controversial violent manifestations inspired and generated by religious hatred and different types of harms carried out in the name of God. The relativizing paradigm aligned with natural sciences and liberal progressive political theories tends to constitute the major challenges of transcendental faith and biblical moral fundamentals in the postmodern Western world (Molnár 1987).

This paper, on the one hand tends to highlight the main premises of the so-called 21st century secular, progressive pseudo-religions, heralded by such much-cited iconic terms as gender identity theories or the co-related LGBTQI+ policies. Furthermore, it also aims to provide an insight into the seemingly paradigm-changing impact, cultural, political challenges of the new theories and trends posed by various Christian churches and denominations in Hungary.

The hypothesis claims that the mainline Christian churches and denominations in Hungary tend to reject the adoption of new progressive ideas on biblical and doctrinal fundamentals and much less on direct political impact from conservative (governmental) policy-makers.

The study is going to provide a brief outline of the responses given by the chosen churches examined, concerning their attitude and standpoints related to highly controversial issues, like same-sex marriage, deconstruction of heteronormativity or the enforcement of recently elaborated and adopted LGBTQI+ rights and policies.

The methods applied through this paper rely on analytical content analyses of the available primary resources in the matter, including direct responses of clergymen, doctrinal documents, synod proclamations issued and decisions made concerning the subject of the paper.

2. Clash of paradigms in the West

“The sad duty of politics is to establish justice in a sinful world”

Reinhold Niebuhr

As the common pious Christian wisdom says times and morals are changing, thou the word of God and the example of his Son and apostles do not. Nevertheless, not rarely in the last centuries, from time to time the secular earthly challenges, like totalitarian ideologies, do pose serious hazards and intellectual, spiritual experiments, time and need for reconsideration for the church leaders and common believers alike.

The Christian churches and denominations following the biblical heritage of Jesus Christ and his apostles have often been regarded since the Enlightenment by several intellectual, secular decision-makers and ideologues as rather weird unworldly features. Christians have been considered almost outsiders or rather not belonging to the significantly different social system and habits of the mind and hearts of modern, secular societies. However, the mission and spiritual message of both parties, namely the Christian churches and the new progressive, secular cluster of ideas, paradigm share some distant resemblance.

On one hand, Christians cherish the idea of another perfect world fulfilling either the words and promises of the Gospel in a sinful, imperfect human environment. While on the other hand, the progressivists await and urge the accomplishment of a visionary utopian dreamland where everyone would be equal without restrictions, with an abundance of individual identities and self-achieving zeal for pursuing the ultimate self-reflective materialistic joy of life (Molnár 2022, 26).

The ideological framework behind the latter ideas can be directly related to postmodernism, post-liberalism, which are meant to be integral components of neo-Marxist critical theories as some sort of distorted new manifestations of Western secular religion, also known as woke progressivism (Malik 2022). The intellectual roots of these trends and theoretical discourses have been embedded in the liberal arts and social studies milieu of Western academia ever since the 1970s.

The commonly shared postmodern theorem on the new technology and gender-driven social, cultural trends, basically re-affirm the necessity and inevitability of deconstructing both the collective historical memories and religious, spiritual frameworks, still prevailing in the West. The intellectual masterminds behind the new progressive discourses emerged more than half a century ago overseas, and were primarily heralded by European philosophers established in America, like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida (Derrida 1995, 9–63). The seeds of their thoughts have turned into full grown trees and their ideas seem to be paramounting these days among Western liberal academia. The American campus culture nourished by the new disciplines of deconstructionism and postmodernism has been also featured by the emergence of radical Leftist feminism, queer and minority studies, critical race theory (Rufo 2021), inter-sectionalism (CIJ 2020), as well as other co-related highly controversial theories. The new paradigm and unfinished anthropological revolution gained momentum in academia and liberal think tanks, particularly during the unipolar moment of American hegemony following the fall of the Soviet Union at the demise of the bipolar world order in 1991.

The former communist Soviet bloc countries of Central and East Europe, like Hungary, too, regarded the West, and especially the United States of President Reagan and George H.W. Bush as the awe-inspiring land of freedom and a role model for all the oppressed people of the East. The rather nihilistic, atheistic, secularized and ideologically indoctrinated post-communist societies swiftly turned into a somewhat more pious, nationalistic medley of groups of citizens who have been eagerly willing to incorporate any new input, spiritual, and intellectual trend and ideas coming from the West (Krastev and Holmes 2019). Christian revivalist movements and new style of pseudo-transcendentalist pseudo-church organizations, like the controversial Scientology movement of L. Ron Hubbard (Scientology 2010) have sprung into life accompanied by the secular trends of covert neo-Marxist theories and their social, cultural and political manifestations. In the post-communist European countries, the LGBTQ movements and their various civil rights activist organizations emerged in the 1990s, as part of the famous belatedness of the entire region depicted by Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes.

The intellectual offsprings of the 1968 new-Leftists revolutionaries, aligned with the new scholarship and disciplines of the Frankfurt School overtook the social studies institutes of several Western universities, elaborated not only a new, covertly Marxist paradigm, but a highly individualistic philosophy, a radical revolutionary anthropologic attitude. It also resulted in a marking new position or *raison d'être* for the forthcoming post-war generations with an eager appetite for something strikingly new and revolutionary during the Cold war apathy. The key terms and principles, which are commonly used nowadays in the mainstream media and political narratives, were denoted by much revered liberal thinkers, most notably Jacques Derrida, John Mooney, Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault, or Judith Butler. More recently law professors like Kimberley Crenshaw, Cheryl Harris, Bradley Mason (Lamb's Reign 2020) and their numerous influential disciples within American academia, like Ibram X. Kendi, as the primary trend-setter progressive intellectuals (Saad 2020).

Their primary premises revolve around ideas like: deconstructionism, structuralism, gender, new morality, anti-transcendentalism, anti-traditionalism, post-heteronormativity, and social constructivism. These considerably Leftist, revisited neo-Gramscian concepts have also been supplemented with the controversial theory of structural racism, white privilege status and oppressive Christianity generally prevailing within the Western societies (Lindsay 2021).

Peter Boghossian, an American atheist philosopher and a career-victim of progressivist cancelled cultural campaigns together with Rod Dreher, American Orthodox Christian author and journalist on a conference panel discussion in Budapest, ascertained and consented with the recognition that the new secular progressive cluster of theories, or wokism is basically a new pseudo-religious ideology (MCC 2022). Similarly to the logical pattern of Gramsci's Marxist concept of religion — as the most complex utopian ideology in human history (Gramsci 1970, 154), — the postmodern progressivist theorem can also be considered a totalitarian neo-Marxist paradigm, a new type of social and cultural anthropology with effective political implications.

The recently elaborated set of norms had been properly and quite incomprehensibly wrapped into the paradigm of new Western post-Christian morality, based on the cult of liberated self, redefined and deconstructed post-binary gender roles and principles of unchained sexual desire as driving force of history, culture and even of progressive political acts (Murray 2019).

The Western Christian churches, primarily the Roman Catholic and mainline protestant churches and denominations have traditionally adopted a very reserved, cautious positioning concerning the new, so-called progressive postmodern ideas and theories, until recently. Although the various church teachings and biblical fundaments provide useful and practical guidelines they can adopt in most cases some Protestant denominations as it emerged in the controversies of the Church of England (House of Bishops 2019) and Church of Scotland (CoS 2022), or the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutherans tend to take into account and even embrace the new paradigms related to marriage norms and gender issues.

The Eastern Orthodox churches (Orthodox Europe 2021) have expressed their firm opposition and dismissal of the new spiritual and socio-cultural challenges (namely, on abortion, same-sex marriage and transgenderism) relying on their dogmatic biblical fundaments from the very beginning (Couretas 2019). Both organizations share the universalist conservative conceptuality echoed by the Roman Catholic firm stance, which claims that the role and mission of the Church *ex initium ad finem*¹ is to fulfil God's will on Earth and serve the salvation of true believers and not to adopt and align with the ephemeral human visions and sinful profane misconceptions. The recognition and blessing of the marriage of same-sex couples is considered a repellent notion both for Eastern Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic Church principals and even for the traditionalist, Orthodox Judaic Jewish congregations' council of rabbis in the US, as well as in Europe (Dreher 2021).

3. The position of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary

During the previous decade the moderately socially conservative Christian Democratic government of Hungary, led and defined by the personality of prime minister Viktor Orbán, has been forced into a considerably defensive position from various sides by progressive pressure groups. The Hungarian Roman Catholic Church, along with many other Christian denominations have been indirectly involved in an intellectual row, so-called culture war since the controversies affect such core institutions and concepts as family, marriage and the anthropologic status of men and women. The local progressive pressure groups, NGOs belonging to the designated international networks in the matter, as well as diplomatic corps and European institutions altogether have defiantly expressed their dissent and outrage on the religiously affected, so-called discriminatory Christian conservative

¹ from the beginning to the end.

legislation practices of the Hungarian Parliament, and particularly by the decrees and amendments approved related to the Fundamental Law of Hungary since 2011, (practically, the new redefined constitution of Hungary).

Nevertheless, the new amendment to the Hungarian Child Protection Act of 1997, adopted by the National Assembly (Parliament) of Hungary in August 2021 caused the biggest uproar and international wave of objections resulting in few good points and much more, rather gloomy implications for Hungary. The new Child protection act no. LXXIX/ 2021, also labelled as the notorious law on banning the dissemination of LGBTQ topics in schools for minors raised serious concerns for both major confronting groups not only in Hungary but abroad, as well. The Hungarian conservatives, including the mainline Christian churches overwhelmingly supported the initiative of legally barring the spread of subversive pseudo-scientific gender-based ideas in Hungarian schools (Reuters-CNN 2021).

The law and the national referendum on this issue in 2022 have altogether demonstrated the enormous influence and soft power outreach of the progressive groups and the indoctrination level of LGBTQ-issues in common political discourse and media narratives. American and European conservatives from Florida to Cracow cheered for the Hungarian stance and defiant opposition against the new progressive norms in politics, sports (The Athletic 2020) and education, though the global anti-Hungarian sentiments and progressive media campaigns overshadowed the gains in this respect (Loustau 2021). In Hungary, also several anti-clerical and Christophobic cases caused an uproar, like the scandalous initiative of an atheist activist called Gáspár Békés. Mr. Békés used to be one of the young city clerk officials of the newly elected progressive liberal mayor of Budapest Gergely Karácsony, and he wished to decorate the Budapest Statue of Liberty with light-painted LGTBTQ rainbow colours. Previously, Békés had several anti-Christian and bluntly defamatory remarks on religious faith and practices including the idea of banning child baptism, too. The scandalous remarks ultimately led to nationwide public uproar and his dismissal from the city hall office (Horváth 2021).

The dark shadows cast by the alleged paedophile scandals of some members of the clergy also had their counterproductive negative effects on the church and the religious life of Hungary. Furthermore, some domestic catholic theologian critiques also raised their voices, which resulted in more harm than benefit for the stale reputation and popularity of the Roman Catholic church, which is in palpable decline in Hungary similarly to many post-communist countries in the region. Most remarkably the rather controversial activity of Ms. Rita Perintfalvi must be mentioned and taken into account. She tends to be acting both as a media influencer and a feminist Catholic, liberation theologian (MTÖE 2022), arguably a sort of progressive Catholic spearhead and opinion-shaper of the church against the Catholic Church itself. Perintfalvi is a teacher of religious studies and post-doc lecturer at the Theology Faculty, Old Testament Studies Departement of the University of Graz, Austria, and she has become the most vocal critique and well-known, pro-LGBTQ reformist theologian of and against the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church. She also wrote a rather controversial, bestseller book on the

allegedly concealed misdemeanours, and paedophile crimes committed by various members of the clergy in the previous decades (Perintfalvi 2021).

On the opposite spectrum, we may find various think-thanks, young Christian conservative scholars in Hungary and academic organizations, research groups, which tend to deal with the protection of traditional religious norms and raise awareness on various hazards posed by new secular progressive phenomena. Mr. Gergely Szilvay was practically the first Catholic conservative historian, a journalist in Hungary who indulged himself in the critical analysis of gender and other progressive studies, writing his PhD dissertation on the political implications of same-sex marriage, moreover, he also elaborated a popular book entitled *Critique of gender theory* (Szilvay 2021).

For the Hungarian church leaders and conservative policy-makers the thematic activity and public awareness-raising of Szilvay, and a few young scholars have considerably contributed to legislative as well as to intellectual responses, and defensive measures facing the new-Leftist, progressive secular challenges.

The Hungarian Roman Catholic Church joined the universal initiative of the Holy See to tackle the ardent problem of sinful paedophilia cases that allegedly might affect a significant ratio of clergy members (with several unofficial and non-verified estimates circulating). Following the global outcry amplified by the rather hostile, defamatory liberal media and a few benevolent critiques, too, the church simply cannot be deaf, dumb and blind anymore over the horrendous cases stretching from Canada through France and even to Hungary (Rodriguez 2021).

A special international conference was organized by the Holy See in Warsaw, Poland in September 2021 for the Church delegates from all the Central East European countries, solely dedicated to this inner disturbance and, especially for the protection of minors and people in need within the reach of the church. The keynote speaker and one of the main contributors of the conference Father Lombardi S.J. from the Vatican Press Office both through his speech and in his written article as well emphasized all the extensive and emphatic efforts carried out by Pope Francis and the Holy See through the last decade to tackle this endemic problem of the church (Magyar Kurír 2021).

As Father Federico Lombardi S.J., also mentioned, the progressive challenges along with the paedophile scandals within the clergy are sinful diabolic acts that hinder and jeopardize the church from fulfilling its role and mission in the world.

To dismiss one of these claims and implicit volatile accusations concerning the covert acceptance of homosexuality, Pope Francis issued a rare doctrinal policy statement in 2021, which overtly declared the sanctity of solely heterosexual marriage. The note from the Vatican, which was approved by both Pope Francis and the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, stated that “it is not licit to impart a blessing on relationships, or partnerships, even stable, that involve sexual activity outside of marriage (i.e., outside the indissoluble union of a man and a woman open in itself to the transmission of life), as is the case of the unions between persons of the same sex” (ProLife 2021).

As reverend László Gájer, a young scholar of Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Budapest asserted, the Hungarian Catholic Church evidently fully undertakes and follows the concerning pontifical guidelines which evidently comply with the corresponding Social Teaching of the Church (RKE 2022) in this important matter. The two millennia-old tradition and wisdom of the Church possesses clear-cut guidelines in all important matters, insinuating the fact that homosexuals (and people with diverse, non-binary sexual identities) are also sinful human beings, just like anyone else, worth being salvaged by faith in Christ, no matter of their gender identities, unless they convert their identities into deliberately sinful activities.

Though the pontiff's letter mentioned above also declares *expressis verbis* on biblical grounds that "God neither blesses nor can He bless sin" adding, "for the aforementioned reasons, the Church does not have, nor can it dispose of, the power to bless unions of persons of the same sex in the sense understood above" (ProLife 2021).

In 2019 Hungarian bishop András Veres (Hungary Today 2022), on behalf of the Hungarian Bishop's Conference also expressed their unanimous and amicable support towards their Polish Catholic brothers, who encountered a vicious discrediting campaign for their anti-LGBTQ stance from various European institutions, also reinforced by progressive global pressure groups and vocal anticlerical NGOs.

4. The Position of the Calvinist Reformed Church in Hungary

The Reformed Church in Hungary (Hungarian acronym MRE) has taken an observing, distance-keeping position in the context of the progressive ideas and the intellectual, spiritual, cultural challenge posed by the postmodern phenomena. Nevertheless, the congregation leaders and bishops have expressed their consent and support for the constitutional and legislative changes initiated and adopted by the Parliament of Hungary in recent years. The common declaration of the mainline, so-called historic churches of Hungary on the protection of the tradition and norm of heterosexual marriage and against the blessing of homosexual relationship, has also been coincidentally signed by the MRE on December 9, 2021 (Pécsi Egyházmegye 2021). The undersigned churches and denominations commonly expressed their commitment and belief in the biblical fundament revealed in Genesis 1:27-28 as follows "So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them: Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Among many other Hungarian Calvinist ministers took an active part in a supportive demonstration on February 14, 2022, organized for a Finnish Christian democratic politician, wife of a Lutheran pastor, dr. Paivi Raisanen. She had been

put on trial allegedly for her consecutive public arguments denoted to be anti-gay, anti-minority hate crimes. Ms. Raisanen also had to face an intensive and violent smear-campaign for her firm remarks against LGBTQ and gay Pride campaigns (Lee 2021) purely on biblical grounds, amplified and vilified by the Finnish progressives and state authorities (Visegrád Post 2022). Interestingly enough, many Finnish Lutheran priests and common believers, too failed to support Ms. Raisanen publicly in her ordeal and legal battle for her biblical views, freedom of speech and religious belief. For many conservative pious people all around Europe as well as in Hungary, her legal case significantly demonstrated the power of the progressive media and persuasive sensitivity campaigns which, indirectly may as well result in self-censorship and fear of public humiliation for conservative dissenters. Ultimately, all the charges against Ms. Raisanen were dismissed by the Helsinki Central Court of Appeals in March 2022.

5. The Position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary

The Hungarian Evangelic Lutheran Church has found itself in a delicate situation regarding its attitude and nexus with the new progressive ideas, which have been partly adapted by sister congregations in Finland, Sweden and other Western countries, too (Evangelical Focus 2021). Evidently, it has caused considerable tension and conflict, almost a domestic schism among the pious believers and some more progressive clergy members and leaders of the various Lutheran congregations involved.

In Hungary some young Protestant pastors (Lutherans, Calvinists, Pentecostals, Baptists, free Christians alike) established a strictly biblical fundamentalist group a few years ago, also labelled as Protestant Orthodoxy or “Evangelicals”, presided by Calvinist pastor Tamás András Márkus (Evangelikalizmus 2020). One of the most vocal and fierce counter-LGBTQ activists in this clerical group is a Lutheran Evangelical pastor Máté Kiss. He proved to be one of the initiators and co-author of the famous “November Proclamation” of Hungarian churches on the protection of traditional families and heterosexual marriage, in the turbulent year of 2021 (Kiss 2021).

Pastor Kiss and the Evangelical Group deliberately and clearly expressed in their manifesto that their proclamation is not against people with diverse gender identities and sexual orientation, rather the evangelical clergy and community demonstrate their firm stand on biblical fundamentals against sinful acts, such as homosexuality, changing biological sexual identity and condition of humans and the controversial idea of same-sex marriage.

The last point of their proclamation means to be really significant and exemplary for many other clergymen and women around the world who must face the challenges of postmodern progressive lure and temptations. As priests and pa-

stors, all of them have received clear attainment and duty from their congregations to have exemplary life conducts as well as to show the way and light for the common believers of their congregations strictly on biblical fundamentals, and not on the new trends of the ephemeral secular world. Basically, it confirms the reiterated classic Christian wisdom claiming that the true disciples of Christ are those who follow their creed on biblical teachings following God's will and grace against or despite the wishes and prerequisites of the external world. Pastor Máté Kiss also expressed his fear and concerns about the distressing volatile secular trends and postmodern liberal ideological challenges approaching the clergy and sneaking into his church. Thus, the Hungarian Christian believers and the Lutherans must prepare and brace themselves with good faith, too, as Christ preached "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Elek 2022).

6. Other Denominations' Standpoints

Among the smaller denominations, Christian churches actively present in Hungary the Evangelical Trinity Church (Szentháromság 2021) shares the thoughts of his pastor Attila Hajdú from the Diósd congregation fully rejecting the legitimacy of so-called progressive ideas and practices (e.g. abortion and homosexual relationships, trans-gender identities) as merely sinful acts. He referred among others to the biblical teaching proclaimed in the New Testament by apostle Paul as in Rome 1,18-32: ".../ thus God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error /.../."

The most dynamically growing and developing protestant revivalist small church in Hungary is the Congregation of Faith (H.Gy 2022). It has been operating in Hungary and in Romania as well, half illegally, underground since the early 1980s, founded and still led by chief pastor Sándor Németh. They are an American-style revivalist, a charismatic Pentecostal denomination, with around 70 thousand active believers and a significantly influential educational, charity and media organizational portfolio in and around Hungary.

The popular media outlets of the church, notably the periodical *Hetek* (*Weeks*) and *Hit Rádió* (*Radio Faith*), also consider the new progressive trends considerably dangerous and vicious (HitRádió 2020) contradicting the biblical teachings and the charismatic churches' doctrines as well as basic universal Christian values. Pastor Sándor Németh considers the promotion of same-sex marriage and denial of hetero-normativity as the wicked instances of earthly temptations the faithful must cope with extreme caution. These had been also proclaimed in the Book of Revelations by the apostle John and are nothing more than warning signs for the apocalyptic times and the approaching second return of Jesus Christ for the true believers (Hit Rádió 2021).

On the other hand, in relatively sharp contrast to the biblical conservative clerical responses presented above, the only Hungarian-founded historic church, the Hungarian Unitarian Church (Unitárius 2022) also headquartered in Kolozsvár-Cluj, Transylvania, Romania since the mid-16th century, seemingly tend to reconcile with the existence let alone the legitimacy of homosexual marriages, similarly to the right of women to perform abortion in extremely urgent cases. Chief notary of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church, pastor Dávid Gyerő in his individual proclamation claimed that his church should manifest a tolerant and more inclusive attitude towards homosexual relationships and same-sex marriage, taking that the Scriptures also express quite controversial, contradictory ideas in the matter of marriage (Oborocea 2016). In this matter, the unitarian protestant ethics is centered around the sanctity and value of human existence, adoration of life and all living creatures as well as the Creator of life, as also proclaimed in the Sermon of the Mount by Christ (Matt 5–7). All the same, contrary to reverend Gyerő's stance, the chief custodian of the Hungarian Unitarian Church, Mr. Elekes Botond expressed their total dissent concerning the inclusion and recognition of same-sex relationships within and by the Unitarian Church (FŐTér 2017) despite the written request of their sister-congregations from the United States, affirmed by the American Universalist Unitarians (Universalist Unitarians 2021).

The almost schismatic domestic conflict among Unitarian clergymen and Church leaders ultimately led to the Unitarian Church Synod sentence, issued on 28 October 2017. The statement reiterated and reaffirmed the legitimacy and conservative norm of solely heterosexual marriage, rejecting the inclusion and recognition of Unitarian LGBTQ-people status (Unitarius 2021).

Nevertheless, the Hungarian unitarians refrained from signing the common declaration of churches in 2021 on the protection of traditional marriage and various secular LGBTQ-challenges. Along these controversial and distinct standpoints, the Unitarians still can be considered one of the most inclusive, pliant, so-called liberal protestant churches among the mainline historical denominations serving in Hungary, Romania and in the United States.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy the case of a famous intellectual, non-clerical individual, an acclaimed Hungarian neurosurgeon, prof András Csókay, who is a well-known and also notoriously devout Christian medic for many of his colleagues in academic circles. He has been facing serious attacks, vilifying smear campaigns against his person and professional career, based on his proclaimed faith in Christ and traditionalist, anti-LGBTQ and transgender principles, too (Csókay 2021).

7. Conclusion

As it has been revealed from the findings presented in the study, the great majority of the Hungarian mainline churches and denominations from the Roman Catholic Church to the revivalist Congregation of Faith do not embrace the new progressi-

ve gender-based theories and identity policies in any form, as it being considered contradictory to fundamental biblical doctrines and teachings of Christ. Even the non-Christian Judaism and Islam, as part of the Abrahamic religions, share the same stance and protesting attitude versus the new-Leftist, liberal, postmodern discourses and pseudo-religious ideas. The majority of the Hungarian society can be considered to be culturally Christian, with a slow but continuously shrinking ratio of believers among the members of under –40, Z and millennial generation (Balogh 2017). The ratio of regular churchgoers, and devout practitioners of faith is less than 10% among the Hungarian adult population (Csepreghy 2022), who non-surprisingly reject the new gender-related ideas and practices in education and in society in general. However, the 2022 April referendum on child protection — rather unique and exemplary in the entire world in this matter — ultimately turned out to be invalid, 95% of the respondents (3.3 million people) also expressed their full dissent with LGBTQI+ awareness raising curricular programs in education for Hungarian minors (Magyar Hírlap 2022).

As the findings have demonstrated in the previous pages, the primary aim of the study has been fulfilled. Namely, to examine and highlight the various responses and reactions of the major Hungarian Christian Churches and denominations concerning the new secular, pseudo-religious progressive ideas and gender-based identity theories. The ascertained results provide a clear-cut response, seemingly reactionary conservative, biblically fundamentalist attitude, which cannot be reconciled or harmonized with the “new songs of the new times” as a Hungarian protestant poet Endre Ady would famously recite. The Hungarian religious conservative people and institutions do seem to share the martyr poetic proclamation of renowned Transylvanian Evangelic poet Sándor Reményik from 1925 that “do not abandon your church, the church and the school” (Reményik 2019, 289).

Most of the pious believers of the examined Christian churches find comfort and confidence in withstanding the new secular progressive challenges, also recalling the teaching of Jesus, transmitted by apostle John that “I have given [my disciples] your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one” (John 17:14-16).

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