"BABEȘ–BOLYAI" UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA

FACULTY OF REFORMED THEOLOGY AND MUSIC

Ecumene Doctoral School

DOCTORAL THESIS
RESUME

COORDINATES AND SPIRITUAL
DIMENSIONS
IN CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE COUNSELING

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Introduction

The smallest cell in the human community is the family. The starting point of the family in the classical sense is the union of a man and a woman. Throughout human history, this community has been called marriage. The origins of marriage are obscured in social science research. According to biblical teaching, it is God's acquisition.

In the history of the institutionalisation of marriage, we find similarities and differences in both lines. In social science terms, ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics meet. Theologically, religious affiliation is decisive.

The thesis provides an insight into marriage from the point of view of social science, psychology and partly the basic sciences of sociology. Theology focuses on Christian marriage in the field of religion. In the Christian religion, interdenominational marriage is a mixed marriage in which, above differences, the common denominator of the connecting heritage is the *Christian* determinant. Learning about social embeddedness helps us understand the background of everyday Christian marriage. Christian theology opens up a biblical dimension to the coordinates of marriage. In this dual leadership, crosstalk and interconnectedness, we seek the point(s) of common encounter in which Christians can live and present their unity in Christ to the world.

The achievements of social sciences can inspire theological insights in such a way that, in the specific ecclesial practice of pastoral care, in pastoral psychology, in the spirit of interdisciplinarity, ecumenical aspirations can move from the smallest cell of the human community to the practical unity of the congregational community.

In Christian mixed marriage, to go from the common dining table at home to the table of the common Lord, and to live the intercommunion in it, is a Christlike imperative: "that they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, so may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

The thesis seeks common values from the three coordination systems of the Christian church (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant), the dimension in Christ. Intercommunion

is the dimension of faith. The ecumenical community of Christian mixed marriages would best appreciate, live and show: "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

The purpose of this research

The aim of the thesis is to draw parallels between the values of the three Christian denominations and to show the connecting points concerning marriage in them. At the same time, in the spirit of interdisciplinarity, to point out the socio-psychological insights of marriage. To use the coordinates of both analyses in the pastoral care of Christian mixed marriages, so that marriage regains its dignity of which the Creator is the author.

At the same time, it points out the denominational benefits of Christian mixed marriage, which can enrich marriage and the family.

To call attention to the importance of theological dialogue in ecumenical dialogue.

To start a movement where Christians appreciate each other more. Where they realize that in Christ they are much closer together than they realize. Where the emphasis is on human communion that loves one another and loves God together.

To show that based on the church, openness to communion is also a demand in an institutionalized form.

Dissertation structure

The thesis consists of five chapters and a survey. The summary, the bibliography used, and the appendix are exceptions.

Chapter I is about marriage. After defining some characteristics of marriage, we get general information about its origin and validity.

Examining the biblical roots of marriage, after a brief historical insight, we can learn about the teaching of the Old Testament on marriage before and after the fall. According to the order established in creation, God "acquires" a helper for man, a suitable one. The concept of foreigner in the Old Testament is given special emphasis when it comes to marriage. A more detailed study of this is presented in an excourse, where we explore the concept of a foreign woman. Next, we will briefly touch on the incorporation of foreigners into God's chosen people. This possibility also occurs primarily through marriage.

The New Testament teaches a new perspective on marriage. Jesus' attitude toward women is very different from the rigid religious norms of the Old Testament. The interpretation of marriage in the New Testament Epistles, Galatians in Paul, already sees the spouses as a couple (dias) and in Christ. Ephesians brings back to God the original communion of "two shall become one flesh" established in creation.

Chapter II is entitled "Mixed Marriage, ecclesiastical marriage". From a historical point of view, the appearance of marriage, in its humanly measured components, can be traced in a brief overview to the Middle Ages. This is followed by a typical historical example on mixed marriage, church marriage. In the marriages of the kings of the Árpád dynasty, regarding the wives, we can meet the mixture of which is church marriage, the common denominator of which is church marriage. More specifically, Christian marriage, and more specifically Roman Catholic Christian marriage. The centuries-old marriages of the royal house were born and conducted along coordinates from which the dimension of the canonization of some outstanding wives is a consequence of their earthly activities.

The Christian understanding of marriage in the early Christian church is a long process. Roman law, from the interpretation of marriage through the Church Fathers to Origen and St. Ignatius of Antioch, is a conditioned process of the validity of marriage. He must be blessed by a bishop, he must conform to certain laws.

The Middle Ages were marked by the clericalization and sacralization of marriage. East and West followed different paths. In the East, secular forms of marriage were enforced separately, then sacralized, and are still present together in the same liturgical feast. In the West, marriage also went from a secular event to a wedding mass around 400 AD. Around 800, *the Decretum Gratiani* regulated marriage but did not yet consider it a sacrament. In 1184, the Council of Verona established marriage as a sacrament. The Council of Lyon (1274) made marriage an exclusively ecclesiastical matter, a sacrament, and its blessing could only be done by the Church.

The Reformation's understanding of marriage, in the whirlwind of the events of the Reformation, polemicized with the existing Roman Catholic order, places the question on a biblical basis. He does not consider marriage a sacrament because, as Luther puts it, *it cannot give redemptive grace.* Calvin and Zwingli emphasize the dignity of women and detest divorce.

The Council of Trent (1563) established the sacrament of marriage as an article of faith. He placed the validity of marriage in a strictly canonical context.

Marriage, as a training ground for morality, together with the Church's teaching that flows into it, was ultimately meant to serve the purity of marriage, sometimes more freely and sometimes fixed.

Chapter III approaches marriage from a "psychological point of view."

Social processes are analyzed from the perspective of social psychology, while religious communities are analysed from the perspective of pastoral psychology.

Social psychology studies the relationship between the individual and the social community. Marriage is also a community. The couple and others may also be in comparison. Plato and Aristotle thought about the state and the individual from different points of view. As a result, they also have a different opinion about the polis as a community. From Hegel's ideas grows the group soul. Mastering the norms of social relationships is *socialization.* The process *operates along the reciprocity model.* Social knowledge spices up the Christian church in mixed marriages with a sense of identity, prejudice and stereotypes. The ecumenical movement of churches has long sought a way out of spiritual apartheid and a stable meeting point. Social interaction, in the tension between private interest and public interest, presupposes for mixed marriage in the Church a divine mediator, conciliator, mediator.

The art of inclusion is *affiliation.* The God who welcomes man, gives an example.

The interaction of social groups and intergroup relations can be recognized in the manifestations that define relationships, in the social and religious behaviour of those who are married. The sociological study of religion reveals the path of religious diversity. The pastoral psychological approach, the therapeutic echoes of psychotherapeutic theories in marriage therapy, touching on the great figures of psychological development, lead us from the subconscious to trans-therapy. Meanwhile, we also become acquainted with different interpretations of religion.

Chapter IV sets out the framework for "Christian mixed marriage". These are discussed separately, such as religio, confessio, interconfessio, and denominations. At each stop, it tries to interpret them with relevant insights.

We examine the special interpretation separately in the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant denominations and look for common ground in each of them, beyond exclusivities. The beauty, the construction, is a connecting element.

The issues of interdenominational marriage have been brought to the surface by social movements and changes, prompting Christian denominations to take a stand.

The reassessment of the pillars of Christian unity, such as baptism and faith, are important links between Christians. On the issue of baptizing children, inter-denominational tensions eased a lot. One of the perennial buffers in mixed-faith Christian marriage is a reversal, which has lost its exclusivity since Vatican II (1961-1965). The basic position of marriage as a sacrament is to treat the non-Catholic party tolerantly in mixed marriages. The Orthodox denomination has a more rigid position.

Although there have been positive changes in baptism and related faith, as well as in the understanding and practice of blessing marriage, the convergence of positions on the issue of communion is still hindered.

There is an urgent need to continue ecumenical dialogue since practice often precedes theory.

Chapter V "The Common Point of Contact Experiment." The chapter is an attempt to bring Christians closer to each other through Jesus through the omega (table community) hidden in the alpha of Christian life (baptism). Two biblical stories help with this. The paradigm of the road to Emmaus is used by Isidor Baumgartner (Luke 24:30-36) and the questioning of the butler of Etiophia. (Acts 8:26-39) „What can stand in the way"… ? Experience interviews confirm the need and possibility of a common meeting point. Religion in marriage and family is not a private matter. This reality is explored by the presentation of some family models. In clarifying religious and religious identities, Erikson's example of identity development is authoritative. Paraphrasing this can clarify the question of religion and identity. Diagnosis and therapy together outline the root disease of a person and the resulting community barriers, such as prejudice, influence, stereotypes, and discrimination. Therapy recommends the *contact hypothesis* as a cure. There are also special religious obstacles which, in their differences in form and creed, do not yet allow for official intercommunion. Among the pastoral tasks of Christian mixed marriage, nuptial education, the relationship between the child to be baptized and the family, and then family

therapy for marriage in old age are of paramount importance. Prayer, as ecumenical dialogue, creates a continuous openness. Inclusive therapy is divine. Welcoming the disabled (sinful) is a task: "Receive one another as Christ received us for the glory of God" (Rom 15:7). Baptism, the rite of reception, the Lord's Supper, the healing power of communion with Christ and with each other. The common point of contact is the alpha and omega of the Body of Christ (ecclesia). The ritual expressions of belonging to the Church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. A community of authentic Christians before the world is one step away from believing "*that they are all one; as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe* **that you have sent me" (John 17:21).** The intention of this step is best conveyed by Christian mixed marriages.

The Hypothesis of the thesis

The hypothesis of the thesis draws attention to the common meeting point that is of divine origin. At Jesus' last earthly supper, he left a legacy that was meant to express the unity and communion of his followers, with him and with each other. Throughout the history of Christianity, this meeting point has become a buffer point. Denominational exclusivities and the coordinates of church doctrinal systems separated Christians from each other. In Christian mixed marriages, this separation is most painful. According to our hypothesis, there is a need for a common meeting point, precisely in mixed marriages. And that point is the Eucharist, the Lord's table, the Lord's Supper.

In the segment of the Christian community, marriage and mixed marriage, the thesis perceives and evaluates the ecumenical unity towards the dimension that Jesus desires: "that all may be one" (John 17:21). The assessment of the thesis confirms the experience and expression of the spiritual unity of those living in mixed marriages in the common sacrament. This is a real need on the Christian church base.

Conclusions

The thesis examines marriage along secular and ecclesiastical coordinates. It is important to compare the two so that mixed marriages can be assessed objectively.

It is with the same intention that psychological investigations are carried out. The socio-psychological approach is important, because the social embeddedness of Christian

communities inevitably influences Christian marriages, and the religious context, in which they manifest themselves. Intergroup relations, social knowledge, community and individuality, and interaction, are present in Christian mixed marriage. This information is of great help to Christian pastoral care.

Getting to know the religious side and its coordinates is also important. It is necessary to interpret concepts, behind which there are rigid stereotypes and prejudices. These are religio, confessio, and interconfessio.

The separateness of Christian denominations, but also their common connection, must be evaluated or reassessed when it comes to Christian mixed marriage.

It is an attempt at a common point of connection, not to discover something new, but to show common tangentialities. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are inheritances linked to Jesus. It should become a connecting legacy.

The ecumenical blessing of Christian mixed marriage is no longer an obstacle. Those who set out in the sacrament of Baptism should arrive in the communion of the sacrament of the Lord's Table. The need, the desire, the desire for this lives in Christian mixed marriages. Their community can open the way to Christian intercommunion.

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