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Indexed by Religious and Theological Abstracts.



Year of Foundation: 1861. Publisher: The Transylvanian Unitarian Church. Appears quarterly.

Editor in Chief: **dr. Sándor Kovács**

Editor: **dr. Júlia Eszter Andorkó**

Copyreader: **Miklós Kürti, Rodger Mattlage**

Layout: **Péter Virág**

Editorial Board: **dr. Mihály Balázs, dr. Juliane Brandt, dr. Szabolcs Czire,
dr. Ildikó Horn, dr. Botond Koppándi, Lehel Molnár, dr. Elek Rezi**

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Printed by the IDEA Printing House. ISSN 1222-8370.

ABSTRACTS

György Benyik: *The Bible's Role in the History of Education*

The Bible is the book that was taught before it was completed. The long process of the formation of the text is presented from an educational perspective. The subsections deal with the inner religious pedagogy of the Bible, the early Christian catechetical characteristics, the “dejudaizational” tendencies of the Middle Ages, the role of the *Biblia Pauperum* (*Biblia picta*) in the lower social classes. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation both recognized the central role of education, and developed their own educational systems around the Bible. This led to the modern religious educational programs in both the Catholic and Protestant churches. The Catholic religious education paid close attention to the overlap between the national heroes and religious saints. Finally the study deals with the role of the Bible in the faith formation of the 20th and the 21st century, the intermediary mediums, the layers of Bible-knowledge, and the main difficulties concerning Bible-teaching in public and parish education.

Keywords: Bible, education, biblical pedagogy, early Christian era, Middle Ages, Reformation, Counter-Reformation, 20th and the 21st century Catholic pedagogy, Protestant pedagogy

John Buehrens: *Sola Scriptura: Biblical Authority, Tolerance, and Ongoing Revelation* (Translated by Réka Szaló)

The occasion of the 450th anniversary of the Edict of Religious Tolerance promulgated at Torda in 1568 requires of us some reflection concerning the Bible. One key principle of the Protestant Reformation, after all, was that of *sola scriptura*, questioning the accumulation of post-scriptural creeds, rituals, hierarchies, and practices that had come to separate the faithful from a more direct experience of God's word of grace as an ongoing presence in human life. Tolerance in religious debate was then practiced (to a degree), and encouraged at Torda. In our own time, it seems rare.

Our 21st century, in which electronic communication has supplanted Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, often fosters far more polarization than reasoned discussion. Identity politics now divides us along lines of race, ethnicity, tradition, creed, class, gender, or sexual orientation. The Biblical story of Babel illustrates how new technology, and an arrogance that goes with it, can divide humanity. Yet surely that of Pentecost, in which the Spirit descends upon even those who consider themselves the Elect, should encourage us to try to speak and to be understood in tongues not even of our own inheritance. It is in that spirit that this short essay was written.

Keywords: Edict of Religious Tolerance, Torda, 1568, Sola Scriptura, creeds, tolerance, 21st century, present problems, identity politics

Márta Cserháti: *Historicity of the Cleansing of the Temple*

The story of the so-called Cleansing of the Temple is a narrative that has generated a lot of scholarly interest and discussion among New Testament scholars in recent years. Those that look up on this narrative not as a cleansing, but as a prophetic sign of the Temple's destruction, prefer to call it "Jesus' Temple Act", or "the Temple incident". Some critics have suggested that the episode might not have taken place. They view it as a Markan fabrication, referring either to Zealotic (fanatical?) action in the Temple during the war, or being an element in Mark's anti-Temple narrative. This paper takes a look at these different suggestions, as well as other arguments that are in favour of the authenticity of the story.

Keywords: Jesus, Bible, Mark, Cleansing of the Temple, fabrication, fact

András Gromon: *Rediscovering Jesus Freed from Apocalyptic Viewpoints*

This paper argues that Jesus did not think in the apocalyptic paradigm, and therefore, that all the apocalyptic quotes ascribed to him were later additions to the biblical texts. The synoptic gospels contain almost a 100 items regarding this topic. The paper analyses them and arranges them by specific subject. The researched subjects are: the end of the world, the final judgement, prophecies regarding the final judgement, the Son of man, apocalyptic threats, and vigil. The paper lists a few quotes that can be considered as uttered by Jesus himself. These quotes are examined as well: some of them contain messages against apocalyptic

views. It is characteristic of Jesus that he gave answers filled with moral lessons to apocalyptic questions.

Keywords: Jesus, Apocalypse, final judgement, authentic and false sentences attributed to Jesus

Botond Béla Jakabházi: *The Gospel of Thomas – Introduction to a Forgotten Community of Followers*

Building on a previous paper on the gospel of Thomas in the 2004/4 edition of the Christian Sower, this paper explores the underlying theological and religious aspects of the text, providing a glimpse into the thinking of an ancient and nearly forgotten community of Jesus's followers. Also by extensively commenting on the logions (sayings of Jesus) that provides the frame for the whole gospel, its ancient wisdom will become more accessible to our minds and hearts.

Keywords: Gospel of Thomas, logion, religious strata, community of Jesus's followers

Péter Jenei: *Male Circumcision in Ancient Near East Cultures*

Although male circumcision is a significant theme in both the old and new testaments, its study has been neglected in Hungarian biblical and theological scholarship. In the ancient Near East (including ancient Israel and Egypt) the practices, significance, and function of male circumcision were diverse and widely known, and especially significant in initiation and apotropaic (warding off evil) rites.

This study provides a survey of male circumcision in the context of the ancient Near East.

Part one focuses on the origin of circumcision in the ancient Near East, including Jack Sasson's (born 1941) challenge to the long-standing scholarly tradition of circumcision's Egyptian origin in his 1966 ground-breaking article "*Circumcision in the Ancient near East*".

Part two focuses on the phenomenology of circumcision. Arnold van Gennep's (1873–1957) understanding of circumcision is surveyed on the basis of his book "*Les rites de passage*" (1909). His understanding of circumcision's function as differentiation and identity formation established a paradigm.

Parts three and four provide an application of van Gennepe's understanding of circumcision to its practice in ancient Egypt and Israel.

Part five focuses on the apotropaic function of ancient Israelite circumcision. Even van Gennepe overlooks this rather significant function of circumcision. Therefore, a detailed study of Exodus 4,24–26 highlights this primordial feature.

The conclusion proposes that the apotropaic function of ancient Israelite circumcision antedates its secondary differentiation and identity functions, while still being preserved in the closing fearsome sanction of circumcision's classic Old Testament passage of Genesis 17,9–14.

Keywords: Ancient Israel, Ancient Near East, Apotropaic Rite, Bible, Cultural Differentiation, Cultural Identity, Hungarian biblical scholarship, Hungarian theological scholarship, Initiation Rite, Male Circumcision, Jack Sasson (1941), Arnold van Gennepe (1873–1957)

Paul Jeffrey: *The Ziklag Inquiry: An investigation into David's Military Career with the Philistines* (Translated by Réka Szaló)

This paper examines a highly problematic event recorded in 1 Samuel; that is, the defection of David to the Philistines. That such a pro-Davidic text would include such an embarrassing account would suggest that this period in David's life was too well known to be ignored, and required an explanation. The author of 1 Samuel attempts to address David's motivation for defecting to the Philistines, as well as defending David's conduct while serving the Philistine king, Achish of Gath. The paper provides an analysis of the period in David's life as recorded in 1 Samuel based on the biblical text (primarily 1 Sam 27,1–28,2; 29) and proposes a motivation for David's defection to the Philistines, assessing the credibility of the claim that David did not kill any Israelites while he was serving under King Achish.

Keywords: King David, defection, Philistines, King Achish, the first book of Samuel

József Szécsi: *Bible and Christianity in the Context of European and Hungarian Interreligious Dialogue*

The difficulty with the crisis of European Christianity is that it is not homogeneous or single-focused, but multifaceted and constantly changing. It seems that newly emerging world problems persist and culminate. The paper presents a brief overview of the difficulties of the Hungarian Christian churches in the context of the global social, political and religious crises.

Keywords: Crisis, Christianity, Europe, Hungarian Christian Churches