

ministries and reconciliation workshops all across former Yugoslavia and beyond.

We as Christians must constantly both pray and work for peace, justice, and reconciliation. We also need to pray that all the people, now living in seven new nation-states that are the result of the painful break-up of former Yugoslavia, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or social status, will have their basic human rights and dignity restored. Their personal safety, the well-being of their families, and the inviolability of their property should be assured. We Christians need to be at the forefront of the search for peace with justice, which will provide a just solution for all who have been forced to leave their homes. Their right to return to a peaceful and safe life in the place of their birth still remains an unfulfilled dream for many.

As Christians practising holistic mission, we must also continue to support the search for the thousands who are still missing, to ensure their decent burial and dignified closure for the bereaving families. Promoting inter-religious dialogue, ecumenical co-operation, respect for women, and care for the children, along with multicultural education, all remain a task of the integral mission of the followers of Christ. We should strive to be creative instruments of reconciliation and courageous defenders of life and family, demonstrating in humble service our love for all persons as our neighbours. God calls all of us to pray for these worthy goals and ministries, and for many of us to be active participants in the remaining task of rebuilding, reconciliation, and renewal.

## THE DRAMA OF RECONCILIATION IN THE POST-COMMUNIST HUNGARIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

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This paper has grown out of the post-communist contextual experience of Hungarian Lutheranism. Part 1 discusses the term "reconciliation" suggesting that the biblical term has to do with the climax of a theo-drama which calls for theatrical performance within the community of believers, i.e. the church. Part 2 tells the story of how the need for a theatre of reconciliation emerged in a minority church when the community was suddenly faced with the trauma of unveiling former secret agents within their midst, including their respected pastors, professors and even family members.<sup>1</sup> Progress has been made when not only grassroots movements but also the church leadership have taken up the task of promoting research into uncovering the dark side of their church's history, something unprecedented among Hungarian churches. However, the scenario of reconciliation cannot be performed properly when, due to the change in church leadership, the issue is trivialized, when formerly complicit persons are awarded high state decorations, and those committed to the painful exploration of the past are demonized.

### 1. Reconciliation and its "Drama"

I will use reconciliation and atonement as synonyms following John W. de Gruchy:

"'Reconciliation' is one of the words used in English to describe this experience, though the word 'atonement' has often functioned as its equivalent in theological textbooks. But 'at-one-ment' is a peculiarly English construction, coined to describe God and humanity through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross."<sup>2</sup>

I am proposing to discuss these terms together as I believe the basis of the healing of all human conflicts is the climax of the drama of the

<sup>1</sup> Tibor Fabiny, "Complicity and Perseverance: Hungarian Lutherans During and After Communism" in *Lutheran Forum*, 42:1, Spring 2008, 43-48. Reprinted in my *The Veil of God: The Testimony of Bishop Lajos Ordass in Communist Hungary* (Budapest: Center for Hermeneutical Research, 2008), 80-94. Some paragraphs from this publication are used in the present article.

<sup>2</sup> John W de Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 44-45.

