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TODAY'S PROBLEMS FACED BY DEACONRY MANAGEMENT IN SOCIAL AND DEACONRY ORGANISATIONS

- extract of PhD thesis -

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2. INTRODUCTION: TOPIC OF THESIS (RESEARCH); REASONS FOR TOPIC

I am grateful to God that I could take part in the re-introduction of the Faculty of Teacher Training of Károly Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in 1990. This re-introduction served "today's" needs, that is why higher level deacon training was established already in 1992. In the first few years we came to realise that God's deaconry is *a message, the content* is eternal and unchanged – to help the ones in need **in deaconry** in gratitude for Jesus' Salvation – *the form* must adopt to changed social environment (new miseries, and new possibilities, e.g. in the field of social support.)

Through this work it became clear that the two problems, the contingency of the theoretical background of the topic, and the shallow knowledge of deaconry activities in the congregations is an *obstacle* for professionally well-based church management work, as well as the practical development activities of training.

We have already supposed in our earlier empirical researches about our chosen topic (Today's problems faced by deaconry management in social and deaconry organisations) that it requires a rather *complex, inter-professional approach.* During our research it was proven that the handling of problems requires at least some minimal theological, sociological (within this: social), economic (management studies) and labour and organisational knowledge.

In addition, (also) with the theological approach, the applied knowledge – deaconry, cybernetics – dominates.

In our essay we were aiming at revealing the modern approaches to deaconry activities management, and at its analysis from a historical viewpoint. Another main point of our essay was to

examine how deaconry activities, and above all their management are realised in the Hungarian Reformed Church.

3. THE GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ESSAY AND ITS CHAPTERS

Following the Introduction (Chapter 2), we take a look at the theoretical basis, the concept of deaconry, bearing in mind that we cannot analyse the definition of deaconry within the frames of this essay. We have accepted the widely and almost exclusively spread interpretation that deaconry is a *charity service* that is carried out by Christians from belief, in gratitude for Jesus' Salvation, and thus people in miseries are helped; served (I. Nagy). At the same time, however, we agree with J. Collins that the person carrying out the service *conveys* the sender's i.e. God's message.

We briefly reviewed the history of deaconry activity management beginning from the ancient Christian congregation. We found that as of the 4th and 5th centuries deaconry lost its original content, deacons (clerics) were crowded out of the management of church hospitals and deaconry institutions. The owners (guilds, religious associations) appointed the president, and laypeople gain more and more role in professional work (L. Pásztor), see e.g. the Beguines' movement.

Thus deacons lost their role around the 9th century, and the title itself as well practically 'disappeared' from the church organisation. (G. Langgärtner) Deaconry and the function were finally brought back with its original content by the reformation, by J. Calvin. (K. Fekete; Ch. Tapernaux).

In **chapter four** the concept of deaconry management is covered, along with the definition of the theoretical basics of congregational management. Based on A. Jäger's works, we highlight that the realisation of deaconry management was linked

to the social realisation of the subsidiary concept on one hand and the appearance of state (normative) financing on the other, due to domestic historical proceedings and within the frames of the German deaconry. The organisational model of deaconry institutes developed from a patriarchal management form toward Christian business through the functional model, thus achieving the characteristic integrated management from of today. We agree with H.-J. Abroment in that the management f deaconry is a *necessary* minister's/deacon's activity and the harmony of the interpretation of three concepts is necessary for its successful practice: 'spirituality – congregation – management'. (In our essay, his congregation management standards are also mentioned.)

The basic types of deaconry work are also covered based on A. Jäger's work. Deaconry work of the deaconry of pietism is *service:* its content was represented by a shared life, service and belief (deaconry family). From the 70's of the 20th century, this was more and more replaced by *the deaconry work as social work* concept, the two significant features of which are the basic question of expertise and professionalism: how can a relatively high standard service be provided with decreasing finances? The original message of deaconry is less and less visible, deaconry and social work became almost the same. Finally, the third basic type is *entrepreneurial co-operation /organisational form.* The basic frame condition is an economical viewpoint; but it is the management's basic interest to define corporate identity. When defining the mission it is not possible to evade the theological and ethical definition of the inner essence of deaconry activity.

In **chapter five** we the theoretical basics of deaconry management models are covered.

As a selection criterion, we followed historical and content perspectives. It was important for us that the model has a significant effect on deaconry and it is of an overall perspective.

The St Gallen model was introduced based on H. Ullrich's work, which by now has developed its so called third generation (K. Bleidert; G. Müller – Stewens and Ch. Lechner; later J. Rüegg Sturm).

To understand the theoretical basics, we considered it important to give a draft outline of congregation building theories connected to the concept of *deaconry congregation:* Church from below as social deaconry (U. Bach); The congregation's 'study of deaconry' (M. Rufus); Deaconry – the distinctive feature of the congregation (H. Steinkamp); The culture of helping – locally (J. Degen); Church with strangers (V. Kleinherz); The horizon of alliance – the deaconic dimension of the Christian congregational practice (G. K. Schäfer); Church for others (H. Pompey / Zellderfel – Held); Evangelic social pastoring (Ane, Götzelman).

These theories evolved to answer problems raised by practice. All theories start from that the Church belonging to the Lord follows His unmistakeable and unique footprints. Exceeding itself, it steps out of its own limits, and as it considers this a mission, deriving from its call thrives for more and more, authentic deaconry. (G. Ruddat – G. K. Safer).

In **chapter six** a model, which in our opinion exercised the biggest impact on deaconry, the Freiburg model of non-profit management (NPO) is presented.

According to H. Haas, NPO gradually got into the centre of the interest of deaconry in the 80's, because the non-profit sector gave 2.5% of the gross product of the social sector; by that time, social and health care as a business opportunity had an impact on deaconry activities as well. The most important factors, however, were the more and more visible crisis of the social welfare state

(shrinking resources), and the economic problems arising from that.

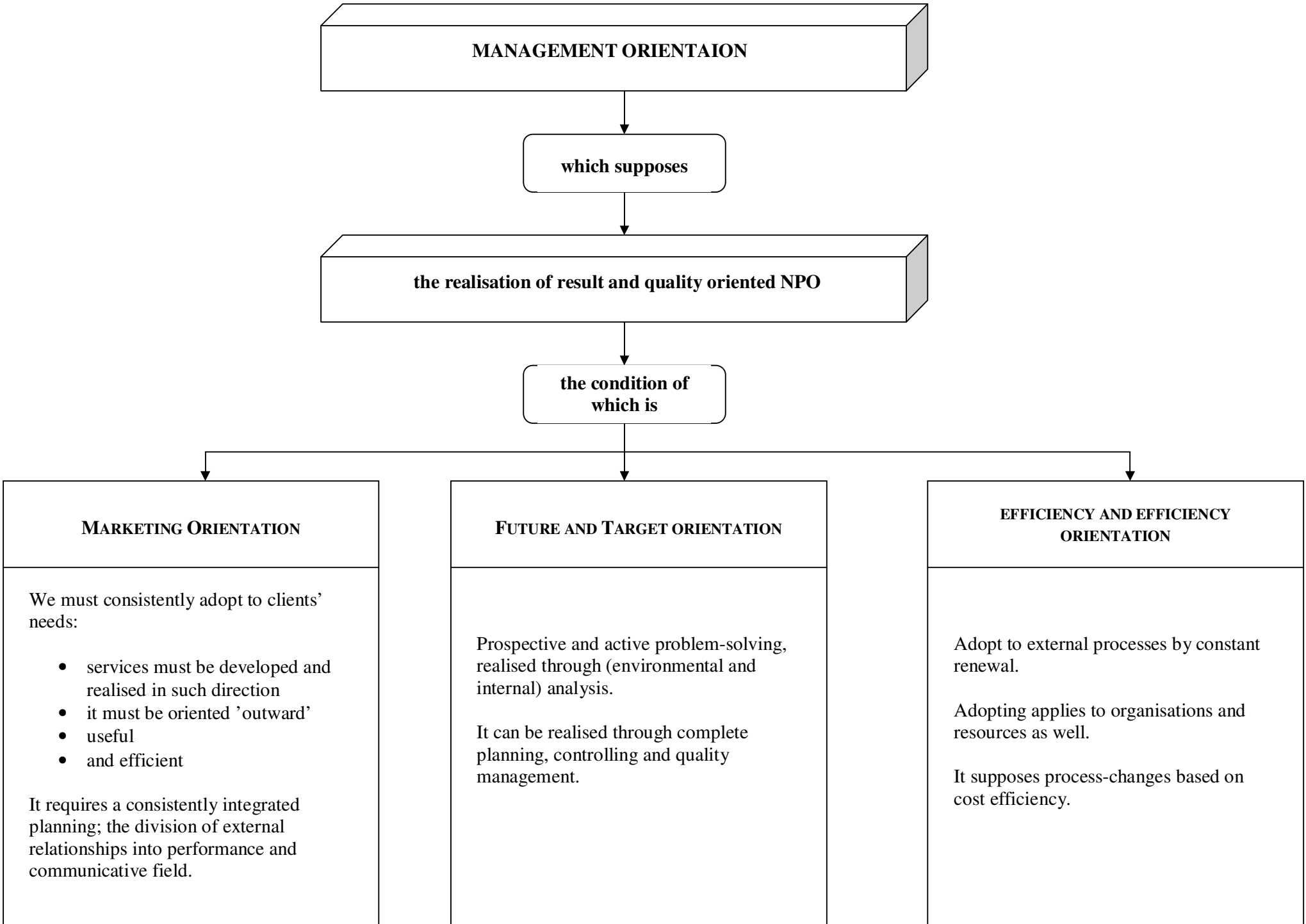
BASIC IDEAS:

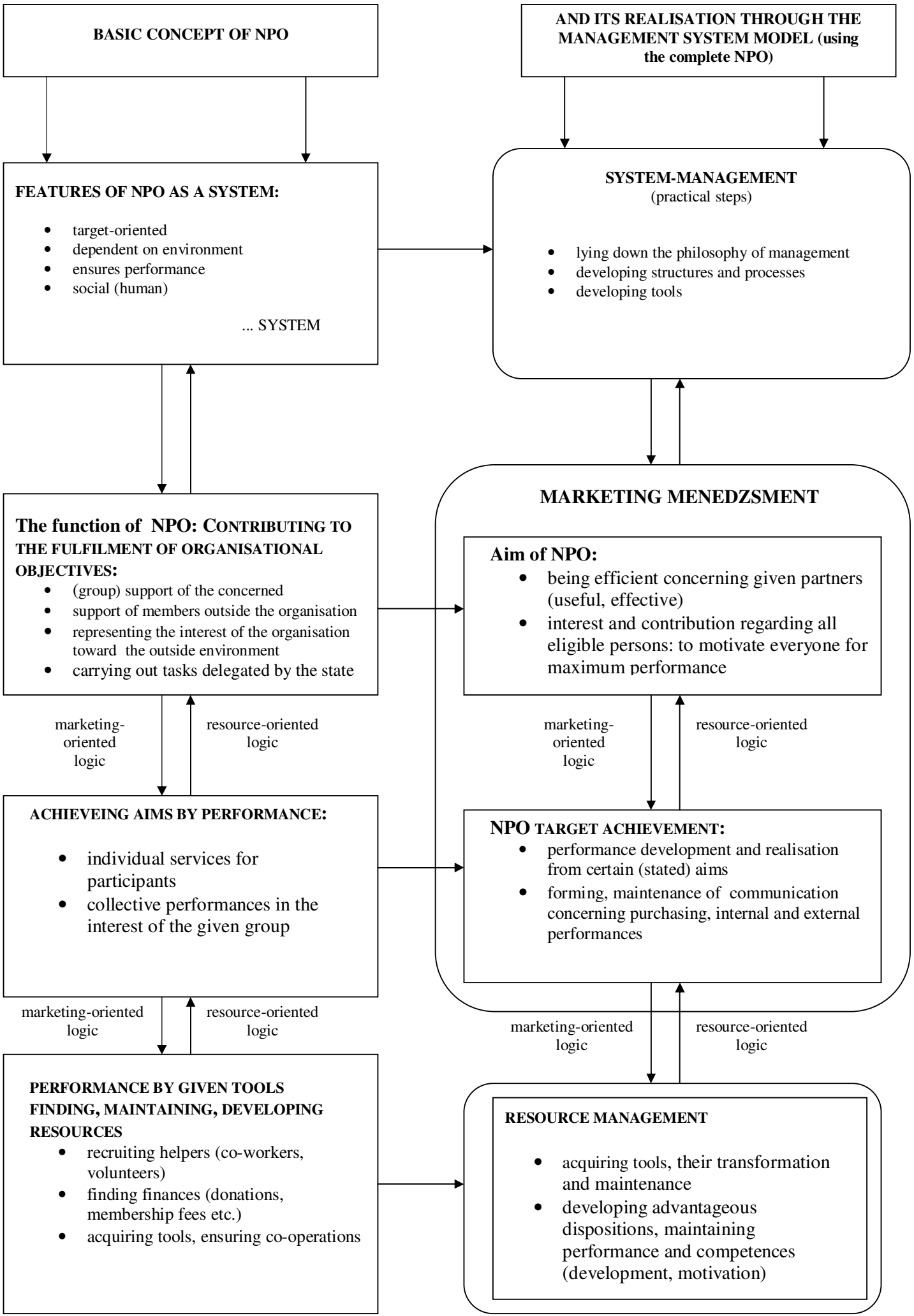
* Models applicable in the non-profit sector (NPO) differ from models used in profit-oriented models (PO); the solution of the problems requires a different set of tools (think of volunteers' work, for instance)
* At the same time, there are a number of problematic fields where NPO practice has to be shaped to resemble PO

1 for many non-profit (deaconic – in our interpretation) services, the so-called 'inside orientation' is valid (concentrating on the internal world of the organisational operation), whereas the given organisation may only react to changes if they change to *marketing orientation* instead;

2. instead of ad-hoc management it applies a *future-planning directed management and controlling;*
3. instead of self-oriented behaviour, actions and operation in accordance with the *mission (and the strategy, tasks, responsibilities deriving from that etc.)* may be the tool of efficient objective realisation.

The following figure shows the essence of management oriented approach by H. S. Haas, in a very graphic way (Fig. 1). The management oriented approach – in our opinion – is result and quality oriented, and has *three distinct conditions.*


MANAGEMENT ORIENTAION
which supposes
the realisation of result and quality oriented NPO
the condition of which is
MARKETING ORIENTATION
We must consistently adopt to clients' needs:
• services must be developed and realised in such direction
• it must be oriented 'outward'
• useful
• and efficient
It requires a consistently integrated planning; the division of external relationships into performance and communicative field.
FUTURE AND TARGET ORIENTATION
Prospective and active problem-solving, realised through (environmental and internal) analysis.
It can be realised through complete planning, controlling and quality management.
EFFICIENCY AND EFFICIENCY ORIENTATION
Adopt to external processes by constant renewal.
Adopting applies to organisations and resources as well.
It supposes process-changes based on cost efficiency.


BASIC CONCEPT OF NPO
AND ITS REALISATION THROUGH THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM MODEL (using the complete NPO)
FEATURES OF NPO AS A SYSTEM:
target-oriented
dependent on environment
ensures performance
social (human)
... SYSTEM
SYSTEM-MANAGEMENT
(practical steps)
lying down the philosophy of management
developing structures and processes
developing tools
MARKETING MENEDZSMENT
The function of NPO: CONTRIBUTING TO THE FULFILMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES:
(group) support of the concerned
support of members outside the organisation
representing the interest of the organisation toward the outside environment
carrying out tasks delegated by the state
Aim of NPO:
being efficient concerning given partners (useful, effective)
interest and contribution regarding all eligible persons: to motivate everyone for maximum performance
marketing-oriented logic
resource-oriented logic
marketing-oriented logic
resource-oriented logic
ACHIEVEING AIMS BY PERFORMANCE:
individual services for participants
collective performances in the interest of the given group
NPO TARGET ACHIEVEMENT:
performance development and realisation from certain (stated) aims
forming, maintenance of communication concerning purchasing, internal and external performances
marketing-oriented logic
resource-oriented logic
marketing-oriented logic
resource-oriented logic
PERFORMANCE BY GIVEN TOOLS FINDING, MAINTAINING, DEVELOPING RESOURCES
recruiting helpers (co-workers, volunteers)
finding finances (donations, membership fees etc.)
acquiring tools, ensuring co-operations
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
acquiring tools, their transformation and maintenance
developing advantageous dispositions, maintaining performance and competences (development, motivation)

The break-out directions of increased management orientation are as follows: marketing orientation, future and target orientation (mission →strategy ⇒ tasks), and efficiency and efficacy orientation.

In Fig. 2, *the basic principle and practice of NPO can be seen:* on the left, the basic theses of NPO are presented; the right hand side contains the practical steps for realisation.

As we have already mentioned, the Freiburg NPO model has been renewed three times since the 80's and it is still the most definitive system of views and management philosophy deaconry.

It is obvious that the changes of the current socio-economic environment as well as the Curch's (internal) environment had an effect on the management approach; and they generated changes in applied approach as well. Considering the Hungarian situation, we saw the *adaptation of the model propsed by A. Jäger as most appropriate.* The point of the concept is that the balance must be kept by the manager according to theological and economic factors, in a synthesised way.

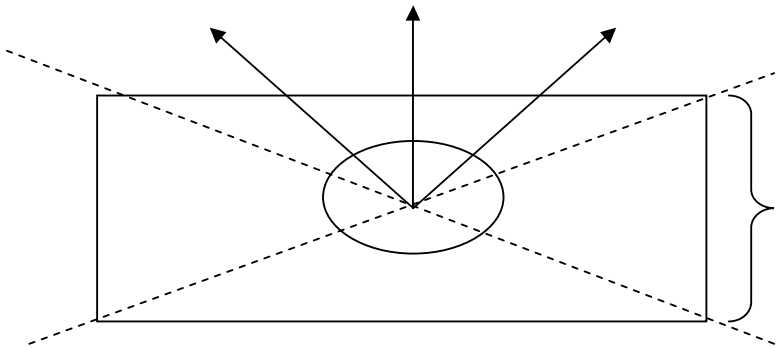
The deaconic institution/organisation must work according to a future picture, based on a *leading concept* which contains organisational objectives, strategies as well as structure or organisational culture.

Its concept is shown in Fig 3 and 4.

theological objective

leading axis

economic objective



Effects on the basic axis of deaconic activity

FUTURE

LEADING - CONCEPT

HARD-MANAGEMENT

- AIMS
- STRATEGIES
- STRUCTURE

SOFT-MANAGEMENT

- CULTURE
- ETHICS
- STYLE
- DESIGN

DEACONIC INSTITION POLICY

EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

PAST

A helyzet és a környezet érték-analízise

Biblical-theological motivation and target orientation

Economic reflections level

Business policies

The situation and environment of the deaconic business enterprise

A vállalkozói tevékenység érték-tartalmú meghatározottsága

In **chapter seven** a few important West-European reflections to the NPO ST Gallen model are presented. A detailed description of A. Jäger's further developed ideas is also given here, in eight theses. We give details of the change that in his opinion must be made in cybernetics: there's a need to shift from management to shaping and adopting. In cybernetics (in the theory of church management), thinking to the future and professional and management consultancy must bear a function.

D. Lohmann differentiates four phases of the development of deaconry (personal – charismatic, professional – complex) and explains in his basic thesis: "the basic questions of theology (must) be realised with the help of modern management models as deaconic activities… the decisive factor in confessional – social issues is theology". We agree with this, as He holds it important to present spirituality not only in the celebrations, but also employee motivation, work processes, working methods, institutional frames etc. (In our essay we highlight how Lohmann's deaconry and deaconry management concept is built on the theology of "believers' realism" by Tillich.

Chapter eight of our essay is called Professionalism and/or spirituality in deaconry management. In this chapter we thrived to analyse the theoretical basis of the practical problem lying between the *need of professionalism* (e.g. state normative finance requirements) and *the internal need for spirituality.* This contradiction is of significance here and definitive concerning employee *burnout* (a German survey of 700 institutions, 12000 employees is presented to support the above.) It is a serious mistake to contracts these two features, as we saw that the solution of the conflict lies in the earlier mentioned approach to deaconry management (re. Bonhoffer; H. H. Brandhorst's arguments are accepted).

In **chapter nine** our Hungarian empirical experience is summarized, using the concepts and relations of theoretical chapters and other management science materials.

We discovered that Fayol's definition of management may well be interpreted with theological concepts as well ('foreseeing, planning' → profiteering; organising → pastoring; commending → the power of keys; co-ordinating → communion; controlling → practicing church discipline); but deaconry may also be interpreted with the concepts of role-life, including the application of Mintzberg's role concepts/activities (interpersonal, information processing; decision making roles). Based on deep interviews with deacons (D. Gál, I. L. Fruttus), the job and job description of congregational deacons were interpreted (organisational position, tasks, scope, responsibilities, additional information). We tested the

development of the role of deacons in case of 15 full-time deacons, and found that 5 or 7 activities stand out of their 36 different social activities, in the following order: family visits; caring for the elderly; spiritual care; spiritual leadership; physical care; help around the house; social administration. As for the deacons' qualification (more than half of them have higher qualification), their relationships with ministers and presbytery are rather ambiguous: we found especially confusing situations concerning the operation of Deaconry Committees and saw a lot of various solutions for the deacons' organisational and operational positions.

All in all, it can be said that **we do not have reliable information on the situation of congregational deaconry and the deacon serving in the congregation.**

Based on these learnings, we were aiming at discovering the situation of congregational deaconry in Hungary, constituting the second half of this essay.

4. EMPIRICAL STUDY OF DEACONRY ACTIVITIES IN CONGREGATIONS OF THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Based on empirical studies, different workshops and surveys supported by the Deaconry and Health Board of the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church and the Synod's Charity Office, we formed a consistent but perhaps subjective opinion on the situation and future tasks, but this was not sufficient to form well-founded hypotheses. Thus we chose a *descriptive approach of inductive* research strategy for our study, ***as we actually did not have reliable information on the situation of deaconry management in Hungary.***

Study, research methods, resources

Unfortunately, to provide a theoretical base rather subjective sources were at disposal. We found almost exclusively German sources to reveal the theoretical background, in addition to a limited amount of English and Hungarian materials. We also used documents of empirical research done in our institute (Deaconry and Social Work Institute of KRE-TFK): theses, scientific publications (e.g.

materials of 4 study compilations; our own publications), presentations, speeches and workshop materials of the 12th Penticost Deaconry Conference.
Thus our information was collected within the frames of different methodological forms.
We could also use the results of more than 10 years of empirical researches done at the Deaconry Faculty of KRE-TFK and later at Deaconry and Social Work Institute.
We had ***documents*** at our hand**.**
We could:

- carry out surveys and studies: theses of deacons; institute reports, end reports of tenders ...
- the works of annual International Pentecost Deaconry Workshop, records of professional disputes, analyses, studies;
- the international relations of the Institute, their documentation, definitions, workshops with experts of German (Bethel-Bielefeld), Danish (Philadelphia Alliance; Älhus, college, Denmark) and Italian (Valdens Church) institutions to fulfil common professional objectives.

In several cases, we had the opportunity to use congregational and regional media materials.

Interviews
Our main research method was *interviewing*. More precisely: *partly structured, sometimes deep interviews* deriving from the nature of the topic. (IN other words: targeted interviews).
It was obvious at the preparation of the research report that the selection of interviews as a research method proved to be more useful than sending out questionnaires (they would have contained records of optimal information but with much less additional information.)

A key element of interviews/recording was to gain and build up *trust.* We had many rejections... On the other hand, we had to reveal a *complicated, multi-coloured* situation, which requires *field experience* (the field knowledge of our correspondent students already working as social workers meant a lot in this area!).

In our research strategy, we conducted interviews with *251 ministers, stewards, deacons (full-time or volunteer) and/or chairmen of deaconry boards.*
In all cases, permission was asked to *record the interviews on Dictaphones*: permission was given in 84 cases by the minister and so by the others (two out of three is not a bad rate…) Detailed *minutes* of the were prepared following the logic of question areas, in 7-12 pages on average (6 and 35 being the two extremes). We consider it a valuable result that in most congregations, in addition to the minister, a (at least formally) related secular officer also gave an interview.

The *sampling* was not accidental/opportunistic: it was mostly a combination of *expert and volunteer sampling*. It embraces more than 10% of Reformed Church Congregations (excluding sporadic congregations). We have a good reason to suppose that, on the basis of the address list, Duna-mellék and Trans-Tisza Districts of the Reformed Church, sampling was nearly representative.

Aspects of processing:

We took *12 aspects into consideration when analysing* interview minutes:

* Preceedings of deaconry work in the given congregation
* The concept of deaconry: what does the interviewee mean by congregational deaconry activity?
* The structure of the deacon's helping process
* Division of congregational employees
* Solutions/ideas of deaconry
* Congregational institutions (explicitly of deaconry)
* Relationships; deaconry support of different institutions
* Professional relationships with the Charity Service of the Hungarian Reformed Church
* Detectable problems of deaconry – It was clear during processing that some issues stand out of the given set of information. Realising their significance, we organised four focus groups for a better understanding of the given answers, out of which the most important is:

* Revealing the problems connected to deacon education/training with focus groups.

The 2700 pages of minutes (supplemented by 74 recordings) were processed by content analysis based on the 12 aspects above. Sub-chapters follow the same structure usually: quantitative information gained from the answers given was recorded in tables and deciphered graphically. The most significant information was quoted in the chapter, while other information not fitting in due to their size was recorded in the supplement (according to the given aspect). This was followed by an analysis relating the given problem area.

For size reasons, important conclusions and statements are not presented here, however, they can be found in Chapter: *Summary, Conclusions.*

4. Acknowledgements

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Dean Mr Prof. János Molnár, my topic leader for his patient and helping support. His useful advice helped me overcome my arising obstacles.

I have to thank teacher of theology Gábor Hézser (Bethel-Bielefeld, Teologische Hochschule), who, as a guest teacher of the doctors' school, helped me find my way in the huge volumes of professional literature of deaconry management.

I also would like to thank college teacher István Nagy, the Dean of KRE-TFK, whose theological discernment was definitive in the formation of my perspective on deaconry. Thanks to the teachers and students (of the school years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008) of the Deaconry and Social Work Institute once lead by myself, since they made more than 250 interviews, kept minutes and helped students' work.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS

1. In our analysis, based mainly on the works of L. Pásztor and G. Langgärtner, we found that deaconry was realised through actions based on shared work and religious belief, its motivational base is religion deeply rooted in the individuals and the quick strengthening/embourgeoisement of cities.

2. We also saw that deaconry, especially within church-organisational frames, lost its original mission from the 4th or 5th century (see e.g. the practice of selling of indulgences). From the end of the 5th century, deaconry began to decline, which finally lead to the extinction of deaconry (the deacon's position) in the last third of the century. This process was strongly supported by the socio-economic and religious activities of the guilds and by civilian helpers' movements. For us, the Beguines' movement (J. Szabó) provided a very persuasive example.

3. A special sharing of work was developed, the reason for which is the scope of responsibilities exceeding the knowledge, competence and in several cases the ethical limits (material abuses) of the spiritual leader (priest). As a consequence, tasks in hospitals carrying out deacons' jobs in the *professional* (healing, caring, treatments) as well as *managerial* fields were taken over by secular persons, through election procedures, based on decisions by maintainers such as religious associations and guilds. The priest's task was spiritual leadership, which (in case of appropriate frames and standards) provided a leading role for the person in the position.

4, Unfortunately deacons (at least from the point of view the dialectics of workforce quantity necessary for the tasks and responsibilities) could less and less find their role, and were 'forced out' of the Church. It is a serious problem that can be well highlighted from an organisational viewpoint: while *the deacon is the bishop's co-worker* in the ancient Church, by now it has become unnecessary in the Church organisation due to their lack of functions.

5. Deacons were more and more left without role... more or less founding the fundamental changes of reformation.

K. Fekete well presents *The triple significance of Calvin's approach:*

- ha gave back the Biblical meaning of the word deacon
- views the deacon's service as a position in the Church
- views deaconry as a role of the congregation. The Church and the congregation is the mother, who must carry, bear and feed God's children (Inst. IV. 1.)

Reformation stood by a centralised caring for the poor, and created new frames and also found legal grounds for that. It is not true that poverty is an ideal condition. Earlier, the individual hoped salvation for donations.

The practice of deaconry changed: caring for the poor expressed the community's solidarity by belief in action, which is also *god's celebration*.

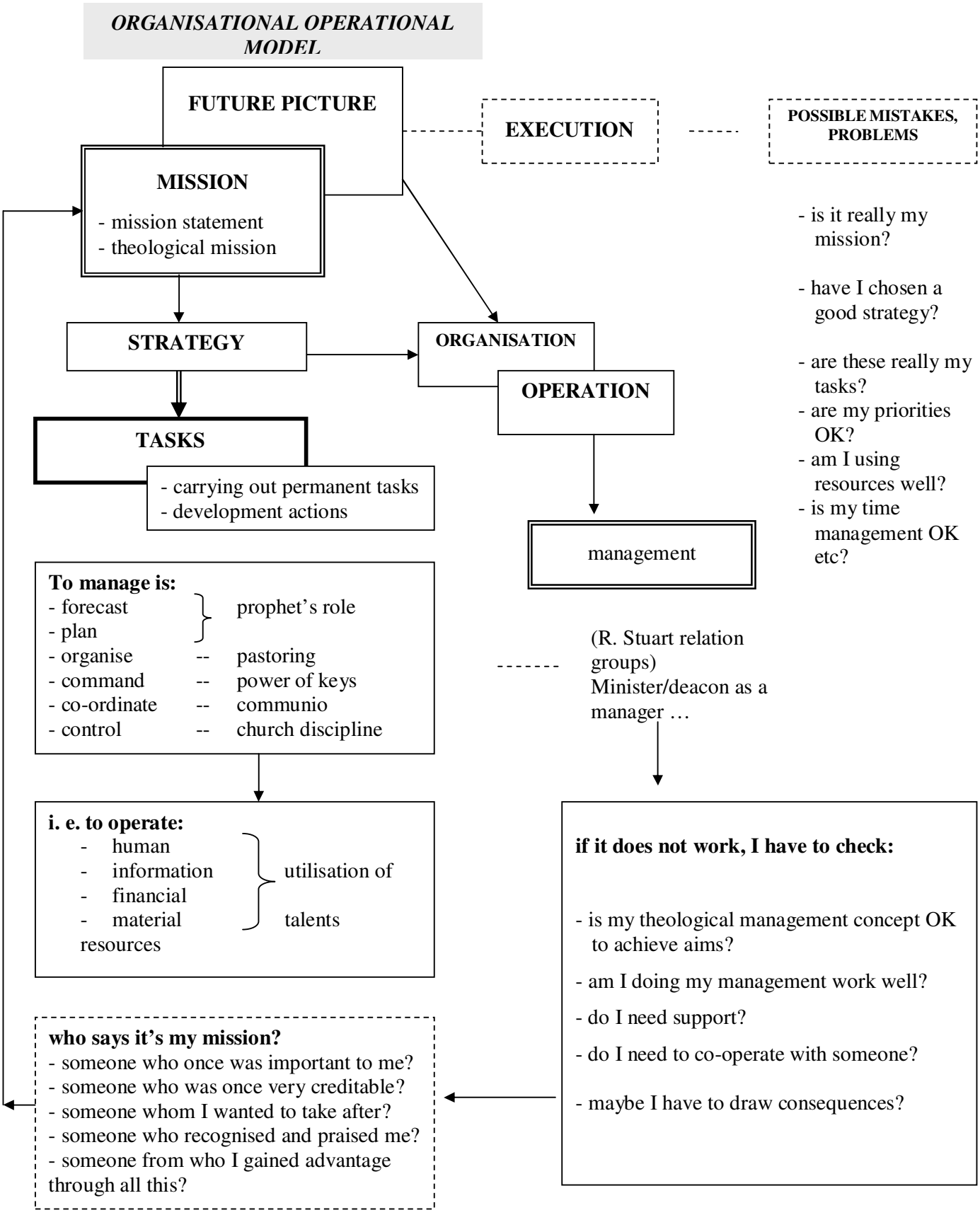
6. The following statement is to be made based on deaconry management theories, in the knowledge of models and considering the situation of Hungarian congregations of the reformed church:

* it is necessary to publish the theological statements of deaconry approach of congregation-building as recommendations (chapter 5.4 of the Dissertation), and build it into the training, or rather further training programmes of ministers;

Figure 5 presents the organisational/operational model of such a further training of ministers/deacons.

* with respect to Hungarian conditions, based on the adaptation in Germany, A. Jäger's management theory seems to be appropriate (in our experience, authority may be extended to all congregations of the Carpathian Basin.)

István Levente Fruttus –Gábor Hézser (2008)



Conclusions of our work revealing the situation of congregational deaconry activities

7. *We found that, especially nowadays, deaconry activities are a strategic breakthrough point and definitive missionary possibility of Christianity.*
It is also true that a rather confusing picture was formed after processing interview materials: with most interviewees a kind of 'oral yes' was formed; however, replies concerning concrete features of deaconry activities remained on this oral level. What is promising though is that roughly the half of the remaining answers *contains definite positive answers,* which are supported by references demonstrating concrete deaconry activities. Of course, 'no-s' are also evident, the most frequent answer being: 'spreading the Word is more important'.

We were looking for an answer on our processing and analysis for whether a certain link will be formed between ***the situation of deaconry and important congregational features,*** e.g. size of congregations, micro-social features (village, town, region etc.). *With two exceptions, we found that there is no link;* ***two exceptions are:***

* In small size settlements (mainly where traditions are not strong), there is no or limited possibility of the employment of deacons ('deacon' here is used in the sense of the Charity Law of the Hungarian Reformed Church). If we exclude the mentioned criteria, we can see that there is no obstacle (especially in view of certain charismatic volunteers' blessed activities) to carry out deaconry work (of a narrower spectrum) with the purpose of easing everyday miseries.

* The minister's relation to deaconry (their idea of deaconry, picture of God and Humans, deaconry knowledge and motivation) and the organisational culture (mostly traditions and direction of piety) are an important factor in the realisation of deaconry activities.

8. It was obvious in our research work that, among D. Lohman's four development phases: personal, charismatic, professional and complex, a mixture of the charismatic and (to a lesser extent) the professional phases are

characteristic of the Hungarian congregational deaconry. The personal phase may also be found in places.

9. What about the situation of the professional support of congregational deaconry?

Congregational deaconry is rather 'left alone' concerning Church government. An exception is the past 2-3 years, when, following the establishment of the administrator's position of the office and the forming of the Charity Service of the Hungarian Reformed Church, a blessed development was initiated. This may lead to a significant strengthening of Lohman's professional development phase.

As we have already said, the interviews were made as a part of a social knowledge (summer) camp of two school years. The information and interview extracts concerning knowledge about the Office/Charity Service in point 11.10 of the analysis differ: supporting activities were much more emphasised in the second camp! This is a good sign; the support of the Charity Office is identifiable on congregation level, even in the scope of 1 year.

It was stated that *the direction of the development programme of* the Charity Service is good, and *that there is need for more support. A part of the support is*

– concrete professional information, project-possibilities, concrete methodological assistance concerning state social care etc;

- is of a community nature: support group, discussion group, supervision etc. possibilities (financed, as the stakeholders – or their congregations - cannot take costs);
- coaching activities that may include personal meetings e.g. given projects in case of deaconry development actions, approved by SZSZI, MRSZSZ);
- the need for the involvement of a regional congregational consultant is very much emphasised concerning progressive congregations; however, this requires significant financial and human resources. As for the graduated deacons, human resources are available, and our research to reveal the careers of deacons carried out within the frames of the Deaconry fully supported this fact.

- the need for the training of the congregations' volunteers was expressive;
- *useful and good central deaconry actions present a possibility to practice deaconry* for a lot of congregations (being up-to-date, aims to be supported, mobilization and connected PR activities etc.) Note that the support of the above shows that there is a need and there are resources for the practice of deaconry, but many congregations lack in knowledge, human resources and management to use them.

10. The content of deaconry activities, its features and frames based on the survey

We were given a clear picture concerning the concept or rather *content* of deaconry. However, certain unique interpretations were also present.

A summary of these interpretations is given below:

- Deaconry was interpreted as a church activity of belief and professional nature, realised in actions. It is carried out from gratitude to Jesus' salvation in an altruistic way by dedicated volunteers. Many of them said that all members of the congregation should be participating. It is practiced in everyday life. (This is a dominant opinion.)
- However, the interviewees differ in that whether deaconry should stay within the frames of the congregation or should extend to all of the society.
- Deaconry and the deacon as the cleric co-worker of the congregation is only present in answers where it exists or where there is a need or where there is no possibility for their employment. Their employment was considered necessary.
- Deaconry has a missionary and congregation-building effect.
- It is a process, whose definitive element is the realisation of needs (notice the ones in need).
- The picture is contradictory concerning roles and the sharing of work. The role of the minister is more dominant in case of interview sections

relating to the definition of deaconry: deaconry activities are a part of the minister's everyday work, independent of whether they can fulfil that or not.

Concrete statements

a. Deaconry is *the active Word* the realisation of God's love in actions. Its source is the gratitude for Jesus' salvation, and it must be built on belief and expertise. It may be a tool to lead secular people to God.

b. It was a dominant opinion in the answers that deaconry activities must *exceed* the limits of the congregation: it must extend not only to non-believers of the micro-society but also to other – mostly Catholic (families, but also institution's e.g. priest Böjte's orphanages) – congregations as well. (The interpretation of answers is hindered by contradictions here).

c. The 'naturality' of common actions is remarkable (civil sector, municipalities), and their often additional practicism: municipal experts make physical, social and sometimes special (e.g. psychiatric) efforts and accepts/requires spiritual service. This is however mainly the 'gift' of villages, small and medium size communities in the countryside, or is based on personal and informal relations in bigger (town) communities.

Note that informality may be interpreted within system limits: if a social administrator of a village is an active member of the congregation or maybe the leader of the activity (volunteers), this may (also) be a formal relation from the point of view of the Church. It is true however, that this interpretation is irrelevant without each other's mutual recognition.

d. The problem of *work sharing* within the congregation is even more contradictory, if possible. The vast majority of congregation doing deaconry activities is dominated by the minister. It has long been true also for recognised deaconry congregations that the members of the congregation insist on the minister e.g. in spiritual care or visits (the deacon, the elder or mostly the volunteer is not 'high rank' enough...) It was also clear, however, that the deacons' dedicated and high level work from biblical as well as professional perspective will change this, mainly when the minister manages those changes.

It is a new learning though, that *a big number of assistant ministers carry out the work of a deacon*. Frankly speaking, a trained deacon could fulfil this responsibility on a higher level! (The contradiction is enhanced by the reasoning for the lack of deacons' employment: 'we have no financial possibilities for the deacon's employment.')

e. Our earlier experience was proven when interviewees handled *the structure of the helping process* correctly (obviously based on their empirical experience). Individual problem handling related to given social problems appeared (debt service, for example!)

The most positive learning is that *the recognition/revealing of requirements of the ones in need was highly emphasised.*

The tool of revealing needs is discussion in case of more than two-thirds of congregations. This was confirmed in lots of interviews, two points of which are given below:

- in small settlements in the countryside, people of small congregations are very shy concerning their problems and needs, they find it difficult to talk about their problems (and help is received with the same reluctance), therefore here

- only direct, very personal communication of 'spiritual care intimacy' or direct information from a nuclear or personal environment may be a tool to gain knowledge.

This was a new learning compared to our earlier experience.

f. As for financing, among state/normative subsidies, pensioners' clubs, support service, home care finance may be seen as 'congregation specific'. (We express our 'hope' that these forms, even with very limited management/cybernetics knowledge, may be a form of developing agent of congregational deaconry, in respect of all resources.)

Classic resources:

church maintainer's contribution
donations (generally or specifically for deaconry aims)
donations in kind (clothes, tools, food, etc.)

income from the sale of donations in kind – a relatively new form of resources!

Two important learning must be mentioned:

- in congregations operating stable deaconry activities from an organisational point of view, deaconry has a separate budget;
- considering the worsening economic situation, old methods are not enough for sufficient subsidies: it is necessary to apply *the domestically applicable elements of deaconry management.* (A few examples of that have already been seen.)

11. Another important learning is that *the cybernetic aspects of the Calvinic congregational operation were only accidentally realised* in congregational management processes.

Form the point of view of the *management* of the deacon's activity, management structure, the deacon's position, their activities and issues related to the deaconry committee were mentioned by the interviewees.

Among these issues, the problems of the *deaconry committee* were in focus.

It can be stated that from the point of view of the management of deaconry the *uniform* organisational-operational frames provided by the Charity Law *do not serve* the development of deaconry activities. We are certain however, that even in case of small congregations, it is necessary to employ a *volunteer/or contracted* deacon with sufficient organisational-operational responsibilities even in the current stage of development. Depending on the congregation's strategy of deaconry, a deaconry organisation may be built (community of volunteer helpers, the position of deacon trustee, deaconry committee, etc.)

12. One last learning must be emphasised among the vast professional information: the *issue of congregational women's organisations:* in a surprisingly high amount of congregations, the praying communities of women's organisations carry out the job of deacon-volunteers, or fill in the role of deaconry committees.

An organisational concept must be developed, which includes:

- 'one-man' deacon-volunteers (Lohman's charismatic phase), and also

- the concept of a professional organisation supported by the deaconry committee, forming a community with a few volunteers.

Many questions must be answered for the development: finding the dedicated, training volunteers, planning the sharing of work and work processes, etc…

13. What typical solutions can be found concerning MRE's congregational deaconry?

In possession of the survey's material, a picture that bears more perspectives and has a significantly more detailed model was formed concerning the basic issue.

- What we experienced and published in our earlier works relating the deacon's job as described by Mintzberg and our own ideas were confirmed.
- Another of our suppositions (we may call that a zero hypothesis) was also confirmed and *took a more detailed form.* Based on our earlier experience, we saw that MRE's deaconry can be described as having *five separated* organisational forms:

Supervised by the Charity Office of the Synod of MRE, maintained by the Synod, the formation of the so-called *central charity homes* (mostly homes built for the care of the elderly, e.g. Switzer A. Charity Home, or a home of the handicapped, e.g. Molnár Mária Charity Home in Cegléd). These institutions operated already after the 2nd World War. New organisational formations, such as the Network of Foster Parents of the Reformed Church also belong here. Examples like the gypsy mission, the mission of the blind and people with poor eyesight, the dumb, the handicapped area different issue. These deaconry missions are called missions, but the two concepts: deaconry/mission in practice is sometimes mixed in some congregations. ('I help you and you will notice the caring love of Jesus!') This may significantly distort the Biblical message of deaconry.

Charity institutions maintained by the congregation, usually small-size (primarily home for the elderly). They have no formal connection to the congregation in most cases. Their common feature is the occasional personal

relation (e.g. the director is the congregation's minister, and 1-2 experts are involved in the congregation.)

Congregational deaconry based exclusively on volunteers' work. Two sub-formations are differentiated here:

Lohman's *clearly personal phase* (spontaneous realisation, occasional good deeds, uncoordinated) and

the charismatic phase (certain dedicated members of the congregation e.g. a sister of women's alliance, an elder) joined by some volunteers, forming a prayers' community in a more developed form. Connected to their programme, it is characteristic to have some professional further training: seminars, lectures, consultations etc.

Congregational deaconry enriched by some state financed social care forms: e.g. support service, social care with alarm systems, home care or the most preferred day care centre of the elderly etc. with *integrated co-operation*.

A number of Christian deaconry formations founded by the Church exist in Hungary. For our congregations, as implied by several interviews, their healing work is accessible.

Professional institutions and organisations maintained by foundations etc.

The name 'reformed' may only be used with the permission of the Synod of MRE (the Synod's religious and financing reasons are understandable). Their activities, however, are blessed for deaconry – as it turns out from the related sections of the interviews.

Maybe it is time to launch a support programme based on professional analysis for them!

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