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Towards hermeneutics of substantial change. Between conciliar continuity and tendency to break

1. Status questions

The issues concerning interpretation of Revelation, contained in Scripture and Tradition, constitute a powerful challenge to contemporary theology. They have intensified especially in the last decades due to the diverse understanding of the letter and spirit of the Second Vatican Council. On one hand, certain circles have evolved as representing the opinion, that the Council in its reform efforts had gone too far. The opposite circles on the other hand indicated the incompleteness of reforms and called for the convening of next council. The Catholic hermeneutics were in a much more difficult position than the Protestant, which related primarily to the biblical texts. Catholic interpretation is also required to take into account the normative tradition of the Church. In the post-conciliar era it can be distinguished between three currents of interpretation: 1. The fundamentalist current – proclaiming the absolute continuity, 2. The current of moderate reform – partially conservative and partially reformist, 3. The radical current – postulating a break with the previous method of interpretation. Do we need a fourth current?

2. From the history of the development of interpretive research

The problem of hermeneutics is not a new issue, but it accompanies the Christian thinking from the time of Jesus of Nazareth. The first interpreter of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God was Jesus Himself. The early Church had to face a difficult call to read and explain the Divine Revelation left by the Risen Lord. Exegetical schools were established (e.g. School Of Alexandria, Antioch, Rome), synods and councils had convened, powerful work was performed by Fathers of the Church, theologians, catechists, missionaries and preachers. Reconstructing the history of the Christian hermeneutics, it is not difficult to find so many mistakes (heresies, schisms) in the interpretation of *Revelatio Dei*, as well as to find great achievements. Golden age of scholasticism discovered the philosophical and dogmatic sense as the basis of ethical, moral and pastoral praxeology of the Church. The hermeneutic approach was divided into four stages of cognition and action (*lectio, questio, disputatio, applicatio*).¹

After a period of stagnation in the days of the late Middle Ages, Baroque and Enlightenment, theologians of the twentieth century took again with passion the issue of understanding and interpreting the revealed texts. The birth of modern philosophies, the introduction of the category of history to theology and development of biblical studies set new tasks not only for biblical hermeneutics, but also for theological hermeneutics, which interpreted symbols of faith and doctrinal judgments of the Magisterium of the Church.

Substantial contribution to the development of contemporary hermeneutics have been first made by evangelical theologians, such as: F. Schleiermacher, DF Strauss, J. Droysen, J. Ch. K. von Hofmann, M. Kähler, M. Heidegger, R. Bultmann, K. Barth, E. Fuchs, G. Ebeling, W. Dilthey, H.-G. Gadamer, E. Kaesemann, G. Bornkamm, H. Conzelmann, H. Braun. Underlying these almost revolutionary changes in the current hermeneutics was primarily the work of R. Bultmann (1884–1976). The basic assumptions of demythologization made by this Protestant theologian are quite well known and among his followers they have lived to be deeped, so there is no need to quote them here in their entirety. The scholar from Marburg demanded the demythologization of New Testament's texts in order to be able to convince the message of Jesus of Nazareth. He saw a clear conflict between what was subjective and what was

¹ Cf. K. Klauza, *Hermeneutyka teologiczna*, [in:] *Leksykon teologii fundamentalnej*, red. M. Rusecki i in., Lublin–Kraków 2002, s. 475–484.

objective and that was why he wanted to submit an existential understanding of the Bible, which was supposed to be more accessible to a modern man. By introducing history to the interpretation of Revelation and making use of existential philosophy of Heidegger, Bultmann made criticism of biblical texts in order to facilitate the Christian kerygma in the changed conditions of modern times.

The development of hermeneutics was also influenced by studies in the philosophy of language and linguistics. Some theologians focused on building Christian language, others on theological meaning, and some others on the relationship between sense and truth. Structuralism (J. Derrida) and analytic philosophy suggested to limit the speech to itself. A lot of explanations to problems of interpretation were brought by Emil Benveniste (1902–1976) and Paul Ricœur (1913–2005), who stressed the linguistic and historical nature of the human existence in the world. Hermeneutics assume, that in Christianity the constitutive language is the language of Revelation (as a fact and its continuation), intercepted in Scripture and Tradition, and ultimately in the Church.

On the other hand, in the Catholic world, hermeneutics experienced some kind of stagnation in that time, resulting primarily from a different understanding of the sources of Revelation. In contrast to the Protestant hermeneutics relating primarily to the biblical texts, the Catholic is based firmly on the rule of tradition. It emphasizes the primacy of oral media and traditions, which are prior in relation to the written Word of God. Therefore, Catholic theologians were in a far more complex situation, because besides the Scriptures they also had to interpret Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church.

In addition, the First Vatican Council (1869–1870) confirmed the then applicable rules of hermeneutics: *sensus ecclesiae*, *analogia fidei*, *nexus mysteriorum i finis ultimus* and stressed the primacial rule.² First new form of hermeneutics in the early twentieth century began to be built in the theological school of Tübingen. The Catholic doctrine of interpretation was limited primarily to the reconstruction of the process of creating understanding (*Verständnis*), including history, authority and tradition, and sought transcendental conditions of understanding and its correctness.

The first magisterial document presenting the position of the Roman Church about the historical-critical exegesis of the Bible was the encyclical *Deus Providentissimus* of Pope Leo XIII in 1893. It included important dogmatic-methodological indications for the whole process of interpretation of the Bible,

² Cf. DS 1016.

focusing on the following issues: the problem of allegory, function of auxiliary sciences, and science about inspiration and infallibility of the Holy Scripture.

Unfortunately, the Second Vatican Council in the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* from 1965 confirmed the traditional teaching of the Roman Church on the sources of Revelation. Although it encouraged the faithful to personal reading of the Scriptures (KO No. 21–25), it also pointed out, that following the sense of faith (*sensus fidelium*), one should understand and interpret the Bible in the spirit of the tradition of the Church (No. 7–10). In KO (No. 4–16) the Council Fathers submitted the following rules of hermeneutics: the ecclesial nature of the Scriptures, the charism of truth in the Church, intellectual character of understanding the nature of theology, connection of faith experience with the hermeneutical process, the historicity of the language of the Church, the incarnation of the Word of God in the word of men, the development of understanding of faith and theology towards the fullness of Divine truth, the need to consider the whole of language (the Bible) and its internal unity, the primacy of redemptive truth over the worldly one. In this context, the Catholic Biblical hermeneutics is not only in the middle, between Revelation and faith (as by Protestants), but also between faith and reason; it becomes a form of ecclesial and salvational communication.³

Because of the subject and methods of research hermeneutics took many forms. There are fundamental and auxiliary hermeneutics, as well as explicative and normative, general and specific one. You can also talk about apologetic, dogmatic, biblical, moral, catechetical, liturgical, canonical or artistic hermeneutics. The representatives of Catholic hermeneutics include: J. Wach, J. J. Rambach, E. Castelli, H. Bouillard, C. Geffré, R. Marié, F. Mussner, O. Loretz, W. Stolz, G.H. Stobbe, E. Schillebeeckx, Cz. Bartnik, H. Pesch, P. Neuner, H. J. Pottmeyer, A. Dulles, M. Seckler, W. Kasper, W. Kern, J. Hermann, H. U. von Balthasar, K. Rahner, C. Geffré, A. Zuberbier and A. Bronk.

Hermeneutics are supposed to be in relationship with reality, allowing this reality to express and realize its meaning. The goal of hermeneutics is to help the Word of God, to become up to date, giving meaning to the present and turning it to the future. Between the testimony of the New Testament, and the events to which it relates, there is a distance that must be taken into account. Texts communicating the Word of God already contain interpretation of religious experience. Therefore, contemporary hermeneutics must develop a new

³ Cf. Cz. Bartnik, *Hermeneutyka katolicka*, [in:] *Encyklopedia katolicka*, t. VI, Lublin 1993, k. 775–776.

biblical theology, which is the result of tension and dialogue between exegetes and theologians. Similar task awaits hermeneutic as far as the relationship between theology and ideology. Theology too often protects institutionality and tradition of the Church, taking away the dynamism of the Word of God, and unfortunately teaching sometimes is a certain form of ideology, rather than the Gospel. Then the Magisterium by sanctioning, instead of creating a new message of Revelation, protects the most conservative and conciliatory theology.⁴

3. Do hermeneutics guarantee the continuity of the reform and development of the Church?

Powerful challenges to hermeneutics within the Catholic Church appeared with particular intensity after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), in connection with questions about the proper course of the post-conciliar Church. The call for reforms that resulted from the announcement of 16 conciliar documents, was taken to a different extent and with a different depth. How many reforms did the Council plan and how far did it want to go about them? Is it consistent with the letter and spirit of the Council to separate itself completely from Tradition to the point of breaking with it (*Traditionsbruch*)? Or should its provisions be read and understood in the context of continuity (*Kontinuität*) and only in the mainstream of the history of theology? Or should we rather support a trend, indicated by Benedict XVI, which intends to combine continuity with renewal? Or should we maybe refer to hermeneutics, which takes into account such substantial change, but does not break the essence of continuity with Tradition?

In the post-conciliar Catholic theology, especially in relation to the texts of Vatican II, two opposite interpretations of hermeneutics have emerged. On one hand there was the hermeneutic of discontinuity and break from the pre-conciliar Church with the post conciliar Church, on the other hand – the hermeneutic of continuity and reform, striving to maintain continuity in the modern Church with the Apostolic Church. The first one radicalizes doctrinal breakthrough and loses essential truth about the identity of the one and whole Church. Problems with the interpretation and then reception and application of the Council resolutions into the life of the Church resulted from

⁴ Cf. R. Winling, *Teologia współczesna 1945–1980*, przeł. K. Kisielewska-Sławińska, Kraków 1990, s. 326–330.

the fact that it came to an unnecessary confrontation and opposition of these two conflicting hermeneutics. One caused confusion and disorder, and the other – as it seems – gradually bore some fruit.

Hermeneutic of breaking with the past – much publicized and sometimes also uncritically promoted – is unacceptable, because in the life and doctrine of the church, there is non-transferable continuity between “old” and “new”. Faith in its subjective, as well as in its objective aspect has to be churchly (*die Kirchlichkeit des Glaubens*). More correct is hermeneutic of continuity and a half-way reform, as it preserves, in spite of all the continuity, the one and the only subject – the Church. This subject grows and develops over time – notes the Pope – succumbing to the reform and yet remains the same. Continuity is the only and authoritative criterion, whereby one can correctly interpret the mystery of Christ and the Church, and especially the conciliar documents. According to Benedict XVI, only this interpretation of the Council is entitled, which – while preserving the doctrinal continuity and identity of the Church of the past and present – involves the development and deepening of the doctrine. Sometimes it allows “revision” or “correction of certain decisions of the past”, but it does not extend to what is the deepest. In other words, the hermeneutic of continuity and reform – as American theologian Richard R. Gaillardetz rightly says – does not accept the idea, that Vatican II made a substantial change in the essential teaching of the Church. But is it really the case?

In the context of debates with his circle of scholars, Benedict XVI spoke in favor of the hermeneutics of reform (*Hermeneutik der Reform*), which on one hand – with its way of understanding and meaning – distances itself from hermeneutics of broken discontinuation (*bruchhafter Diskontinuität*), as it was demanded by radical reformers, and simultaneously rejects the hermeneutics of non-historical continuation (*ungeschichtlicher Kontinuität*) – what on the other hand is demanded by traditionalists.⁵

Advocating the concept of Ratzinger, Kurt Koch points out in the post-conciliar theology, newly discovered elements that already existed in the Church, but were played down and forgotten. For example, he refers to the freedom of religion and theology of the office, which were known in the tradition of the

⁵ Cf. Benedikt XVI, *Zur Hermeneutik und Rezeption des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, [in:] Papst Benedikt XVI und seine Schülerkreis, Kardinal K. Koch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Die Hermeneutik der Reform*, Augsburg 2012, S. 9–19.

Church.⁶ In his article on the liturgy K. Koch advocates also more acceptance of Tradition in the current mainstream of the post-conciliar reform. Swiss Cardinal carefully distinguishes between the teachings of the Constitution about Liturgy and the post-conciliar liturgical reform. Therefore, on one hand he shows the reasons in favor of re-admission of the Tridentine Mass, on the other – he proposes impulses to renew the liturgy.⁷

With break and reform issue in connection with tradition deals also a collective work edited by Jan-Heiner Tuck, which is a record of an academic conference at the College of Theology in Vienna. In view of the Roman efforts for reconciliation with traditionalists, Tuck favors the clear hermeneutic of reform (Hermeneutik der Reform), which, however, should go further than Benedict XVI says. This Austrian professor of dogmatic theology calls for changing the perspective of the Church, expanding the term of Revelation, spreading the testimony of the Gospel outside the church space, the right to freedom of religion and conscience, and the right to seek the truth.⁸

With this subject of broadening the understanding of conciliar reform, deals also the book *Im Sprung gehemmt. Was mir noch nach dem alles Konzil fehlt*, written by Helmut Krätzl. This former stenographer of the Council and the Auxiliary Bishop of Vienna sees the authentic opportunities for the development of the Church in the strengthening of the co-responsibility of bishops or in the strengthening of the role of the Bishops Conferences in the management of the universal Church, as well as in the further development of Synod's elements, in the reading of the meaning of faith, in the continuation of the Conciliar positive conception of marriage and sexuality, and in the renewal of the liturgy. Krätzl derives from the general Council's legacy such spiritual impulses as the reading of Scripture and biblical meditation, examination of conscience, the renewal of the sacrament of baptism – all that creates our awareness of being the Church.⁹

⁶ Cf. K. Koch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil zwischen Innovation und Tradition*, [in:] Papst Benedikt XVI und seine Schülerkreis, Kardinal K. Koch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil...*, op. cit., S. 22–50.

⁷ Cf. K. Koch, *Die Konstitution über die Heilige Liturgie und die nachkonziliare Liturgiereform. Innovation und Kontinuität im Licht der Hermeneutik der Reform*, [in:] Papst Benedikt XVI und sein eSchülerkreis, Kardinal K. Koch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, op. cit., S. 70–98.

⁸ See: J.-H. Tück, *Erinnerung an die Zukunft. Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, Freiburg 2012.

⁹ See: H. Krätzl, *Im Sprung gehemmt. Was mir noch dem Konzil noch alles fehlt*, Mödling 1998.

4. Why a new hermeneutics?

It seems that the interpretation of the text of Revelation is not satisfactory, if it is made in the light of the absolute continuity of hermeneutics. Similar critical attitude must be also referred to hermeneutics of a break. It should be noted, that both of these ways of interpreting the content of Revelation and Magisterium, claim to be the reform. Not to be accepted is the hermeneutics of traditionalists, which is absolutely determined by tradition. Thus, in recent years there have been attempts to work out a fourth kind of hermeneutics. Therefore let's make few remarks on this way of interpreting magisterial texts that would not be a radical break with the Tradition of the Church, but at the same time would appear as an adequate tool to explain, what God says to a modern man, and what has been written 2000 years ago.

The essential contents of the Christian Revelation will never lose their authenticity. However, they will never experience the definitive wording either. Formulas, symbols and dogmas of the faith are historical in their external form, i.e., with the time they become anachronistic. However, the essence (the core) of dogmatic ruling does not change, since it comes from the Divine Revelation and is personally experienced by the believer. The fundamental basis of faith is rooted, therefore, in the event of Revelation, i.e. in the self-giving of God in Jesus Christ. The Revelation here is not to be understood as a statement of truth, but as an event of truth. Jesus Christ, as such, is an event of truth. Thus, language and way of communication needs to be constantly reviewed and modernized. The truth however remains forever not fully grasped. Like any human statement, the dogmatic statements are conditioned by time, and given the fact that the human nature is sinful, these statements may be limited by the human tendency to sin. In this way, the Church and theology must continually look for the most appropriate way of expressing the Christian faith and continually purify the wording of any trace of sin, as long as the Christian community is on the way to the Kingdom of God. Therefore how far can the demythologization process of Christian Revelation go? After all, the cultural changes shaping the language in which the content of Revelation is described, are subject to change. So is it allowed to leave the language and categories of hermeneutics to the subjective reception? How far can you go as far as the interpretation of the text, moving away from its historical way of communication, so that the truth could become available to the man of the post-modern era?

But is really a conciliar breakthrough only limited to such non-substantial change, revision or correction? After all, at some points the Council actually

went further ahead and changed the doctrinal substance, like for instance in teaching on ecumenism, Judaism, or relationship to other religions? In the pre-conciliar age of these terms they indeed were explicitly negatively qualified! Don't we see therefore today the need for hermeneutics of substantial change, accepting a break with continuity at some points, and yet not destructing the identity of faith?

In the doctrine of the Church in the past there are examples of teaching, preached over centuries, which have been given up definitely. History is full of examples of unbroken tradition, which changed due to an increase of moral sensibility of believers, critical intuition of theologians, restrained research exercised by the Magisterium, in accordance to the changing cultural context – writes the American theologian Elizabeth A. Johnson.¹⁰ There was a time, in which the Church taught, that sexual intercourse of married couples aimed only at pleasure was an unlawful act; that killing of the unbelievers was the way to salvation; that the profit for a loan was prohibited; that slavery was permitted; that discrimination against the Jewish nation was justifiable; that Biblists were not allowed to use the historical-critical method in the study of the Holy Scriptures. Today, there is no trace of these doctrines in the teaching of the Church. We are dealing with much more than just the development of the understanding of the doctrine. The Church strongly moved away from them. The calls for the construction of a fourth form of hermeneutics are no longer isolated, which would be more adequate to certain parts of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, e.g. in the liturgy, because their interpretation cannot be encompassed/explained neither by the hermeneutic of discontinuity and brake, nor by hermeneutics of continuity and reform, nor even by the fundamentalist hermeneutics of absolute continuity.

Constructing a new hermeneutics, which would not be an irresponsible attempt to break with the Tradition of the Church, could revitalize theology. Conducting theological research, based on the determinants of the new interpretation, would give a new impulse for a critic of the ideology of the church and it would become a clearer move away from speculative theology towards discovering biblical and existential theology instead. Certainly there is much to be done in the area of ecclesiology, because we are still in the grip of institutional ecclesiology.

¹⁰ See: E. A. Johnson, *Quest for the living God. Mapping frontiers in the theology of God*, London 2007.

It seems that one of the main determinants for the new Christian hermeneutics should be a far better consideration for spirituality. We should move away from the perception of faith in Jesus only as a religion. Faith in Christ is more than a continuation of the Jewish Law.¹¹ Christianity should not be narrowed down to a religion with its institutional forms. It is primarily the Word Made Flesh. And it is also a way, having two meanings. First, in the sense of Jesus – His person, words, and deeds, and then in the sense of following Him. Christianity is a process of conversion and entering the path of the glorious Lord, who in a conversation with his disciples Philip and Thomas asserted, that He is “the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me. “If know me, then you would also know My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him” (Jn 14:6–7). A person who keeps the commandments of the Decalogue, is not yet a Christian. The Apostle Paul proposes a different way of life for followers of Christ, (cf. Gal 5:16.18). “If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit!” (Ga 5:25).¹²

The Good News about the liberation of the man is still too firmly grounded in terms of Jewish precepts, Greek philosophy and Roman law. Unfortunately, we take out too little of Christ from all of that, focusing rather on the doctrinal truth. Ignace de la Potterie in the book *La Verite dans Saint Jean*, expressed it rightly, indicating that we focus too often in the Church on the Catholic doctrine, and not on personal truth, which is Jesus Christ. We allow the transformation of the Gospel into a more or less independent system, in which

¹¹ There is more on this topic in my book *The reform and development of the Church [Reforma i rozwój Kościoła]*, Kraków 2012, pp. 202–206. “Christianity is not only a religion for many reasons. First of all, because the essence of Christian theology and the object of the kerygma are not ideas, principles or religious structures and offices, but the Person. It is Jesus Christ, Alive and Risen. The crisis that currently affects some particular Churches in Europe, is in the final reference Christological crisis. You cannot discover and get to Christ, the eternal Son of God who took on human nature, without being in His Church. Favoring the slogan «Christ – yes, the Church – no» closes effectively the way to the real Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus Christ is not an information or a content for any human consciousness, but Someone truly, really and substantially existent. Christianity is, on one hand, above all, a Person, on the other hand – a path. How to understand this? In a personal sense, it is the living presence of Jesus Christ. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [...] And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:1.14), *ibid.*, p. 204–205.

¹² The dynamics of Christianity aptly captures the concept of “path”, with which defined themselves the followers of Jesus of Nazareth at the very beginning. At least six times in the book of Acts of the Apostles we find such concept, informing about the first phase of Christianity: Acts 9:1–2; Acts 22:4–5; Acts 2, 28; Acts 24:15.22; Acts 18:24–25; Acts 19:23.

the divine source of the truth about the redemption of man and the world is masked. In his Gospel – as noted by I. de la Potterie – St. John identifies the truth with Christ the Revealer, therefore he insists on the need of carrying the truth by the believer in depth of his soul (“the truth that dwells in us” 2 Jn:2).¹³ Excessive concentration on attention to theoretical dogmatic truths leads to the loss of fascination of the life and person of Jesus of Nazareth.

However, to complete the picture, it has to be added, that the less there is in someone the Spirit of God, the more someone needs the elementary Rights, engraved on stone tablets. And in order to keep the spirituality in constant dynamism of development it must be in relation to the institutional dimension of the Church. “True holiness in the Church is not possible without a complete surrender to Christ in His Divinity and Humanity, in the sacraments and in the hierarchy,¹⁴ says Balthasar. The Swiss theologian speaks here about the so-called “objective Church”, in other words about a Church, without which the holiness is impossible. True holiness is only in the Church, in which there is a full devotion to Christ, also in the Church hierarchy. In his opinion “the objective Church” is the one which includes the institution, while the “subjective Church” is the one which is born in the community of love. This is possible, because the Church has in itself the Holy Spirit, who is objective and subjective at the same time. Holy Spirit demands for the Church a certain structure and visibility that would straighten and clear the charisma.

Therefore a courageous and responsible constructing of hermeneutics of substantial change must carry a significant potential of spirituality and at the same time remain in the area of churchliness, which will protect the identity of the Christian faith.

ABSTRACT

Towards hermeneutics of substantial change.

Between conciliar continuity and tendency to break

In the interpretation of Revelation, as well as, documents of the Magisterium of the post-conciliar Catholic theology, strong tensions and differences have been exposed.

They are a consequence of various hermeneutics. Each of the sides claims the right to define “a reform”.

¹³ Cf. I. de la Potterie, *La vérité dans Saint Jean*, Roma 1977, p. 106.

¹⁴ H. Urs von Balthasar, *Interview given to Renato Farma* (Italian journalist), “Die Tagespost” 1986, 27. November.

However, a careful and critical analysis of the three functioning types of hermeneutics (of absolute continuity, of a break, and of absolute fidelity to the tradition) is not fully satisfactory.

In its external form of expression the symbols and dogmas of faith are historical, so with the flow of history they become anachronistic, despite the fact that the essence (the core) of the doctrine is not changed, because it comes from the Divine Revelation and is a subject of personal experience of the faithful. Therefore, a fundamental basis of faith lies in the event of Revelation, namely, the self-giving of the Triune God. Hence the Revelation must be understood not as a statement of truth, but as an event of truth. It is about personal experience of the Resurrected, and not just knowledge or information about Him. Therefore, the language and the manner of communication must be constantly verified and contemporized. While the truth is always not completely grasped. This is why the presented article is a small contribution in developing a fourth type of hermeneutics – a hermeneutics of substantial change, which though would allow to break the continuity at some points, nevertheless would not destroy the identity of faith.

KEYWORDS

Revelation, Tradition, Council, hermeneutics, hermeneutics of continuity, hermeneutics of breaking, hermeneutics of substantial change

ABSTRAKT

W kierunku hermeneutyk substancjalnej zmiany.

Pomiędzy soborową kontynuacją a tendencją do przerwania

W interpretacji objawienia, jak i tekstów magisterialnych w posoborowej teologii katolickiej ujawniły się silne napięcia i rozbieżności. Są one konsekwencją opowiedzenia się za odmienną hermeneutyką. Każda ze stron rości sobie naturalnie prawo do określenia „reforma”. Jednakże uważna i krytyczna analiza funkcjonujących trzech rodzajów hermeneutyk („bezwzględnej ciągłości”, „przerwania” i „absolutnej wierności tradycji”) nie jest do końca zadowalająca.

W swej zewnętrznej formie ekspresji symbole i dogmaty wiary są historyczne, czyli z wpływem historii stają się anachroniczne, mimo że istota (rdzeń) doktryny nie ulega zmianie, gdyż pochodzi z Boskiego objawienia i jest przez wierzącego doświadczane osobiście. Fundamentalna podstawa wiary tkwi zatem w wydarzeniu objawienia, czyli w samoudzielaniu się Trójjedynego Boga. Stąd objawienie należy pojmować nie jako twierdzenie prawdy, ale jako wydarzenie prawdy. Chodzi o osobiste doświadczenie Zmartwychwstałego, a nie wiedzę czy informację o Nim. A zatem język i sposób prze-

kazu musi być ciągle weryfikowany i uwspółcześniany. Natomiast na zawsze prawda pozostaje nie całkowicie uchwycona. Dlatego niniejszy artykuł jest małym przyczynkiem do wypracowywania czwartego rodzaju hermeneutyki – hermeneutyki zmiany substancjalnej, jaka dopuszczałaby jednak zerwanie ciągłości w pewnych punktach, i mimo to nie burzyła tożsamości wiary.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

objawienie, Tradycja, Sobór, hermeneutyka, hermeneutyka ciągłości, hermeneutyka zerwania, hermeneutyka zmiany substancjalnej

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