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THESES

*The happiness received  
in the light of the theological context and the pedagogical  
significance of the words of the New Testament)*

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## Contents of the thesis booklet

I. Background to the research .....	2
II. Methods used in the research .....	3
III. Results of the research .....	3
A) Results from interdisciplinary considerations .....	4
B) Findings of biblical science .....	5
C) Systematic theological findings .....	7
D) Findings in the field of religious education .....	9
E) Theological significance of the whole process in terms of content and method .....	12
IV. Summary ordered by central topics .....	12
III. The literature used in the dissertation and referred to in the thesis booklet .....	15
IV. Own publications on the subject of the research .....	16

### I. Background to the research

It is not a new demand to develop the theological implications of the issues that have defined particular periods of intellectual history in theology. If we take seriously Gerd Theissen's claims in his book on biblical didactics in the context of biblical didactics as a motivational science, i.e. that the motivational power of the Bible's message can also be drawn from by the postmodern public today, and that the text itself provides the motivation for those who learn and teach to read the Bible, it is an obvious task to research the biblical text, which also carries a message about the causes and nature of joy and happiness for a diverse public of believers and non-believers. It is a theological task to point out the possibility of linking the life question of happiness with theological content, and to articulate this also in terms of contemporary religious pedagogical considerations.

The transcendent implications of the question of happiness can be suggested by theological and non-theological scientific findings and by references to the biblical text, but the experience of happiness itself is less theologically accessible, and can be accounted for 'only' as a consequence. It was therefore necessary for our investigation to find theologically accessible concepts that could in some way approach the subject of happiness. A reliable group of words in the philosophical and psychological literature on the problem of happiness, and at the same time in theological literature, is that of the words "χαρ", which, when linked to a single word, are connected to the problem of happiness in a broad spectrum of theological terms, since joy, grace, gratitude and their derivatives are known as concepts that are important both in psychological and philosophical discussions of the subject and in theological terms.

*The initial thesis of my research was: the occurrences of words with the stem χαρ- in the New Testament – with special attention to their collocations – can enrich thinking about joy in New Testament, can shed light on new contexts in theological thinking, and can contribute to the presentation of the dimensions of the Christian concept of happiness and to their application in theological and practical - in our case in religious education – contexts.*

## II. Methods used in the research

In the course of my work, starting from the results of my own research on the New Testament - placed in a scientific context - and through systematic theological considerations - also formulated in a scientific context - I arrived at the practical aspects of the experience of happiness based on transcendental foundations, in the religious pedagogical part.

In the selection of the interdisciplinary literatures discussed, I was primarily concerned with their relevance to systematic theology and religious education, largely determined by the biblical exploration of the New Testament texts themselves and the approach to the theology of the giftedness that is based on them.

In my research based on the biblical text, I used a reference table I constructed and attached to the thesis to find the occurrences of the words with stem *χαρ-* in the New Testament. Column A of the table contains the names of the New Testament books, and column B contains the chapter numbers. The other columns, from C to J, show the occurrences of the words *χαρά*, *χαίρω*, *συνχαίρω*, *χάρις*, *χαρίζομαι*, *εὐχαριστία*, *εὐχαριστέω* and *χάρισμα*. For ease of identification, I have placed the text passages containing the words in the 'K' column together with a context in the form of a short quotation in Hungarian, separated by semicolons in the order of their occurrence. I have marked the verses in the table by chapter and verse number, and then described them with additional parameters. In terms of context, I have indicated whether the term refers to the speaker himself (S), the community (K), God (I), Jesus (J), Timothy (Tim), Titus (Tit), Philemon (Filem), or whether it simply appears in profane usage. In terms of tense, the word could have been marked past (m), present (j), future (jő) and eschaton (e). Finally, in terms of theological significance, I classified the occurrences according to whether the behaviour is hostile to the faith or to believers (-), or has no theological significance (1), or has theological significance (2), is theologically emphasised (3), is of special significance primarily from a Christological point of view (3+). The table allowed me to make counts by topic, even in a combined way. Using the parameters indicated in the table, it was possible to shed light not only on the number of references but also on the actual role and quality of the word in question. At the same time, a number of limitations of the analysis, such as genre and contemporary language use, could be addressed.

In the systematic-theological thread, I had further considerations and applied the results of my New Testament research in evaluating and establishing systematic-theological theories. Behind the central concepts of the theological statements, I have searched for the thematic circles already explored in the reference research and their connections, which were later taken up and thought on as key ideas in the religious pedagogical part.

The possibility of learning and experiencing being gifted is fundamentally in the inclusive education, so it was obvious to bring inclusion theory in the field of religious education into my train of thought. The consequences of the study of words with the stem *χαρ-* can also occur explicitly between the contents of religious education. This possibility is illustrated by comparing religious education and happiness education and especially by tabulating the curricular accents with terms that occurred from my research. According to the weight of the theme-complex of prayer, prayer as a reflection opportunity and the questions of education for praying are considered in subchapters.

## III. Results of the research

The research produced a number of partial results. These are summarised in the final chapter of this thesis. Here I will confine myself to highlighting the results that are relevant to the overall reflection.

## A) Results from interdisciplinary considerations

1. I have found that, starting from the New Testament texts, it is not possible to find a uniform conception of happiness, nor even traces of a uniform conception of joy, by limiting ourselves to the words with stem  $\chi\alpha\rho$ -. In addition to the differences in content and genre, the theological and philosophical diversity in contemporary Jewish and Hellenic thought may also have caused the different authors to adopt particular emphases. My fundamental insight is that it is necessary to assert this diverse openness in later works, and never to formulate Christian responses to the question of happiness with a claim to exclusivity.
2. If we look for an answer to the question of happiness in the texts of Scripture, or in the theology that derives from Scripture, whether in the fundamental, dogmatic or ethical field, we must take into account that the theological statements that can be separated - and thus the theological debates - cannot only bring aspects of separation and separation in the search for happiness, but show a diversity that is inclusive, complementary, but always open to further reflection.
3. The statement about the three faces of happiness (enjoyment, flow, search for meaning), as noted in the Happiness Orientation Scale and its Hungarian validation, is also consistent with biblical and systematic theological statements, so I suggest that it be considered in your religious pedagogy from these perspectives as well.
4. The prominent role of the themes of coherence, coping and flourish, and the religiousness factor in their background, which has been empirically demonstrated on several occasions, provides theology and especially religious education with a significant motivation to develop and apply the message of happiness to a specifically theologically oriented discussion, even along the lines of creation-redemption-consecration.
5. The lesson of Plathow's reflection is that it is worthwhile to leave the theological reflection open to the notion of happiness in relation to creation, the preservation of the created world and blessing, even if, as Christians, this is (re)interpreted in the work and teaching of Jesus Christ, and for us this interpretation is the very essence of Christian faith.
6. Following Lauster's suggestion, I believe that an integrative theological approach to happiness is appropriate, in which the happiness of the aspiration and the happiness of the moment are valid and complementary approaches, both in their transcendent aspects. The fullness of the moment is the engine of the pursuit of happiness. Happiness is also man's action, his work on his own life, done in freedom and abandonment, in which he recognizes the gift of God.
7. We therefore need to take an integrative approach to the question of happiness. We do not have the whole picture, and therefore we cannot have a complete theology of happiness, but only an integrative and coherent approach can prevent us from making extreme miscalculations.
8. I agree with Lauster that religion reveals the complexity of happiness in order to challenge the common perception of happiness and its attainability.

## B) Findings of biblical science

9. In different writings of the Old Testament, the expressions of joy and happiness appear in different contexts. Thus we can discover in it the diversity of life experiences and the different faces of happiness itself in different contexts of life situations and historical times.

10. The action of the same God who creates, chooses, forgives and redeems sins is the source and therefore the object of joy.

11. From the questions and negative answers in Ecclesiastes, we have found that even if there is no profit to be made in the believer's life on earth, there is a conscious sharing in the gifts of creation.

12. Such a good part of creation is pleasure and enjoyment. But pleasure cannot overcome the absurdity of life. It is joyful to give thanks to the Creator for man's happiness, but it is easy to go astray in establishing a general theological law by narrowing it down to the question of joy and happiness.

13. Although they can be linked, the realms of faith and emotions should not be confused, as both can exist independently of each other. Emotions can exist and function independently of the dimensions of faith, but if, in times of emotional or physical shocks, faith were to automatically disappear along with positive emotions, it would not be faith.

14. The law of the Lord accompanies the believer in the storms of his life, as both a certainty of belonging to God and his duty. For, as the rabbinic commentary emphasizes again and again, understanding, interpreting and living the Torah in a given situation is the personal task of every believer.

15. There are many places in the Old Testament where it talks about joy and happiness. In the midst of secular events, but with a transcendent foundation and an eschatological outflow. This happiness is shared again and again by believers. Although there is a worldly logic to it, and even a kind of reward for the believer's life in a given situation, and often a quite natural gift from God, it remains a mystery to God when, how, on what occasion and in what way man may share in it.

16. According to the testimony of the Psalter, happy is the person who lives his life in a context of faith in which everything is for his benefit. While the "sinners" are scattered to the winds and their paths are lost, the Lord knows the way of the "righteous" man. Such a life, reckoned, nourished, rightly adjusted, is truly happy. This mysterious interconnectedness not only links the worshipper to the Lord and his fellow worshippers, but also gives new meaning to the law, which is much more than a prescription: it is a support, a guiding principle, a gift. And the 'righteous man', like Job, even in times of extreme and absurd suffering, comes to believe in the God he has come to know all the more in the midst of all this pain and scandal.

17. A closer look at the Old Testament words and expressions of happiness reveals that the particularity of the theme of happiness that recurs in the Old Testament lies in its integrativeness. For when this theme appears in the Old Testament, it is not usually a question of physical or spiritual, social or material well-being, but of a certain well-being that can take on different dimensions.

18. Thus, as the Old Testament teaches, happiness is usually (a) the result of a relationship with God; (b) a sign of salvation, whether temporal or eschatological; (c) a gift from God.

19. The New Testament uses fewer words and fewer times to express happiness than the Old Testament. While the vocabulary and conceptual system for expressing joy is retained, the predominance of χαρά and χαίρειν is clear. The use of this word also indicates a predominance of a deep spiritual joy independent of the enjoyment of material goods, in which even eschatology is assumed in the mundane.

20. The most comprehensive translation of the Hebrew word for joy in the LXX is χαρά, and in its adjectival forms χαίρειν. Although it most often denotes joy with a cultic meaning, it is not used exclusively in this context. In its use as a word denoting heartfelt joy, since it is primarily regarded as the equivalent of שמח, it is always causally connected with the Lord's redemptive acts. The scene and occasion of the experience of this joy is no longer simply the worship of the Temple and the teaching of the Torah, but the work of the Holy Spirit and of Christ, and the life of the community of brethren thus endowed.

21. *As a common denominator of the words with the stem χαρ- and their associated schools of thought, we find the concept of giftedness. These words are characteristic expressions of theological reflections on the recurring giftedness.*

22. The meaning of words is determined by the genre and the context of the texts, both in terms of content and community. However, despite the differences in emphasis in current usage, there is continuity in the concept of gifts in the Old and New Testaments. It is a gift, a grace, which in all contexts takes on a very personal actuality and is given without any preconditions, religious, moral or otherwise. These characteristics can be decisive parameters not only for the genesis and conceptualisation of biblical texts, but also for their theological interpretation and even the theological reflection based on them.

23. The context of the words in the χαρ-figure is most often associated with God, and slightly less often with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is mentioned a few times, but when it is, it is emphasized, especially in connection with the gifts of grace.

24. The experience of communion is first of all a gift of grace, then of joy. It is interesting that grace is explicitly found in personal reflections. This result is, of course, broadly consistent with the nature of the concepts, but it is important that grace does not become a general need for communal experience or confession of faith, but is only occasionally expressed for the community, then mostly in Paul's personal reflections.

25. In the reference analysis of the words with the stem χαρ-, emerged mentions of prayer stood out alongside or in combination with theological explanations.

26. In the area of prayer, the following specific correlations have been identified. Prayers are never obligatory topi, but spontaneous and diverse manifestations. They reflect in prayer on many areas and events of congregational and individual life. Fundamental 'faith-life functions' are lived by the believer and the community of believers in their dependence on God, as reflected in prayer, but also in their giftedness in Christ (and in countless ways).

27. Prayers are a reflection of the basic attitude and power of gratitude. Grace, God's all-prevailing but ever-present gift to the pray-er, whether in repentance, danger or joy.

28. Thus, in addition to the personal dimensions of the gift of grace from God, the joy and gratitude of the gift of communion is particularly present in Pauline theology, together with the recognition of charisms.

### C) Systematic theological findings

29. Later ages have all reread the biblical verses, including the New Testament, in their own contexts. The details of the different readings from age to age were typically age- and context-specific, even if their authors or later publishers gave them general validity. This is also how the common gift of Christ may have produced not unity but seemingly permanently impassable dividing lines in theology.

30. In my study of emblematic twentieth-century German Protestant theological texts on the question of happiness, I have identified three distinct theological models of happiness. I was able to classify the works under study and the main lines of thought they contain into one of the "blessing-model", "redemption-model" or "eschatological model". The emphases of the three models of happiness show affinities with the separate but closely related contents of the three branches of faith. The  $\chi\alpha\rho$ -words under study are also characteristically related to these models.

31. The typical words of the blessing-model are thanksgiving and rejoicing. This model relates to the question of happiness along the lines of the potentials given in a person's creation and their realisation, its active (as creativity, decisiveness) and passive characteristics (relationality and emotions).

32. A conspicuous expression of the salvation-model is the (paradoxical) joy, and in Pauline writings it is also the grace. I have included here those ideas which are particularly determined by the Christ-event and its dogmatic-ethical implications.

33. The "eschatological model" is a theology of hope. Its words also testify to paradoxical joy. And the life of the church is marked by charisms.

34. Recognising these models can help us to understand theological emphases and particular positions. At the same time, the overlapping use of the words giftedness is also an obvious indication of the relationship between the meanings behind different theological models.

35. I see the existence of different theological approaches as a value in theology. In addition to capturing the multidimensionality of happiness and the diversity of emotions and experiences associated with it, a theological assessment of all these must also bear in mind the specificities of these models and their interrelationships, since the three models have different emphases but are ultimately complementary.

36. On the basis of all this, I have concluded that the concept of  $\chi\alpha\rho$  is indeed a possible key to the Christian concept of happiness.

37. The concept of "Christologically grounded happiness" sought in this dissertation is multidimensional. In outlining the problems associated with it and in formulating positions on it, it is necessary to take into account the multiplicity of dimensions and their interrelationships. At the same time, the conceptual framework presented is open to research and further reflection. From the point of view of theological reflection, and similarly in the case of an interdisciplinary approach, the relations between the dimensions outlined can be seen as complementary and, as such, as they are interrelated, they offer the possibility of new insights.

38. So the logical problem of the happiness of the moment and the happiness of the aspired to is no longer a theological problem from the point of view of the gift, nor a philosophical one strictly speaking, since both are the formulation of the gift in a different context, which is

always ultimately a grace that calls us to gratitude and joy, and can become a spiritual gift for the whole community, in which new context the particular individual contexts can become a gift to be experienced together before God.

39. In the case of the words with the stem  $\chi\alpha\rho$ -, it has been proven that they can reflect a theological system, that they can be considered as reflections of the "theology of the giftedness", which, although not expressed in the Bible in a built up system, appears again and again in connection with various topics.

40. It is also worth to interpret the testimony of the New Testament texts to the giftedness described in the Old Testament in the context of their various aspects, since, as we have seen, joy, gratitude and even grace, which permeate the New Testament, are not concepts that can be understood only and exclusively from a Christological perspective, even if we have a typical and rich approach to them from this point of view. These Greek terms, partly 'recharged', derive their specific charge from the language of the Old Testament texts and the theological context expressed in that language: they reflect the faith experience and theology of the people of Israel in all its diversity, while at the same time bearing witness to the grace revealed in Jesus Christ.

41. The different emphases in different biblical texts sometimes carry complementary meanings for the same words. This diversity, which is much more limited in scope, genre and age in the New Testament, which focuses on the interpretation of the Christ event, is also evident in the examination of this narrow cross-section of a few words, which reveals the diversity of personal and theological reflections of Christian conviction and faith, which appear to us in the collection of writings, side by side and complementary to each other.

42. If we reflect on the theological concepts that are used in the New Testament reference study against the background of life-experienced religious learning, a whole new dimension opens up in the discussion of the theological themes that are prominent in the context of these words (communion, baptism, salvation, ecclesial communion, prayer). At the same time, we do not shy away from dogmatic approaches of a hermeneutical or even aesthetic nature. Since the words in the  $\chi\alpha\rho$ -text provide a reflection on the theology of the gift, we could, with some modification, attempt to develop the dogmatics as a theology of the gift, either on the basis of Luther's Small Catechism or on the basis of Dietrich Korsch's summary.

43. By using the words with the stem  $\chi\alpha\rho$ -, theology can be understood indeed as a science of orientation. It can make use of other – even profane – scientific findings in its inquiries, also in the case of the study of the giving and receiving, asking and thanking God-human relationship.

44. Dalferth explains the orienting science of dogmatics in the context of the question "Who are we". Here we can also relate to his line of thought, since it is precisely this question that gives us the chance to answer questions about happiness in the reflection of the giftedness, and thus it is also clear that theology and other sciences that ask the question of happiness can enter into a real dialogue not only in the field of ethics, but also in the field of dogmatics.

45. If we accept that dogmatics is an "integrative discipline", i.e. that it can practically include all three approaches of contemporary dogmatics (the doctrinal foundations of religion, the life-history approach, and the hermeneutical approach), we are formulating theology in the context of religion, as Korsch does. Awareness of this context may be particularly fruitful for our own investigation, since in many research on happiness and well-being, religiosity and spirituality appear as specific background variables. And while trying to grasp the meanings lurking in the background of this phenomenon by means of the words of the stem  $\chi\alpha\rho$ -, we



have usually found reflections of faith of the early Christian church, Jesus or the apostles, which have yielded results that are not only meaningful and intelligible in the field of dogmatics, but also in the field of spirituality. Thus, when we have tried to find the possible foundations of Christianity's doctrine of happiness, we have in fact found reflections of joy or of regret, or even of an attitude of supplication and acceptance in the knowledge of grace, but which have had a tremendous impact on the content that has been recorded (for example, the life of the congregations, their donative or even prayerful solidarity).

46. In this particular thematic context, we can understand Dalferth's statement, which is a hallmark of his ethical-dogmatic approach, that the gift (or donation) determines life (and thus prayer), and not vice versa. Thus, the pursuit of happiness or of a life of faith is also determined by God's gift, given in many ways, i.e. it is dogmatically grounded in the system of virtues, the pursuit of happiness, or even the momentary happiness, or even the interpretation of praise in Christian worship.

#### D) Findings in the field of religious education

47. Concepts and experiences marked by the words with the stem  $\chi\alpha\rho$ - are not only common themes and specific components of faith lessons, but also define the attitude of RE-teachers. Not only are these concepts learnt and taught, but their meaning and existence or, in the worst case, their absence, are also experienced by the RE-teacher and the group entrusted to him or her as a hidden curriculum of faith formation. For it is a gifted community, both collectively and individually, which learns to live in the world with the gift.

48. In the religious education, it is particularly important to find connections, to express the message in a way that is accessible to students from non-believing backgrounds. In this way, there are also important possibilities for approaching and interpreting biblical Christian content in the context of the issue of happiness, such as life goals, gifts or the problem of the meaning of life. Theology, as a science of orientation, can also help us to understand and place the search for happiness and the pursuit of happiness on a Christian basis in the consciousness of our giftedness. This can be done in conjunction with specific competence development in religious education. And in the development of these competences, personal and theological reflection also play a key role in understanding, contextualising and working through challenging situations, and thus in the path leading to action and evaluating the action and the learning process it has generated.

49. However, the Christian vision of human also speaks of the dignity of human beyond the scope of human competence, since it is not based on his mere capacity to act, but on his being a creature of God. This argument alone would be sufficient to explain the pedagogical significance of inclusion in the pedagogy of religion. However, the potential richness of the inclusive use of different dogmatic emphases crystallized along the different meanings of the words with the stem  $\chi\alpha\rho$ -, has already been mentioned in the regular theological reflection. This fact also draws our attention to the importance of inclusiveness in religious pedagogy.

50. Anderssohn is proposing an approach to justification from the point of view of "being accepted". Approaching justification in this way is similar to approaching grace as a gift from God, but we might also approach our createdness or Godlikeness in a similar way from the perspective of our gifted life, and understand sanctified community as gifted community. It is right to rejoice in them, to give thanks for them, to look at charisms in this way.

51. The value of the heterogeneity of the group and the possibility of combining personal development through personal approaches and reflection can be seen, together with

Anderssohn, in a holistic faith formation in which holism is not only in the methods of processing but also in the content of the curriculum, how cooperation works against individual atomization, how the whole provides context to the detail and thus awakens further insights.

52. Frederickson proposes that in positive pedagogy "the first step is to become aware of positive experiences (such as feeling, perception, thought, behaviour, impact, joyful moment), the second is to link current events with previous ones, and the third is to develop transformational practices." We follow similar paths in the practice of faith, for example, in prayer, in a sermon, or in a well-constructed discussion of a theme in a faith class. However, it is not simply personal convictions and worldviews that determine how we relate these experiences in faith formation, how we interpret and filter them, or what 'transformational practices' we develop and apply, but, like our self-understanding, we must put each step of this process on the theological scale, since they are transcendently connected.

53. The Hungarian publications on positive pedagogy - as well as the Boldogságóra Program presented here - are usually based on Attila Oláh's model of the psychological immune system. The main components of this model are mostly abilities that are not questionable from a Christian point of view and in many cases also have a religious pedagogical relevance, the content and use of which is, however, significantly influenced by biblically based theological thinking. The set of skills belonging to the psychological immune system support primarily the flow-seeking and pleasure-seeking strategies, the meaning-seeking strategy is outside the psychological immunity factors, as are the thematic treatments of the happiness lessons. At the same time, the thematization of the other two dimensions alongside the meaning-seeking one can be fruitful for faith education and religious pedagogy.

54. The confrontation and dialog with positive pedagogy does not "only" demand the "translation" and specification of theological expressions, but also offers challenges in the area of theological anthropology, social ethics, and also in practical or religious education theology. A módszertani gazdagodáson, vagy a teológiai fogalmak lefordításának vagy pontosításának alkalmán túl a boldogság, boldogulás, jóllét teológiai-antropológiai vagy szociáletikai megközelítését is gazdagíthatja a pozitív pedagógiai törekvésekkel való konfrontáció és párbeszéd. Further interesting results may be obtained later on by including soteriological and pneumatological aspects.

55. Seligman and his colleagues propose an emphasis on all three pillars of positive psychology, i.e., the tasks of identifying positive emotions, promoting character strengths, and seeking out positive institutions. The possibility of identifying and reinforcing positive emotions and character strengths is relatively straightforward to interpret in the context of the RE lessons. However, the concept of a positive institution requires a more thorough definition. For obvious reasons, the positive pedagogical approach usually identifies schools as such institutions. In Hungary, however, it would be particularly appropriate to include the congregational community as such a positive institution, in addition to the school. Whether the congregation, as a positive institution, could function as a resource or could be enriched by the impulses coming from the congregation, is for the time being rather seen as a possibility for congregation building, and less in its religious pedagogical or theological aspects. In the practice of faith formation, however, it is also obvious to see the faith formation community as a resource, a healing and encouraging community of love, so the faith formation group itself can be seen as a positive institution, although groups with a minimum number of members are a considerable obstacle to fulfilling this function. In this case, the interaction between teacher and pupil or between two or three pupils can be seen

more as a supportive relationship, but the milieu of the RE-lessons can still have a very special significance in the lives and interdependence of its participants.

56. In connection with the findings of Gennerich and Naurath, I found that the biblical and ethical application of listening and reflection on emotions can also be linked to the theme of prayer and the development of rituals for the faith formation, the discussion and application of which cannot be without taking into account the age and emotional development of the members of the group, and thus the diversity of the group.

57. Ingo Dalferth observes that Christian prayer does not proceed from a kind of "anthropology of lack" - Anthropologie des Mangels - but above all from an anthropology of the gift - Anthropologie der Gabe. It is also important to make people aware of this fundamental situation in the context of the prayer of the faith, by reflecting on, or even discussing together, what the members of the community understand by the gift of God. For only when we know that the situation of prayer, and within it the situation of prayer, is determined by God's all-precedented devotion to us, will prayer become an occasion not for empty requests but for a hopeful and trustful turning to God.

58. Drawing on the New Testament theology on the question of prayer, we have established that the teaching of prayer cannot be considered as a mere curricular subject, nor simply as a compulsory liturgical element of the RE lessons. Prayer is also a special occasion for reflection on the many gifts, an essential element of communal prayer and the teaching of prayer. It happens on the background of this foundation that praying and the teaching of praying to be carried out in a theologically founded, realistic and methodologically adequate way.

59. All this must be done in community and as a community, that is, in the continuous interaction of the community, so that communication with God can be a real communication, in a varied framework and with topical content, with full sincerity and with respect for all members of the community. And the language of the giftedness provides a useful interface for the possibility of shared theological and prayerful communication among a diverse range of students from a variety of religious socialisation backgrounds.

60. The Pauline (self-)reflections presented in the New Testament study can also serve as an example for those involved in faith formation. In speaking of the faith teacher's attitude, I have linked to László Thoma's reflections on the Christian surplus to the teacher's attitude - "helping more, helping better" -, "encouraging education" informed by encouraging verbs, and the teacher's authenticity, but beyond these I have also highlighted the surplus of theological reflection. In the case of RE teachers, I have also proposed to complement Korthagen's onion model with theological (dictionary and pneumatological) aspects.

61. As an example of self-reflection for RE teachers, I have drawn on the parainesis of Romans on love without hypocrisy (Rom 12:9-21). A recent study by Gerd Theissen and Petra von Gemünden finds that the diversity of the community to whom the letter was addressed, captured in the image of various spiritual gifts, was rooted in the diversity of contemporary Judaism. Each of the paths to salvation represented is purposeful if they carry this one common message: God gives his grace gratis. The passage on love of neighbour does not, therefore, ultimately offer a specific Christian option, but a call to a way of life that can be practised by everyone and thus understood by all. At the same time, the impulse to do so is seen as a gift of the Spirit, resulting from salvation. There is therefore a Christian surplus, but at the same time this surplus does not separate but unites Christians with others, and this fact may be of particular relevance to the situation of educators of faith and morals in secular school settings.

62. Also in the light of the Pauline message, there is clearly a place for emotions and even emotional education in the religious education. Emotions are the same for a Christian as for anyone else. At the same time, the Christ event provides a specific basis for the expression of emotions, and especially for the search for meaning between emotions, or for the rejection of absurdities, or even for gratitude. The hope of Christianity can thus triumph over the deepest absurdities.

63. The Pauline text also encourages a serious consideration of human feelings and the pain and joy of questions of existence, sometimes linked to questions of faith. But the path to the realisation of hope can bear not only expressions of joy but also of pain. Neither the love of God nor the event of Christ, which is in fact a manifestation of the same love, stifles the emotions that are an important gift and possibility in creation. In this respect, too, teacher self-reflection and the conscious participation of the community in the learning process have an important role to play.

#### E) Theological significance of the whole process in terms of content and method

The result of the work, even if only by examining the words with the stem  $\chi\alpha\rho$ -, is that it testifies to the theoretical and practical complexity of the question of happiness, which also requires answers from theologians, and in some respects it has also provided an important theoretical and practical theological clarification. It has also pointed to the possibility of an inclusive theological approach that focuses on the giftedness and is both systematic theological and religious pedagogically oriented. This approach will also guide my further theological-religious pedagogical work. And in the future, this approach, which I have now outlined in its foundations, will be an opportunity for getting more insights and for sharing them.

### IV. Summary ordered by central topics

The search for happiness, as the way of believer's life, happens in freedom and with serenity, and one discovers God's gifts in this process. Freedom and serenity can be present at the same time, and function in a complementary way. The happiness issue can also be conceived in a similar integrated way. Life and happiness should be interpreted and reflected upon without knowing the holistic picture. It follows that one cannot build an unquestionably clear theological – and no such philosophical – happiness-system. But an integrative and coherent view can avoid fatal misinterpretations, and can imply real answers.

#### - *Being gifted, as a theological point of view*

Being gifted, as a theological point of view, has biblical roots. The activity of the creating, electing and sin-forgiving God is both the source and the object of joy. If the life of a believer does not bring this worldly profit, it certainly brings the conscious sharing of the gift of creation. Such a good gift of creation is joy and pleasure. But the pleasure cannot defeat the absurdity of life. However, someone who – or a community that – lives life in the context of faith can keep it sheltered and nourished, that is, happy. One can rightly give thanks for happiness, but one cannot derive a theological regularity in the question of joy and happiness. There are experiences where happiness is explained as a reward of the believer's way of life, and often happiness is understood as God's gift, but it remains God's secret where and how happiness is experienced. This connection, however, binds the praying person not only with

God and with the members of the praying community, but also brings a new kind of interpretation of the law, which itself becomes more than a rule, a support and a guide: God's gift. "The righteous," however, like Job, will believe in God even in radically absurd misery, despite suffering and scandal, whom he comes to know even more deeply in the midst of tribulation. The characteristic of the happiness theme in the Old Testament is its integrative-potential. It is about a certain well-being, which manifests itself in different dimensions. Prayers are grateful reflections of it. Grace is God's all-preceding gift both in times of repentance and danger, but also in joy. Besides the personal traits of the grace given, they are joy and thanksgiving of the community given and the recognition of the charisms are especially evident in Pauline theology.

*As the common denominator of the words with the stem χαρ- and the thoughts derived from them, the thought circle of the giftedness is considered as a possibility of interpreting happiness with Christian content. It was confirmed that these words can reflect theological systems, as they always present themselves in the most diverse thematic circles again though not in a systematically built up form as expressions of the theological reflection of the giftedness.*

We could even use them to explain the dogmatics as a theology of gift. In this special thematic mirror, the inner logic also becomes clear: life is determined by the gift and not vice versa. By using the words with the stem χαρ-, theology can be understood indeed as a science of orientation. It can make use of other – even profane – scientific findings in its inquiries, also in the case of the study of the giving and receiving, asking and thanking God-human relationship. God's manifold given gift can determine the striving for the good, or Christian life, and also the search for happiness. Thus, through a dogmatic grounding of the system of virtues, the question of the pursuit of happiness and also the momentary happiness, or the praise of God in Christian worship can find its proper place.

In the field of religious pedagogy, the aspects of "being accepted" should be considered in particular. They are linked to the doctrine of justification as well as to the theology of creation: grace, creation and the image of God can be considered as God's gift, as well as the gift of blessed community. Rejoicing in these and giving thanks for these gifts and living gratefully with the charisms is fully justified. This view grounds the holistic and positive pedagogical approaches and justifies the emphasis on emotional formation in religious education. The potential for integration inherent in this view contributes emphasised to the theme of inclusion.

### *The theological relevance of inclusion*

Although the term inclusion is crystallized in the field of social and educational sciences, it has often functioned as a useful interpretive frame for our research. The various references to happiness in the Bible complement each other well. The different emphases in the various writings are reflected not only in the different contents and genres of these writings, but also in the diverse philosophical and theological backgrounds in the Jewish and Hellenistic environments. This diversity is also instructive for answering the question of happiness: it's evident, that a single valid answer on it cannot be given. So the Christian theological answers to the question of happiness cannot be formulated with exclusivity, but should always have an open and inclusive character. We have already exposed the integrative view of the OT. It is also worth mentioning that the themes of gift and giftedness in the OT and NT contain a certain continuum despite diverse emphases. From this follows an important interpretative potential in comparison of gift thoughts of the OT and of the NT. Thus, it becomes evident that the joy, thanksgiving, and grace concepts in the NT cannot be interpreted exclusively from a Christological perspective, even though as such they signified the novelty for the first Christians, and they were important elements in the interpretation of

the Christ event. But for us today, useful impulses for enriching and balancing our aspects come from looking at the Old Testament conceptions. These "new charged" Greek concepts gain their newer senses from the contexts of Old Testament language and thought: they reflect the diverse faith experiences and theologies of the people of Israel even as they explain, for example, grace in Christ to the Greeks in the mission churches.

I have based the validity of inclusion in the field of systematic theology on the example of some emblematic Protestant theological writings from the twentieth century as a gain of an investigation into the question of happiness in these writings. In the course of my investigation, I have organized the various aspects of happiness into three theological models of happiness. Thus, I was able to place the thought processes of these theological writings into either the cluster of the so-called "blessing model," or "redemption model," or "eschatological model." In a sense, the three models show parallelisms with the three articles of the Apostles' Creed. They are similarly interrelated but equally each has its own focus and meaning. The words with the stem  $\chi\alpha\rho$ - link marked to the models. The prominent words of the "blessing model" are thanks and joy. This model contributes to the happiness-thoughts in the area of created potencies and their developing, both with their active character and with passive. The characteristic words to the "redemption model" are the (usually paradoxical) joy and in the Pauline writings also grace. Here are the thoughts determined by the Christ event and their dogmatic and ethical consequences. The eschatological model means a theology of hope. The paradoxical joy also gets a special weight here, the life of the church is marked often by charisms. The discussion of these models helps to reveal particular theological accents and to understand different standpoints. At the same time, the overlapping use of these words obviously shows the existing connections behind the different theological models. I see the existence of different theological approaches as a value in theology. Even if the theological challenges are sometimes great in bringing out the diversity of approaches. Besides grasping the multidimensionality of happiness, and the diversity of emotions and experiences linked to it, their theological evaluations should also keep in mind the interconnections and specificities of these three models, as they are valid with their particular emphases complementary to each other.

In the field of religious education, the study contributes to the idea of inclusion: I find the bringing to bear of different ways of thinking through shared experiential learning to be particularly relevant. I see the RE groups as positive institutions and as an inclusive community of members with different faith experiences reflecting together, where even in the Pauline texts. On the gifts of grace there is a discernible possibility of connection and reflection between members who are decisively different believers and even non-believers, rather than of separation.

*The happiness question as an example of working with multidimensional thinking on complex issues in interdisciplinary learning*

The theological train of thought has been enriched several times by intratheological interdisciplinarity. The connection of the concept of happiness with the themes of creation, preservation and blessing, offers points of contact for the extra-theological interdisciplinary discourse, even if these themes are characteristic theological themes, in Christ's work newly interpreted distinctive Christian teachings. The results of the interdisciplinary happiness research should be considered and reflected as impulses in systematic theology as well as in religious pedagogy with regard to the Christian plus and to the special subject-related possibilities. The interdisciplinary dialogue in the context of happiness research does not "only" demand the "translation" and specification of theological expressions, but also offers challenges in the area of theological anthropology, social ethics, but also in practical or religious education theology.

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