

*Healing of Memories in Romania – A Bridge between Churches, Cultures and Religions –  
A Project of Loving one's Neighbour*

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**Abstract:** The Christians' "healing of memories" is a comprehensive project, which requires the cooperation among history, cultural studies, psychology and sociology. In Romania, the Healing of Memories project (hereinafter referred to as HoMR) has aimed at implementing the Charta Oecumenica. The project was preceded by an interconfessional and interdisciplinary study and consultation. The study compared the historic perspectives of the churches, denominations and cultures in Romania.

The outstanding historical perspective of the healing of memories process aimed at gaining access to the various religious and historic perspectives, the participants learning as much as possible about each other, accept the others' approach and share the pain caused by different historic events with each other. The project dealt with the positive relationships among the churches as well as the conflicts and the offences, judgments and misunderstandings that the different nationalities, cultures and religious denominations encountered during the centuries. Overcoming the inner, deep injuries could open new possibilities for coexistence, and Transylvania could become a role model in the future for the entire Europe.

According to Johnston McMaster the concrete steps in the healing of memories are the following: "1. a walk together in history. 2. sharing each other's pain, 3. preparation for the future". In the Healing of memories project, 16 theological research and educational institutions, 7 history departments and 2 sociology departments took part. Furthermore, other six institutions were contacted and over 300 colleagues participated in the workshops and conferences.

What was the general objective of the HoM project? It was recollection and beyond recollection mutually getting acquainted with, understanding, accepting and sympathising with each other. The Healing of Memories project was a true success.

**Keywords:** Healing of Memories, Charta Oecumenica, reconciliation, interconfessional accepting, Transylvania Church History

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In the years after the events of 1989 the churches in Transylvania tried to strengthen their positions shattered during the decades of Communism. The Greek-Catholic church that was dissolved at the beginning of the communist regime also managed to reorganise itself. After the transition, the representatives of the historic churches in Transylvania fought both by political and legal means to recover the nationalised land, real estate and the seized church assets. The churches, prayer houses and parish houses were rehabilitated, and new ones were built. The inner spiritual life of the churches got revived and the ecumenical movement emerged from within and found a new path based on free conviction.

The closing document of the Conference of European Churches (C.E.C.), held in Trondheim, in 2003, sets forth that: "Europe is at a crossroad. The old wounds will heal and the borders among people will disappear... The brotherhood among churches in Jesus Christ can contribute to the healing process. The assembly requested the churches to work for the "healing of the wounds and fight the violence, terror and fear that is increasing in Europe instead of generating them further". Unfortunately, the churches were often the very source of conflicts as they strengthened and approved of the prejudices arising among the individuals of different cultural, linguistic and ethnic communities, thus hindering peaceful coexistence. The Christians' "healing of memories" is a comprehensive project<sup>1</sup>, which requires the cooperation among history, cultural studies, psychology and sociology.

In Romania, the Healing of Memories project (hereinafter referred to as HoMR) has aimed at implementing the *Charta Oecumenica*<sup>2</sup>, signed in Strasbourg on 22 April 2001. The 12 chapters of the Charter set forth various principles for the prerequisites of interconfessional, intercultural and interreligious relations whose points were tried out in practice in an ecumenical project.

On 4 June 2004, the Conference of European Churches and the board of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe decided to undertake the healing process for the Christian churches in Romania that was a joint endeavour with the churches in Romania,

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<sup>1</sup> Healing of Memories as a religious project converged with the objectives set forth in the *Charta Oecumenica*. It first started in South Africa, being initiated by the local Christian churches. Its aim was to deal with the injuries and the painful events that took place among individuals, cultures and religions. The first event of the kind in Europe took place in Northern Ireland in the 90s. Cf. H. Russel Botman, Robin M. Petersen, eds., *To Remember and to Heal, Cape Town*, (Pretoria, Johannesburg: Human & Rousseau, 1996); "Wahrheits- und Versöhnungskommission Südafrika: Das Schweigen ist gebrochen", *Reihe Geschichte-Anhörungen-Perspektiven*, (Frankfurt/M: Brandes & Apffel-Verlag, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), *Charta Oecumenica, Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe*, Strasbourg: 2001, <http://www.ccec-kek.org/content/charta.shtml>.

the first part being supervised by the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe while the second is still being supervised constantly by the Conference of European Churches.

The Healing of Memories project was preceded by an interconfessional and interdisciplinary study and consultation. The study compared the historic perspectives of the churches, denominations and cultures in Romania.<sup>3</sup>

Initially the project management was undertaken by the World Council of Churches and its coordination was entrusted to Dieter Brandes, Lutheran priest and economist, highly experienced in international relations, former Director of the Gustav Adolf Werk in Leipzig.<sup>4</sup> The Healing of Memories project was preceded in Cluj in May 2005 by an interconfessional and interdisciplinary study and consultation. The study compared the historic perspectives of the churches, denominations and cultures in Transylvania.<sup>5</sup>

The outstanding historical perspective of the healing of memories process aimed at gaining access to the various religious and historic perspectives, the participants learning as much as possible about each other, accept the others' approach and share the pain caused by different historic events with each other. The project dealt with the positive relationships among the churches as well as the conflicts and the offences, judgments and misunderstandings that the different nationalities, cultures and religious denominations encountered during the centuries. Overcoming the inner, deep injuries could open new possibilities for coexistence, and Transylvania could become a role model in the future for the entire Europe.

### **The Theoretical Necessity of the Healing of Memories Project**

The starting point of the HoMR project was the paper summarising the decades of experience in reconciliation, published by the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. The paragraph on the "Reconciliation of Memories" in the collection

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<sup>3</sup> Dieter Brandes, "Healing of Memories – eine Aufgabe christlicher Kirchen in Europa", *epd-Dokumentation*, no. 40, (Frankfurt: Gemeinschaftswerk Evangelischer Publizistik, 2005): 16-25.

<sup>4</sup> I would emphasise some of the author's most important studies: "Healing of Memories – eine Aufgabe ökumenischer Ekklesiologie im 21. Jahrhundert", *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Theologia Reformata Transylvanica*, XLVIII, no. 5-6, (2003):57-63; "Auf dem Weg zu einer Koinonia der Kirchen", *Materialdienst (MD) des Konfessionskundlichen Institutes Bensheim*, no. 02, (2005): 32-34.; "Kurze Geschichte der historischen Regionen Rumäniens", *epd-Dokumentation*, no. 40, (Frankfurt/M: Evangelischer Pressedienst, 2005): 4-14; "Healing of Memories – Eine Aufgabe christlicher Kirchen in Europa", *epd-Dokumentation*, no. 40, (Frankfurt/M: Evangelischer Pressedienst, 2005): 16-25; Laszlo Orban, Dieter Brandes, "Die Burzenländer Vorgeschichte zur Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Rumänien", *epd-Dokumentation*, no. 40, (Frankfurt/M: Evangelischer Pressedienst, 2005): 58-63; "Der Weg von Rom über Wittenberg nach Hermannstadt", *Materialdienst (MD) des Konfessionskundlichen Institutes Bensheim*, no. 03, (2006): 52-53.

<sup>5</sup> Brandes, "Healing of Memories".

starts with the following sentence: "Human development, and all acquired knowledge, are to a great extent based on the ability to organize and take advantage of memory. Without memory human beings cannot take advantage of what they have learned or experienced... Memory enables every human being to function effectively".<sup>6</sup> During their history all human communities preserve their identity by memories. Memory connects us with the living as well as with the previous generations since "what has passed it is not dead yet; it hasn't passed yet".<sup>7</sup>

In the church, the sons have taken up their parents' faith, and the communion with the saints of previous generations is the basis for the present-day religious communities.<sup>8</sup> The knowledge from the past and the awareness that we Christians have a future that is beyond the visible world, "the acknowledgement that memory awakens consciousness", that "faithful speaking and deeds are not only an individual duty but also the duty of the (Christian) community, these features and particularities of human coexistence lead to European (identity shaping and) integration."<sup>9</sup> Remembrance, stories and written history define identity and human communities.<sup>10</sup>

The child needs "an environment in which he manages to understand the world with the help of his body and mind".<sup>11</sup> A real educational experience means that the child is supported and guided by the adults in the long run, he is given safety and love, esteem and he is cared for, he is stimulated, encouraged and challenged, and he develops skills by which he can learn how to handle the tough life situations and conflicts later and how to fight for better life quality.<sup>12</sup>

Sometimes the parents would pass on negative experiences regarding other individuals or groups in order to safeguard their children from their own negative experiences. The efforts to protect oneself from other people different from one's culture and

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<sup>6</sup> "Participation in God's Mission of Reconciliation - A Resource for Churches in Situations of Conflict", *Faith and Order Paper*, no. 201, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006), 52.

<sup>7</sup> Christa Wolf, *Kindheitsmuster*, (Luchterhand: Darmstadt-Neuwied, 1977), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lépések a megbékélés felé. A keresztyén hit és az emberi ellenségeskedés című ökumenikus konferencia (Kecskemét, 1995. augusztus 21-27.) előadásai és dokumentumai, Budapest, 1996; Az evangélium: közös szolgálatunk ma. Kiengesztelődés és megbékélés. 5. Magyar ökumenikus találkozó, Gyula, 1995. Augusztus 17-25. Pannonhalma 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Herrenbrück, "Der Beitrag des Protestantismus zur europäischen Integration", *Protestantismus in Europa - Das Zentrum Europa des 29. Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentages 2001*, Christoph Quarch, Hans Michael Heinig (eds.), (Münster-Hamburg-London, 2002), 12-18.

<sup>10</sup> The past - as a source of self-understanding and value - is not a "neutral zone", but an arena, in which the status and identity of groups are contested. "We can allow ourselves a little detour regarding the evolution of orientations, values and prejudices as before aiming at reconciling traditions, we should understand first how and why traditions play such an important role in our today's lives". "Participation in God's Mission of Reconciliation", 53.

<sup>11</sup> Irene Behrmann, *Zurück ins Leben: Erfahrungen mit der ambulanten Regressionstherapie*, (Berlin: Leutner, 2002), 14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

faith however could shape into a strong mental outfit and attitude spanning generations. In this case the memories could hinder the peaceful cohabitation of the following generations with the respective ethnic groups.

Children easily adapt to their environment, which is extremely important for survival and it can mean learning as well as gathering experience. Individuals react to similar situations in a similar manner. Biologically this is important so that the individual would not have to deal with the same painful experience several times. Such "conditioning" accustoms the individual to perceive danger and activate his own natural defence mechanism. These mechanisms however are preserved even when the danger is no longer there, and thus the grievances suffered by the previous generations could permanently hinder the apprehension of the others and reconciliation.

The grievances suffered as well as the painful events have activated beliefs, attitudes, images and negative appreciations in time, which greatly renders the novel relations with other ethnic groups more difficult.<sup>13</sup> The main purpose of the healing of memories project has been to revise, understand and deal with the fears and separation among Christians that have occurred during history.

The children and the youth build their judgment and conviction models not only within the family but also "as a result of the direct or indirect feedback they get from the society they live in".<sup>14</sup> A prerequisite of the peaceful cohabitation and reconciliation among churches and religious communities is to cease transferring the negative experiences and confinement existing within a people/nation (by the pastoral treatment of the historic grievances), and bringing positive experiences to the foreground. "This is why theologians speak about koinonia: we have not been created to live isolated, telling negative stories about each other but rather to live together as depicted in the simple example of the last supper but also reflected in the image of God's world whose gates are open for every people".<sup>15</sup>

Starting off from the above ideas, the project implementation became necessary in Romania. From 2005, the first partners in the project were the Reformed District of Transylvania, the Roman-Catholic Bishopric of Bucharest and Alba Iulia as well as the Greek-Catholic Bishopric of Blaj. Between 2005-2007, the leaders of fourteen denominations agreed to the participation in the project: the Orthodox church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox church, the Russian old rite Orthodox church (the Lipovans), the Roman-

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Joachim Bauer, *Das Gedächtnis des Körpers*, (Eichborn, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Behrmann, *Zurück ins Leben*, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Santer, "The Reconciliation of Memories", *Reconciling Memories*, Alan D. Falconer, Joseph Liechty, eds., (Dublin, 1998), 30-36.

Catholic church, the Greek-Catholic church and the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church, the Reformed church, the Lutheran church of Augustan confession (Transylvanian Saxons), the Hungarian Evangelical-Lutheran church and the Slovak Lutheran church, the Baptist community and the Unitarian church.

The Federation of Jewish Communities also took part in the process by the communities existing in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Iasi, Baia Mare, Constanta, Oradea, Radauti, Suceava and Timisoara. In the region of Dobrgea characterised by interconfessional and intercultural relations, the Muftiate of Romanian Muslims took part in the process. After 2005, the representatives of national minorities living in different regions also joined the project: the Roma, Hutsuls, Poles, Slovaks, Rusyns, Germans, Tartars, Albanians, Turks, Bulgarians and Greeks.

### **The Theoretical and Practical Foundation of the Project**

According to Johnston McMaster the concrete steps in the healing of memories are the following: "1. a walk together in history. 2. sharing each other's pain, 3. preparation for the future".<sup>16</sup> Based on these stages, it is visible that the healing of memories is a process of generations that is made up of the following steps. The working method is based on this threefold structure that build one upon the other in concentric circles. The method in HoM also used in the project carried out in Transylvania is structured on this threefold division.

Stage 1: a walk together in history

Stage 2: sharing each other's pain

Stage 3: preparation for the common future

The healing of memories project based on the working method drafted by Mc Master considered mapping the interconfessional relations in Transylvania, the analysis of cause and effect both in peaceful and in conflict situations.

Johnston McMaster presented his method in the CEC Healing of Memories meeting held in Trondheim in May 2002, emphasising mostly the "a walk together in history" process. His aim was to present the example of the reconciliation process among the Norwegian Lutheran church, the Sami and the Roma oppressed and harassed during the country's history. The following three stages were suggested for this part in Trondheim:

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<sup>16</sup> Santer, "The Reconciliation of Memories", 35.

## The Implementation Stages of the HoMR

### I. Stage 1: Explaining each other's history

It was a tense and painful stage for the participants as everyone had to accept the other's different approach on history but they had to listen to the other party's approach and historic experience without interrupting. "The images of their own history are so well anchored even in the historians' conscience that the first question is actually if they can stand the existence and the formulation of antagonistic perspectives".<sup>17</sup>

The purpose of the HoM is to get acquainted with each other's historic perspectives. The purpose is not to rewrite history but to accept otherness, not to debate but rather to carry out a dialogue, and thus granting mutual respect to the other's history.<sup>18</sup>

It is important because the antonymic history explains that the historiography of different nations and churches had and still has different positions in the way the past events are judged and that historiography had its own significant share in shaping and fostering nationalistic trends and in the antagonistic, competition-like attitude that the churches had vis-à-vis each other.

The participants to the project mostly acknowledged that the history of Transylvania is characterised by ethnic and cultural diversity, being both a buffer country and a bridge among the historic cultural regions of Europe. During the centuries many religious, denominational and ethnic groups settled in this area during immigration waves, ethnic and religious settlements or wars. The ethnic and denominational groups in the project were a community that was unique in Europe featuring a specific history and relationship network. The starting point sprang from the premise that the cultures, nationalities and denominations living in Transylvania could become the symbol of tolerance and mutual acceptance.<sup>19</sup>

Starting 2004, there were nine conferences organised in eight historic regions around Romania: the "Healing of Memories in Romania International Conference" was organised in Cluj-Napoca in May 2005, in Iasi and Suceava in May 2006, in Timisoara and Oradea in June

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Dieter Brandes, "Healing of Memories in Romania - an interconfessional and interdisciplinary process of Reconciliation", *Healing of Memories in Europe*, Dieter Brandes, ed., (Cluj-Napoca-Leipzig, 2007), 58-77.

<sup>18</sup> Fazakas Sándor, *Emlékezés és megbékélés. A múlttal való szembesülés egyházi és teológiai kritériumai*, (Budapest, 2006), 16; Cf. Christoph Klein, *Bosszú helyett megbékélés. A megbékélés kultúrájának teológiai alapvetése*, (Budapest, 2003); Keresztynség és nemzeti egység a Kárpát-medencében. A balatonszárszói népfőiskolai konferencián elhangzott előadások 2002. július 22-28, Budapest, 2002; *A bűn megvallása és a felelősség felismerése*, (Kecskemét, 1995); Gesztelyi Tamás, *Egyházak és vallások a mai Magyarországon*, (Budapest, 1991).

<sup>19</sup> A project with a similar objective was the Pro Oriente: made up of an Orthodox and Greek-Catholic working group that re-analysed the documents dating back to the 1700s around the time when the Transylvanian Greek-Catholic Church was established, trying to find a common denominator for their perspectives of history.

2006, in Bucharest and Constanta in November 2006, in Baia Mare in March 2007 and in Bucharest in June 2007.

In the Healing of memories project, 16 theological research and educational institutions, 7 history departments and 2 sociology departments took part. Furthermore other six institutions were contacted and over 300 colleagues participated in the workshops and conferences.

## II. Stage 2: Sharing each other's pain on the path to reconciliation

The first most important aspect is that the second part of the HoM project was dedicated to the survivors. Ruth Elias, who survived the concentration camp in Theresienstadt (Czech Republic) gave evidence about the horrors she had experienced in the following manner: "It haunted me and left deep marks inside me. I cannot get rid of it, it keeps coming back".<sup>20</sup> The memory of humiliations haunts the "survivors" of the persecutions of the fascist and communist regimes in the same way. But it also refers to the groups of people and cultures that caused painful memories to each other or fought against each other for centuries. We should not forget that the wrongs suffered by the ancestors is present bridging generations and gets "stronger" due to the current real or imagined experiences and events in relation to the individuals belonging to another linguistic group or culture.

Due to the centuries of ethnic and cultural cohabitation, South-Eastern Europe could become the foundation of a conciliated Europe; however the grievances of the past still influence today our behaviour towards others. The positive and negative experiences from "our ancestors' times", from the time of the Hungarian Kingdom, the time of the counterreformation, the time of the Treaty of Trianon and the Fascist regime, or even the Communist times all lie at the basis of the present-day generation's judgment and approach (mostly unconsciously) vis-à-vis the individuals of other ethnic, linguistic groups or other denominations.

Thus, "a thick layer of memories and opinions< take shape throughout generations, and pastoral care as well as an affectionate dialogue is required for dealing with them. Only this way can we create the conditions for >sharing others' pain< in a Christian community".<sup>21</sup>

Thanks to the healing of memories project we witness "a deep historic pastoral overture"<sup>22</sup> among Christians and different denominations that the nation, culture, language

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<sup>20</sup> Ruth Elias, *Die Hoffnung erhielt mich am Leben*, (München, 1988), 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>22</sup> *Kirchen im Dialog, Offene Projekte - Heilen des Erinnerns - Healing of Memories.*

and religion impressed upon in a different manner. The emerging "social ecumenical empathy"<sup>23</sup> open the possibilities for a conciliated Christian fellowship ("twofold conciliated koinonia") both vertically (throughout generations) and horizontally (among the existing denominations and cultures). However, the prerequisite is to revise our own culturally influenced perspectives over history, "so that we can acknowledge our wounds and put right the self-deceit in these memories."<sup>24</sup>

The interdisciplinary working groups formed in each historic region summarised the differences as well as the congruencies among the historic perspectives of the various denominations, and ascertained the weight and importance of the historic data. They also drafted the structural table of the time periods relevant for the given region. The evaluation board made up of the representatives of the regional working groups discussed and assessed the results obtained so far. The outputs of the regional seminars were also published in Romanian, Hungarian and German.

We successfully managed to apply the above-mentioned Mc Master working method within the regional working groups. It got concretised in the following manner:

The following publications appeared on the churches in Transylvania:

- *Healing of Memories in Europe – A Study of Reconciliation between Churches, Cultures and Religion*, Dieter Brandes (ed.), (Cluj Napoca – Leipzig, 2007). 225 p.
- *Healing of Memories – Punte între biserici, culturi și religii. Un proiect de reîmpăcare a bisericilor*, (Cluj-Napoca: Accent, 2007). 409 p.
- *Die Geschichte der christlichen Kirchen aufarbeiten. Healing of Memories zwischen Kirchen, Kulturen und Religionen. Ein Versöhnungsprojekt der Kirchen in Rumänien*, (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt GmbH, 2011). 478 p.
- *Kurze Geschichte der Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften in Siebenbürgen*, (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt GmbH, 2010). 315 p.
- *Scurtă istorie a bisericilor și comunităților religioase din Transilvania*, (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2008). 272 p.
- *Az erdélyi egyházak és vallási közösségek rövid története*, (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2008). 275 p.
- *Evoluția instituțiilor episcopale în bisericile din Transilvania. Partea I. De la începuturi până la 1740*, (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010). 219 p.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Brandes, "Healing of Memories in Romania".

<sup>24</sup> "Rolul Cartei Ecumenice în promovarea ecumenismului european și local: o perspectivă catolică", *Caietele Institutului Catolic*, no. 6.2 (2005-2006): 203-218.

- *A püspöki intézmények kialakulása és fejlődése Erdélyben 1740-ig, I*, (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010). 219. p.

The volumes were discussed in public. An internal working group carried out a so-called conflict analysis about the issues discussed earlier. The specialist participating in the project bound themselves during the evaluation process to use the conference volumes in interconfessional seminars for a better understanding of each other's approach.

### III. Stage 3: The common future

The third point of the Ecumenical Charter warns us that „It is important to acknowledge the spiritual gifts hidden in the different Christian traditions, to learn and also to enrich each other through them”.<sup>25</sup> Johnston McMaster pointed out that this process gives us the opportunity to implement the third stage of the HoM project but which has to be elaborated in another context. The implementation of this stage was undertaken by the churches and supporters taking part in the HoM project (in cooperation with the CEC, CPCE and CCEE), which did not get a finite form until 2014. The implementation was only partially successful in Transylvania as it did not manage to solve the actual local conflicts.

The title of the course: Course on pastoral care, communication, mediation and team work (within „Healing of Memories between Christian Churches in Transylvania”). The course tried to find a way to the different churches, nationalities and cultures to get acquainted with each other to facilitate peaceful cohabitation. Beside the preservation of the various traditions, stress was laid upon acknowledging the common traits in language, traditions, religion and social duties.

The purpose of the course was also to find and try out models regarding the way in which one can present the common traits in the different churches and cultures. The concerned parties in the process were able to experience the clear advantages of teamwork, and the persons coming from different cultural and religious backgrounds learnt how to apply the knowledge from the moderation and team leader course for the purpose of interconfessional and intercultural communication.

The course was designed on two levels: the first level focused on communicational techniques, with the following areas: life stories and identity, the basics of communication in the church and society, intercultural and interconfessional identity and its acknowledgement,

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<sup>25</sup> Gerhard Albert, „Der Beitrag der Kirchen – Hindernis oder Hilfe für die europäische Verständigung? Die konfessionelle Situation“, *Versöhnung in Europa – Aufgabe der Kirchen in Ukraine, Belarus Polen und Deutschland*, hrsg. vom Kontaktausschuss des Polnischen Ökumenischen Rates und die Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, (Hannover, 1998), 41.

leadership in interconfessional and intercultural contexts. On the second level, the purpose was to acquire intercultural moderation (mediation) techniques, featuring the following areas: identity and alienation in relationships, developing mediation competences and techniques, problem-solving moderation, moderation and communication techniques, life stories and relationships in local and foreign cultures.

The syllabus of the courses was designed by well-known pastoral psychologists such as: Helmut Weiss, Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling SIPCC, Dr. Kocsev Miklós, Director of the Gyökössi Institute in Kecskemét and Dr. Hézser Gábor, Professor at the Evangelical Theology of Bielefeld-Béthel.

The purpose of the courses could be put in the following manner:

- Evaluation of the outcomes of historic conflict analysis – based on HoM publications
- Academic pastoral care courses
- Organising interconfessional seminar locally in regionally.

Upon organising the courses, the selection of pastoral counsellors, mentors and experienced pastoral psychologists required great care.<sup>26</sup> It was implemented with the help of specialists dedicated to the objectives of the project and paid attention to dialogue efficiency.

The organisation of the courses was supported by the following organisations: the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), the Gustav-Adolf-Werk (GAWERK), the Kirchen helfen Kirchen, Renovabis, the Gustav-Adolf-Werk in Romania (GAWRO), the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, the Evangelical Church of Württemberg, the Churches of Rhineland, Baden and Hessen-Nassau.

### **On the Organisation of the Courses**

a. As a first step, a pilot course was organised at the Faculty of Reformed Theology of Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca and the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Alba Iulia. The courses were held according to the 1<sup>st</sup> curriculum in both venues.

In Cluj-Napoca, there were 10 Hungarian native participants out of whom 4 Reformed, 4 Unitarian, 1 Baptist and 1 Roman-Catholic. The course in Alba Iulia was translated into

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<sup>26</sup> Solid relationships came into being with the following institutions: Konfessionskundliches Institut Bensheim, Irish School of Ecumenics Dublin/Belfast, Institute for Ecumenical Studies Fribourg CH, Kontaktausschuss des Polnischen ÖRK, Der Evang. Kirche in Deutschland EKD, Kontaktausschuss zum Interkonfessionellen, Versöhnungs-Dialog Deutschland-Serbien.

Romanian for the 16 participants out of whom 15 were Orthodox and 1 Greek-Catholic. The courses were held in parallel between 2 November 2009 and 30 April 2010.

The participants to the course in Cluj-Napoca were all ministers except for the Roman-Catholic participant while in Alba Iulia, only the Greek-Catholic participant was a priest while 75% of the Orthodox participants were religion teachers and 25% were teachers in public education but they all held some positions within the church.

The more exciting part of the pilot project was the second stage of the course, organised according to the 2<sup>nd</sup> curriculum. The members of the former two teams regrouped into one group with 16 participants: 7 Orthodox, 1 Greek-Catholic, 4 Reformed, 3 Unitarian, and 1 Roman-Catholic. The very first conflict was to choose the language into which the foreign speakers were going to be interpreted into. Finally, the Hungarian participants suggested to have interpretation in Hungarian too only if they could not understand and their ideas conveyed in Hungarian to be translated into Romanian.

b. Further two courses were organised. One between 15 March 2010 and 11 September 2010 at the Orthodox Theology in Sibiu, with 16 participants: 10 Orthodox, 3 Reformed, and 3 Greek-Catholic. It was supported by the Church of Norway and the Evangelisch/Lutherische Landeskirche Hannover. The next course was organised at the Greek-Catholic Theology in Blaj between 26 April 2010 and 30 September 2010 where from the 16 participants 15 were Greek-Catholic and one Reformed. It was sponsored by Renovabis, partner being the Roman-Catholic Bishopric of Rottenburg-Stuttgart.

The participants in the previous two preparatory courses regrouped into a mixed group made up of 14 participants out of which 9 Greek-Catholic, 3 Orthodox and 2 Reformed who were awarded the interconfessional mediator degree based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> curriculum.

The course was held at the Greek-Catholic Theology in Blaj between 1 March and 29 September 2011.

Thus, in the HoM project, 30 people were awarded the interconfessional mediator degree.

c. Based to the declaration of Oradea dated 9 April 2009, as a joint programme of the 4 churches, they conceived the course on the integration of Roma women, organised between 6 September 2010 and 17 June 2010 at the Partium Christian University. The sponsors were: the Presbyterian Church of USA, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Evangelical-Lutheran Church of America, Lutherische Kirche Finnland. The heads of the 3 churches resolved upon it at the meeting organised by the HoM on 25 February 2010, being aware that the Christian communities around Europe know about the Roma holocaust and

are aware of the persecutions, too. That is why they commit to „turn against any form of nationalism that causes the repression of other people and ethnic minorities, and they are constantly in search for peaceful solutions”.<sup>27</sup> In Transylvania, the history of all the churches intertwine with the past as well as current grievances and prejudices against the Roma, and that is the reason why this joint decision was taken to attract the Roma representatives into the healing of memories process.

The course was based on the 1<sup>st</sup> curriculum. The course on the integration of Roma women had 14 participants: 7 Roma and 7 non-Roma women who were active in the different churches but mostly in the Reformed and the Roman-Catholic church and were all already acquainted with the Roma projects.

In conclusion, we can state about the HoM projects that one can surmount the trauma of personal life experiences if the members of the denominations take active part in the historic and pastoral processes aimed at healing the historic and individual wounds. In the case of individuals as well as groups, the wounds pile up throughout generations by the evocation of negative experiences and fears. One can get rid of these wounds arising from these wrongs only if one takes account, deals with and repels them effectively.

On the way to the reconciliation among European churches in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the main duty of the Christian churches, ministers, leaders, workers and congregation members is to facilitate the reshaped brotherly behavioural norms among nations, cultures and denominations, and feature the brotherhood inspired by the Holy Spirit in a long-lasting manner.

The HoM process proves that there is openness towards getting to know and accepting each other as well as for the common future, and its further development rests with those over 300 participants who got involved in this work one way or another.

What was the general objective of the HoM project? It was recollection and beyond recollection mutually getting acquainted with, understanding, accepting and sympathising with each other. The Healing of Memories project was a true success. What better proof for that than the fact that it spread all over Romania by 2007.

The participants' experience was formulated pertinently by Sándor Fazakas:

„Remembering and facing the past be restricted to rituals and political formalities that do not bound us for anything ... The individuals and society need to have the freedom to face the past and get relieved by it”<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> *Charta Oecumenica*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Sándor, *Emlékezés és megbékélés*, 16.