1984

To Rt. Reverend Dr. Gyula Nagy, Lutheran Bishop

Zoltan Doka

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Dear Bishop Nagy:

I am very sorry that I have to write this letter. It is the role that you played in the campaign against me that forces me to do so. I am not writing for my sake, but for the cause that I have initiated, and which I am still pursuing and regard to be of great importance to our Church. It is not my intention to offend you. He who binds us together is greater than our controversies. But it is he who obliges us all to tell the truth!

1. I have learned that during last year's fall-session of the Seniors, among other accusations I was called "one who caused the downfall of a professor." It is a pity that this old matter has come up again now, since we have already settled it in a fraternal way. It is regrettable that you did not correct this accusation. Therefore let me remind you of two facts: a./ At the time I did not act according to my own resolution, but the plenum of the theological students entrusted me, in the presence of the Dean, to represent their standpoint favoring Karoly Pröhle regarding the filling of the vacant chair of Systematic Theology. b./ At the time Karoly Pröhle had already started lecturing with a provisional approval, which shows how universal was the opinion among the clergyman and the Church leaders that at the outcome of the election he would fill the chair. Bishop Zoltan Turoczy dropped him in favor of your election.

2. Last fall you gave an interview in Austria to the local Evangelical Press Service. In this you made a statement concerning the "Doka-affair." I don't wish to comment on such incorrect but typical sentences as: "One assult came after another against the theology of our Church...". Or: "I am talking on behalf of our congregations." Or: "Bishop Kaldy does not participate in it." i.e. in the disciplinary procedures directed towards me./ To these I only wish to add: The Theology of Diakonia is, at the most, the subjective
theology of the Church leaders, which they wish to enforce on our Church. You could not have spoken on behalf of our congregations, since you did not consult them; moreover you did not even inform them in the press afterward, to let them know what you said in their name. You know as well as I that it was Bishop Kaldy who launched the disciplinary procedures in the absence of the presidium of the Judicial Board, with the endorsement of Senior Toth-Szollos.

However, I do have to comment more extensively on what you said about Kevehazi's article, entitled "Theologized Betrayal." [You said:] "The article in the Church paper was written by his immediate superior, the Senior, in the name of the ministers of the Seniorate. This was their own personal opinion, and not that of the Church in general." From this, only the half of the last sentence is true. The rest is not! The facts are the following: Senior Kevehazi wrote only the basic text of the "article" which he had not intended to be an article, only a letter. This did not contain the title and the rough expressions that rank me as a traitor. It is a fact, that the majority of the ministers did not know previously of the article which was written in their name. Senior Kevehazi declared to me that he has never, and he does not consider me a traitor and he has never called me such. Nevertheless, in two weeks another article appeared in Evangelikus Elet ['Evangelical Life'], in which Bishop Kaldy calls me a "shameless traitor." In this way, there is no doubt who is the real writer of Kevehazi's article. You, on the other hand, in front of our brothers living abroad, separated from the article the opinion of the Church -- including the Church leadership -- and you put it on the shoulders of those ministers who did not even know about it, and on Laszlo Kevehazi who, without a word, endured the drastic changes made in his writing and the shame and the indignation that came with it. In the Bible something similar happened to Uriah (2 Samuel 11:15). But I ask you: if the "article of Kevehazi" did not mirror the opinion of the Church, and that of the leaders of the Church, then how could an article with such a rude tone appear in a paper that is edited by the Church leaders; and why -- on the other hand -- did Bishop Kaldy and editor György Mezosi refuse to publish my article entitled "Correction," in which I correct the impossible accusations of the "article of Kevehazi?" All this not only shows that the freedom of the press does not exist in our Church and that the Church leaders, led by Bishop Kaldy, treat people's honor in any way they like; but also that you, even at the price of
the deliberate falsification of the truth, still volunteered for the cover-up of the limitless tyranny in front of our brothers abroad.

3. At Hildesheim, in the Federal Republic of Germany, you also made a statement about the "Doka affair" at the conference of the Bishops that took place in the fall. Here especially, you followed the well-known Kaldy tactics: you wanted to belittle my person so that in this way you could play down the whole affair and save that which cannot be saved. I have to make a few remarks to correct your statements.

a./ You said about me that, "from the Church I have received a lot of exceptional favors for a long time" and you illustrated this by how "I could have received degrees in the West." It is a pity that you did not mention any other "favors," so that I could have learned of them too. I still hold the view that I am not an important figure in the Church. Therefore I will not list for you the "favors" that I have suffered during my career in the Church, especially from the Bishops, just because I dared to criticize. But I do have to shed some light on the issue mentioned by you. It is possible that you are not familiar with the details. In 1978 -- through private contacts and not with the help of the Church leaders! -- I received an invitation for two semesters from the Faculty of Theology in Zurich, with the intention that there, under the direction of Professor Schweizer I should complete a doctoral thesis. We chose the theme: "Mark's Concept of the Church." When I showed the invitation to Bishop Kaldy and asked his approval, with a sharp voice he shouted: "It is out of the question" and he added to it: "Maybe next year." After a year I received another invitation from Zurich. This time he did approve my travel abroad, but under the condition that I could not receive a doctoral degree, unless I prepared a new commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. These are the kind of "favors" that I have received! I do not doubt the intentions behind such actions.

b./ You complained in front of the German Bishops that I aired my criticism just before the beginning of the World Assembly [of the LWF, ed.] in the context of the election of its president, even though I had the time to do so earlier on. You are right! I had exactly 25 years! But you, who went from being the theological adviser of Bishop Ordass to being an unconditional supporter of Bishop Kaldy -- you can also thank him for your title as a bishop -- you have to remember that although right from the beginning the atmosphere
of fear thickened around Bishop Kaldy, there were nevertheless some attempts at criticism. These, however, were roughly repulsed by him before they could lead to any results, that is, to a free, equal and fearless theological dialogue. This is why I had to wait for an occasion where the whole Lutheran world could hear the voice of criticism. The World Assembly promised to be such an occasion, and according to my opinion its most important task is not the nomination, not even the election of its president, but a Gospel-oriented critical outlook on reality. This is why the open letter was indeed appropriate to the World Assembly, even though certain Church leaders would rather have swept it under the table.

Otherwise, I can declare with a clear conscience that I have often rethought Kaldy's "new road," but I always came to the same conclusion: that it is in fact theology's always-tempting old road on which, at other times and in other contexts, the so-called "German Christians" have travelled. Their criteria are always the same too: 1. They place the Gospel under historical and political situations and they use it as a spring board for a certain concept of politics and Church politics. 2. In accordance with this, theology receives a kind of adjectival sense, it loses its freedom and it deteriorates into an ideology which justifies the political manipulation of the Gospel. 3. The secret of the Church: which is communion with Christ, becomes insufficient and unimportant and the apparent basis and standard of this communion becomes a political concept. The representatives of the "new way" regard themselves as prophets, and under the umbrella of the existing regime they live well and in security while in the Church they rule with tyranny. This arbitrary behavior which crushes all critics is especially controversial when at the same time the beautiful word of the New Testament, "Service," is written on the flag. It is true that this word is written in Greek and not many of us understand this language. How many times did you hear with the rest of us Bishop Kaldy's threatening tirades, when he enforced the theology of the diakonia telling us: "No one remain a virgin." What a appropriate metaphor!

c./ You also accused me, saying that I was under "unfavorable Western influence" when I wrote the open letter. You should verify this, but you cannot, because it is not true. Therefore it is merely a groundless slander. But this is also a sign of how natural theology holds you under its power: as if there were an Eastern or a Western theology. There was a time when you
were well aware that the theology in the East and West alike is pledged to serve the truth of God only, and nobody and nothing else.

d./ Of the correction of my commentary you said: "It cannot be denied that Bishop Kaldy has a certain responsibility towards the publications that appear in the Lutheran Church and in the commentary of Rev. Doka there were certain statements which were not acceptable according to the opinion of Bishop Kaldy." This setting will completely misguide those who are not familiar with the situation of the press in our Church. In the press, Bishop Kaldy does not only hold a "certain responsibility;" he has acquired limitless tyranny. He rewrote my book (he left out, added, rewrote, removed) in a way which indicated that he was not familiar with the literature of Marcan research. After the changes he made, the text became at some points primitive, at others incomprehensible. His main intention was to insert into it his own theology of diakonia and in this way make it appear to be endorsed by me. In addition, I only discovered the changes he made in the published text. He did not discuss those changes with me previously. On the other hand he roughly rejected my protest. This is the fact! It is not a demonstration of "a certain responsibility," but of an aggressive tyranny which does not regard others as human, let alone as brothers. What Bishop Kaldy said at the conference of the Seniors in autumn is simply not true, that he himself consulted Prof. Eduard Schweizer and, on the basis of this, he corrected the "outdated historico-critical view" of the book. Prof. Schweizer, from whom I have learned a lot and to whom I owe gratitude, did read the German translation of my book's introduction -- without the Kaldy corrections! -- and in a letter he expressed his joy and approval. It is possible that you were not familiar with the details of this affair. But then you could have asked me, before you made a statement of this matter in front of such a significant forum.

e./ At least, you promised the German Bishops that you will all strive for "objective results" in this matter. Already a half a year has gone by and there are no signs of this effort so far. However, there are more signs of Bishop Kaldy's vengeful intentions and of an attempt by which serious mistakes committed by the Church leadership should be washed clean, and also appear to be so in front of the outside world, even at the cost of altering reality; and also, you set me up as a silly trouble-maker, who should not be taken seriously. Your trips abroad this autumn served these purposes too. But at
home you ordered silence from the ministers. The promised brotherly discussions failed to come about. In the press the personal cult is continuing. Bishop Kaldy continuously praises himself and he demands praise from others for himself. Moreover, you are already in his footsteps, though in a more modest way. Last summer Bishop Lajos Ordass was rediscovered - together with a few of us -- and again he ended up in the "dustbin of history." The aggressive enforcement of the theology of diakonia has been diminished, but in the official statements both the social ethical manipulation of the Gospel and the reliance on natural theology is continuing. Since autumn, in almost all editions of Evangelikus Elet and Lelkipasztor ["The Minister"] one can find demonstrative examples of this. But it is not a surprise! For the Book of Forms not only legalizes this false theological premise, but, clearly, it makes it compulsory. There are no areas in the life of our Church that would not need truthful, that is, Gospel-oriented theological analysis. But you all act as if there were no problems anywhere at all. For me there is not doubt that this "blindfolded" Church leadership will not be able to avoid its punishment and judgment, because no wound was ever healed by keeping silent.

I really regret that you not only tolerate so much falseness, but take an active part in it yourself. I would have expected you, as a scholar, to check the information about me, and ask me as well, before you made your statements about me here and abroad. But I do not resent you; moreover, I am ready as ever, for an equal and fraternal dialogue with you. God bless you! May he give you enlightenment and the joy of suffering for the truth.

Greetings with brotherly love,
/Zoltan Doka/

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