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THE HUNGARIAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS' STATEMENTS ON THE MIGRATION FROM 2016 AND 2017

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Abstract

This paper is about the statements of Hungarian religious leaders concerning the issue of migration. The article is a continuation of a previous study in which we summarized articles and opinions published in the period from 2015 to the beginning of 2016. The statements that have been made since then are contained in this article. Different opinions can be found from the leaders of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist churches, Jewish and Islamic leaders, and the Congregation of Faith and the Evangelical Brotherhood of Hungary. In addition to migration issues, cultural, ethnic, religious and moral differences and questions arise throughout the study.

1. Introduction

This paper is not just a continuation but a complement to the article published in 2016 by Krisztina Barcsa and András Máté-Tóth, titled *The Hungarian Religious Leaders' Statements from the Beginning of the Migration*.¹ That article specifically focused on the early statements about the first significant wave of migrants beginning in 2015. There is now

¹ Krisztina Barcsa and András Máté-Tóth (2016) "The Hungarian Religious Leaders' Statements from the Beginning of the Migration," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 36: Iss. 3, Article 2. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol36/iss3/2>.

a need to reconsider (or re-introduce) the situation from that time because in the last two years, not only have new events taken place, but views on this issue have changed.

The first wave of the migration issue in Hungary made both the political and religious leaders feel compelled and obliged to give guidelines about the approach to this issue. As the events calmed down, so did the opinions, and they became more complex and more mature. Extremist directions have been dissolved, shaded, or passed over in silence in many cases; and in some cases, extremist opinions have only been formulated during the period we investigated. We also encountered many examples when a specific migration event triggered public debates. However, the detailed explanation of these events, unfortunately, do not fit into the framework of this essay.

Therefore, in this study, we are making another attempt to reveal and demonstrate the statements of the representatives of different religions in the Hungarian online media. In order to strive for objectivity, we tried to be informed by many sources on the given topic. We strove to review a wide range of different approaches and attitudes about an article or event. In the introduction, we wish to emphasize that we do not want to make any judgement on the disclosed statements, similar to the previous paper. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive picture of the opinions and statements made over the last two years. We hope our article can provide a basis for future analysis or comparisons, but we do not intend to analyze or to compare in this paper.

2. Methods

In this research, we primarily apply the basic methodology of information research and exploration required and prescribed by Library Science. As we strive to present the relevant knowledge as closely as possible on a topic, we can say that in the content exploration we performed a primarily analytical-synthetic exploration.

The sample of our research includes articles from 2016 and 2017. We were trying to prepare detailed research, and our goal was to explore all the opinions on the topic. However, we may not have found all the statements, so the research cannot be considered complete, despite our endeavor to do so.

The search process was carried out along two dimensions. First, based on the previous study, we used web search engines for online news sites, which, according to our experience, have included many articles about the topic. We included the following media: Index, HVG, *Magyar Nemzet* Online, *Népszabadság* Online, Mandiner, 444, *Szemlélek* Blog, 24.hu, *Népszava*, *Magyar Idők*, *Magyar Kurír*, and more. Thereafter, we tried to find articles which could be relevant to the topic using the Google search tool. However, they may have appeared on smaller, lesser known news sites.

After the search phase, the results were collected into a database, and the collected results were labelled with different tags and distributed into categories. Categorization was performed on several levels. The first label stated whether the article was primarily religious or politically relevant. Afterwards, religious articles were labeled by congregations. In the next column, we marked who was associated with the given statement or who was the subject of the news. The last three columns included the following: (1) a brief summary, (2) the date of publication of the article, and (3) an estimation of the relevance of the article in our predetermined goals, whether it is in the important, insecure, or unimportant category. Originally we collected 112 articles, of which 74 articles were considered relevant after duplicate filtering and selection. Starting with these 74 articles, we continued with the next working phase.

In the next phase, we filtered out the articles which were about people who are currently at the lower levels of the clerical hierarchy. Thus, we focused primarily on the statements by religious leaders who integrate several churches or communities and/or larger

territorial units, and, in the case of free churches, the leaders and/or founders of the church itself. After that, people were sorted into a list, and starting from the articles found in the first phase, we searched further for relevant articles and statements with snowball sampling.

It is important to point out that the online articles we examined were primarily interviews and statements, not just news. With all the articles we tried to find sources, videos, conversations, interviews, and specific circulars which were unmodified sources for that statement and opinion.

3. The Hungarian Environment

Before we expound the detailed statements of religious leaders, we present the chronological order of the main politically relevant measures in connection with migration events. This is necessary because in many cases there is a reference to an event in the statements.

1. In the first period, the Hungarian government launched an anti-migrant billboard campaign.
2. In May 2015, a national consultation on immigration and terrorism was held.
3. A border fence was then started to be built on the southern border of Hungary.
4. In October 2016, a referendum took place on the adoption of the compulsory quota system.
5. In September 2017, another national consultation took place for the Soros Plan.
6. In the fall of 2017, a separate government department was established in the Ministry of Human Resources, that is, a Deputy State Secretariat to protect Christians against persecution.

4. Christianity

4.1. Roman Catholic Church

Representing the views of the Roman Catholic Church, the statements of the following persons will be presented: Gyula Márfi, Miklós Beer, János Székely, László Kiss-Rigó, and Péter Erdő.

4.1.1. Gyula Márfi

In July 2016, an interview was published with Archbishop Márfi in *Magyar Hírlap*.² In this he declared that, in his opinion, Christianity is on the wrong path and should return to its roots. The most decisive values—music, architecture, and literature—were born from the Christian values. Throwing away these values is creating an ideological and demographic vacuum, and migrants come because of this vacuum. He claims that Muslim morals are different from the Christian, and opposites are observed in the mentality of the two religions. He emphasized that he does not hate, moreover, he loves and respects the Muslims. However, because of *jihad*, whose principle is expansion, he believes they want to occupy Europe. But we are the reason for this, not them.

In his view, migration is not only caused by war and natural disasters, but it has its goals as well. The first goal is the aforementioned occupation/conquest purpose, which is the reason for the current pressure in Europe. This is evidenced by the fact that Arabic banks support refugees with money. They do not let them enter Qatar or the United Emirates, but they give them money, encouraging them to migrate to Europe. Another goal is the destabilization of Europe and the Euro currency, which is supported by the United States. Finally, the third goal is "modern slavery," meaning that some states of the EU and large entrepreneurs need cheap labor.

He also emphasizes the biblical idea that "Jesus said, be innocent as doves, but he also said, be wise as serpents," referring to the fact that the Christian person loves everyone, since

² Dániel Kacsoh, "Jönnék, hogy elfoglalják Európát" *Magyarhirlap.hu* 19 July 2016. Accessed: 11 December 2017. http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/61249/Jonnek_hogy_elfoglaljak_Europat.

we are all creatures of God, but "We will not let the wolf go among the lambs, even if it comes in sheep-clothing." He says there is a difference between Muslims: those who come now will not pray together with Christians. He added, however, that Islam needs to be understood for relevant opinion-forming. He emphasized that in Islam there is a sacred hate, while the Jewish-Christian tradition has evolved from violence toward peaceful and forgiving behavior.

He does not believe migrants are escaping from Muslim radicalism to Europe, as they grow up in this radicalism. War may be the cause of migration, but it must be kept in mind that they are different from Europeans. If this fact is not taken into consideration, then it can lead to wrong decisions. Based on the lesson of 1,400 years, he sees that integration is not possible. He points out that the problem with multiculturalism is precisely that Europe accepts refugees, but they are unwilling to integrate, affiliate, and adapt. "They want to form us to their own image and likeness. Even those who come as refugees do so. They do not respect, moreover, they despise the different, that is us, and in fact they claim a sense of supremacy. [...] Islam is not only a religion, but a totalitarian political system, as has been stated by Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini."

Archbishop Márfi stated that if events continue in the same way, Islam will take power, and as a result, Christians will become secondary citizens and the churches will collapse. He pointed out there is a need for repentance, as was necessary in the Jewish exile from previous idolatry. He says in the last few decades only one church was built in Kuwait, but it wasn't allowed to have a cross on it, while mosques are being built here. Referring to the political dimension, he said he does not judge the building of the walls—we refer here to building the border fence—because it is not normal for us to accept everyone, namely those who come without papers or who are terrorists. Order is necessary in this very complex situation.

As a kind of closure of the conversation, and thus as a solution, he emphasized that the Christian faith should be taken seriously. The "no faith, no morality" failed in Sodom and Gomorrah. The most important thing is that the apostate parents should again have children who believe. Turning to young people can be the way out, and the strengthening of the church. "There is no other way to the future: either we take Christ's cross on our shoulders or receive Mohammed's yoke of iron. There is no third way. According to the saying, nature abhors a vacuum, and now Europe is in one. This must be terminated."

The members of the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference attended an *ad limina* visit in Rome between the 20th and 24th of November 2017, in which context Archbishop Gyula Márfi and Pope Francis met. In his interview to the Vatican Radio,³ he reported about the meeting, and also mentioned the issue of migration. "And then I said honestly that I was known a little as one who opposes the migration and might even be anti-Muslim. I said that all these go back to a speech I made at a mini conference, and the comments I also made were published in Italian a few days later in *Il Giornale* without my knowledge and permission. And from there, a lot of other newspapers took them over, including French ones, so I received a book from Paris a couple of months ago, in which I was cited, even though I had not given permission to anyone to do so. The mini conference was about the Mediterranean area, and I shared my concerns, namely, we Hungarians were under Turkish dominance for 150 years, and then everything was destroyed. That is why fear lives within us, we still carry our concerns in our genes. I am really worried that Europe will become Islamic and will become de-Christianized, losing its Christian character. At the same time I also expressed that, of course, I am not in the least anti-Muslim. Everyone was smiling, as they knew that this was so."

³ "Iszlám és migráció: árnyalni kell a képet a Szentatyáról. Interjú Márfi Gyula veszprémi érsekkal." *Vatikáni rádió* 23. November 2017. Accessed: 18. 12. 2017. http://hu.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/11/23/ad_limina_1%C3%A1togat%C3%A1s_interj%C3%BA_m%C3%A1rfi_gyula_veszpr%C3%A9mi_%C3%A9rsekkal/1350760.

He further emphasizes that Pope Francis said he knew of the dangers and followed the changes and requirements of Islam. Márfi says it became clear to him that Pope Francis knew far more about migration and Islam than media and unilateral news show. He accentuated that the Pope also emphasized prudence, that is, cleverness. In this interview he repeated that Jesus encouraged us to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves, and he also revealed that the Pope is thinking the same way in this case. He further points out that the newscasts can give us a picture of how the Pope solely emphasized the acceptance, as if unaware of the problems that come with it.

4.1.2. Miklós Beer

In February 2017, Bishop Miklós Beer gave a brief interview to *Magyar Kurír*⁴ where he was asked about his request addressed to "the faithful and the well-intentioned people," in order to embrace a refugee who legally arrives to Hungary. In this article, he shares that the situation of many of those who receive refugee status is still insecure; nobody takes care of them and many of them live in homeless shelters. In his request, he calls for solutions to housing and food problems, and emphasizes that, most importantly, they should be given work to help them integrate. He points out, however, that he is talking only about those who have been lawfully rescued, as he does not support illegality. He also explains there is a need for a change of attitude in Hungary. Every well-intentioned person should consider helping those in need within their capabilities. Finally, he mentions that the diocese of Vác, if asked, connects volunteers with the needy if they indicate they want to help.

In February 2017, bishop Beer spoke to Christians in a video message⁵ via the *SzemLélek* blog.⁶ In that, he shares the following:

⁴ "Beer Miklós kezdeményezése a menekültek megsegítésére" *Magyar Kurír* 16 February 2017. Accessed: 09. November 2017. <http://www.magyarkurir.hu/hirek/beer-miklos-kezdemenyezese-menekultek-megsegitesere>.

⁵ "Beer Miklós felhívása a befogadott menekültek kapcsán" *SZEMLÉLEK*

We are informed by the daily news that the Hungarian government wants to raise the migration situation to a new phase. It means that those who come to us will be kept in enclosed camps until their refugee application is evaluated, and receive the refugee status. I heard that many people already have valid passes, have received an acceptance permit from the Hungarian government, and have a refugee status. At the same time, I heard that these people live from hand to mouth alone in homeless shelters without any hope; there are many Christians among them, together with educated people who are looking for their new place here. I think the moment has come when we need to help these people—of course, on a voluntary basis, I mean communities, families, local governments—whoever can offer a receptive place where they would really be able to provide work opportunities and catering; whoever would be able to provide a flat, home, and could give and ensure the conditions for integration through their personal care. Now we are really in a situation where there is a fence, illegal immigrants will not come in through the window. Anyone who comes in the door and looks into our eyes is being accepted by the Hungarian government. Now we need to help those who already have that license and received their refugee status. Now I call all well-intentioned for this, and the episcopate of Vác would undertake the mediation towards them and to the opportunities offered. I call everyone with good intent to do all of this.

The video was then followed by a smaller conflict: the journal *Magyar Idők*⁷ strongly vilified Miklós Beer for his allegations in the video. Later, at the request of the Szemlélek blog,⁸ they apologized to the bishop—although only privately,⁹ not publicly.

In June 2017, Miklós Beer and Tamás Fabiny published a video message on YouTube on World Refugee Day.¹⁰ In it they said the following: "Every day, thousands of people are chased away from their homes by wars. People like you. People like me. They escape from violence and leave everything behind. Everything, except their dreams and hope that they find a more peaceful future. We believe every refugee deserves to be safe. We support refugees. Please join us. "

13 February 2017. Accessed: 09 October 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=4NMIIYb9qa4

⁶ "Beer Miklós: Karoljuk fel a befogadott menekülteket!" *SZEMlélek* 13 February 2017. Accessed: 09 October 2017. https://szemlelek.net/2017/02/13/beer_miklos_befogadas.

⁷ György Pilhál, "Csak nem misebor?" *Magyar idők* 22 February 2017. Accessed: 03 October 2017. <https://magyaridok.hu/paca/csak-nem-misebor-1430464/>.

⁸ István Gégény, "Bocsánatot kér-e a Magyar idők a püspökgyalázásért?" *SZEMlélek* 01 March 2017. Accessed: 21 October 2018. https://szemlelek.net/2017/03/01/nyilt_level_700.

⁹ István Gégény, "Bocsánatot kért a Magyar idők főszerkesztője" *SZEMlélek* 01. March 2017. Accessed: 21 October 2018. https://szemlelek.net/2017/03/01/bocsanatteres_948.

¹⁰ "UNHCR Menekültek Világnapja 2017 - Fabiny Tamás és Beer Miklós videóüzenete" *UNHCRCentralEurope* 19 June 2017. Accessed: 21 October 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Okpat8MQ3E>.

HírTv did an interview¹¹ with Miklós Beer in August 2017. In it he drew up several guidelines on refugee issues. He claimed that generally he is guided by his conscience in his statements, and he tries to represent and undertake what he believes. In connection with the video message posted in June, several people who disagreed with the video called him a treacherous figure or the monkey of Pope Francis. He did not want to reflect on the counter-reviews in more detail. He adds that this situation really hurts, and he does not understand why people do not know that as a church leader he does not have to say what everyone likes, he must say what God has entrusted to him—the value system and the way of thinking that he represents. In addition, he points out that Pope Francis is highly respected, and he is able to identify with him and accept his statements as he is the supreme ecclesiastical leader. About the current situation in Hungary, he believes people are confused, and the world is tangled and chaotic to them. The unpredictability of the migration issue, the new and unexpected challenges, and the consequences of the situation confuse people. They do not know who to believe or who to adapt to.

In many places, the view is that the Christian religion is in danger because of migration. Miklós Beer points out that we must make a conceptual distinction between Christianity used by politicians and Church Christianity. In his opinion, behind the meaning of political Christianity is the cultural heritage—buildings, literature, churches, etc., which are linked to Christianity. From the ecclesiastical point of view, however, being a Christian first means we believe that Christ the Creator speaks to the faithful, and the Bible is the standard that guides you in life. So in this case, this is a lifestyle, an inner conviction. Pope Francis also mediates this when, in his statements, he responds to the refugee question with the perception/attitude of the Sermon on the Mount. What actually causes the fear is the

¹¹ “Egyenesen – Könnyített kereszt” *Hír Tv* August 2017. Accessed: 29 October 2017. <https://hirtv.hu/video/188106#>.

destruction of the objectified memories of our religion, as there is much news about the destruction and sale of temples, for example.

In the context of the views of the Hungarian government, the bishop emphasizes that what he sees is hurting, and he worries about his compatriots. Here again, he points out the phenomenon of confusion and indifference, which makes people think they really should be afraid of something if they hear it several times. However, referring to Pope Francis, he says if Christianity really is in danger and Islam is really coming, it would be wise to return to our Christian roots and to strengthen our Christianity. He tries to understand the current situation by trying to find the reasons, and he sees a kind of dotage from politics—when they want to tell the little child what to do instead of teaching them to be openminded with their thinking and to search for connections. He thinks people coming here from other religions or cultures will give us the opportunity to show who we are. We have a chance to get to know each other and for them to judge us differently based on how we got in touch with them.

Finally, we want to highlight a question from the interview that is often mentioned here at home, which refers to the criticism that the Catholic Church often does not stand in cases where it should oppose politics. Miklós Beer sees this as a psychological fact, which states two points. On the one hand, usual occurrences give the feeling of apparent security, so it is difficult to change and depart to the unusual. On the other hand, it is a case of the phenomenon of conflict avoidance.

In September 2017, *Magyar Narancs* did an interview¹² with Miklós Beer where they discussed the refugee issues only for a few questions. The stronger emphasis here, in part, was placed on the fact that the bishop had been subjected to several attacks because of his views and statements about migration. According to the bishop, the Hungarian climate of opinion is very "poisoned," and people react to the word *acceptance* with rejection almost

¹² Ilona Matkovich, "A formális vallásosság nem téveszthet meg" *Magyar narancs* 07 September 2017. Accessed: 15 October 2017. <https://magyarnarancs.hu/belpol/a-formalis-vallasosság-nem-teveszthet-meg-106283>.

without thinking. Miklós Beer basically supports building the fence, but emphasizes that it is our duty to take care of those who have already been granted refugee status. About the video he made with Tamás Fabiny, he tells us it had more positive results, and he perceives the consolidation of the situation. He mentions that the asylum office regularly invites church leaders for consultation, thanks to a dialogue that was formed. He also mentions that the Diocese of Vác accepted an Afghani and an Iraqi refugee for half a year. They help them in language learning and job searching. He wasn't willing to discuss party politics.

In December 2017, HVG interviewed¹³ Bishop Miklós Beer. In this interview, he says he represents the idea and tries to pass on to others that no one chooses when, where, and what kind of opportunities or financial backgrounds they are born with. No one has the right to set themselves before others because they were born in a better place. Jesus, however, could choose where to be born, and he chose a homeless, unaccepted state of life, persecution, refusal, and victimization. He also stressed the commitment of solidarity. We cannot choose where to go, but we can choose how to use our opportunities. He invited us to get out of our comfort zone and to commit to helping others, and to embrace those in need. Concerning the specific migration events, we can only point out a question in which he briefly explains his opinion about the State Secretariat against the Christian persecution in Hungary. He tells us that churches should strengthen relationships with other communities, because this is not a state task. He also emphasizes that Christ died, not only for a given ethnic group, but for all, so that not only Christians but everyone should be helped.

4.1.3. János Székely

¹³ Dávid Dercsényi, "Romlik a társadalmunk humán mutatója–interjú Beer Miklós váci püspökkel" HVG. 18 December 2017. Accessed: 11 January 2018. https://hvg.hu/itthon/20171218_Beer_Miklos_interju.

Bishop János Székely published a detailed public letter¹⁴ about the refugee issue in 2015. In our previous study, this letter was not included, so we are making an exception to briefly summarize it, as his letter does not only express an opinion, but also provides detailed and specific guides in a unique way. The following statements can be made about the content of the letter before we present his report in 2017 on this issue. The letter aims to present the roots of the situation in a very detailed, numerical way, but not in depth. He tells us that where there is greater prosperity, there must be an openness to accommodate those in need. Furthermore, he writes about people's individual rights, according to which everyone has the right to a worthy livelihood. Primarily, he claims neighboring countries have the duty to accept refugees, while the others must support hosting countries. It should be noted that the "time that refugees spend away from home cannot be lost, and, as soon as possible, they should be able to continue their lives in their homeland." The immigration wave, however, must be controlled by the financial and social capacity of host countries. In addition, he focuses on managing the causes of migration, namely by (1) creating peace and providing the tools for it in the Middle East, (2) building a radical new economic system that prevents the rapid and unlimited growth of private property, and (3) helping the poorer countries of Earth.

Additionally, the letter states that "the arrival of immigrants also raises the question of whether that particular Europe still exists or not which is capable of integrating anyone, which knows but what values they would like to integrate the arrivals. Europe has lost many of its identities and values in varied ways. The immigration wave calls us to find our faith and values again."

He also points out several concrete steps that are necessary actions concerning this issue, such as financial support for refugee camps in the Middle East, the introduction of

¹⁴ István Gégény, "Székely János püspök: a bevándorlási hullám keresztény szemmel" SZEMLElek 02 October 2015. Accessed: 03 January 2018. https://szemlelek.net/2015/10/02/szekely_janos_puspok_a_bevandorlasi_hullam_kereszteny_szemmel.

refugee applications in Middle Eastern and African refugee camps, and organized helpful contributions from the state and the church. Furthermore, these necessary actions should be in conjunction "with important information, medical help, legal advice, food, etc. to help those who are turning to us." Finally, he thanked those who have done these so far.

In March 2017, János Székely gave a statement to *HírTv*.¹⁵ Here Székely briefly commented on this issue in relation to Miklós Beer's statements, more specifically in his video of February 2017 and the subsequent conflict. In relation to the case, Székely said the following about the refugee issue:

We, the people in the Catholic Church, people searching for Christ, feel that at least the small things we can do, that the few hundred people who are here within our borders got refugee status or asylum status thanks to God, but there are some who are in the middle of this process, so we should try to help at least to them. And thank God I see that there are more and more people with inclusive declarations, work places, and hospitality monasteries, and other institutions that can help.

4.1.4. László Kiss-Rigó

The *Szeged Ma* news portal quoted Bishop Kiss-Rigó¹⁶ about the subject. This article was written in September 2016. We hereby can say that the Diocese of Szeged-Csanád has cooperated with public bodies in several projects based on solidarity, not only at home, but also beyond the borders. He emphasized that the community of the Diocese collected approximately 11 million forints in support of the Syrian Christians, which he personally took and handed over to them. He called the mandatory quota system a mockery of solidarity, and he calls it centrally-organized human trafficking and a humiliation of the human being. "They only want to get help to survive and return back to their homeland," he said in the article. Finally, in his closing statement, he emphasizes, "Solidarity is practiced on the basis of the gospel command, but not on following the dictates of the bureaucrats in Brussels, but rather

¹⁵ "Újabb püspök megy szembe a kormány politikájával" *Hír Tv* 19 March 2017. Accessed: 10 December 2017. https://hirtv.hu/ahirtvhirei_adattar/ujabb-puspok-megy-szembe-a-kormany-politikajaval-1390841.

¹⁶ Marcell Tóth, "Kiss-Rigó László: A bürokraták embercsempészete helyett valódi segítséget kell adni a menekülteknek" *Szeged Ma* 28 September 2016. Accessed: 03 November 2017. <https://szegedma.hu/2016/09/kiss-rigo-laszlo-a-burokratak-embercsempeszete-helyett-valodi-segitseget-kell-adni-a-menekulteknek-fotok>.

on Pope Francis's encouragement." He further emphasized that solidarity should be practiced independently of religion, origin, or skin color.

4.1.5. *András Veres*

András Veres spoke briefly at the Ecumenical Forum in Győr¹⁷ on the 9th of March, 2017. He claims that various denominations and churches cannot remain in silence when at least one Christian dies every five minutes in the world. The primary location of these events are the countries where the migrations originate. He says it is our duty to help refugees, whether they are Christians or not, if they need help. However, he adds that "to defend our brothers and sisters is our duty, even if they are far away, many hundreds or thousands of miles away from us."

4.1.6. *Péter Erdő*

This time, we found only one statement by Péter Erdő¹⁸ relevant to this topic. During the panel discussion of Erdő with Slomó Köves, head of the EMIH (*Egységes Magyarországi Izraelita Hitközség* - United Jewish Community of Hungary), the issue of migration-related feelings and fears were discussed. To the question, "Many people think that we need to save Europe. What do we see today, change or decadence?" Erdő replies that every culture is centered on a world view, which is the Jewish-Christian culture in Europe. He explains that "if man is not influenced strongly by external compulsions, then the internal driving force must be increased. Religion and religious beliefs have a vital role." He highlights the importance of a good conscience and emphasizes that if we only seek welfare, then it is feared that we might uproot God from our lives. Proceeding from this statement to the actual

¹⁷ "Az egység abban áll, hogy mindannyian Krisztust keressük–Ökumenikus fórumot tartottak Győrben" *Magyar Kurír* 11 March 2017. Accessed: 22 October 2017. <https://www.magyarKurir.hu/hirek/az-egyseg-abban-all-hogy-mindannyian-krisztust-keressuk-okumenikus-forumot-tartottak-gyor>.

¹⁸ "Erdő Péter és Köves Slomó beszélgetett a Párbeszéd Házában" *Magyar Kurír* 19 May 2016. Accessed: 14 January 2018. <http://www.magyarKurir.hu/hirek/erdo-peter-es-koves-slomo-beszeltetett-parbeszed-hazaban>.

answer, he says, "the real cause of our fears today is the cult of the momentary pleasant mood of welfare. If I do not see the meaning of the universe, the meaning of my own personal life, the pleasant mood is the only thing that remains." This brings with itself the fear of insecurity. If we go beyond the simple anthropological approach, we can liquidate mass poverty and unfair structures. When we give to someone, do we give what we no longer need or do we give as an act of self denial because we care? "By the way, the classical Catholic moral theology developed a gradual system based on the weight of responsibility. With regard to this, the most important one is the responsibility for those who stand close to us."

In response to the question of how are we able to do the right thing, Erdő points out that Catholic people's main task is Christian love, but the manifestation of this depends on the situation. "Within Europe there are regions which migrants do not reach. There are countries like Hungary, where they are passing through, and there are destination countries. The Catholic Caritas, the Charity Service of the Order of Malta, and various parish groups have also done a lot helping the moving crowd. We have also provided sanitary and psychological assistance." Another way to help is to assist in or near the crisis region. The donations of the collection organized by the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference were donated to Northern Iraq by the *Kirche in Not* (Aid to the Church in Need - ed.). Finally, he emphasized that a kind of mirror can be perceived in the events that the poor man holds up to the rich. More specifically, the difference is that the "poor man is accustomed to paying attention to others, while the rich is accustomed to being able to do everything. Attention to others is the most important thing here."

4.2. Greek Catholic Church

4.2.1. Fülöp Kocsis

We mention two articles concerning Fülöp Kocsis, the Greek Catholic Bishop. One of them presents his Syrian journey, and the other is an interview with him. At the end of June 2017, in an interview by Hajdú Online,¹⁹ he stated it is a big problem that only a little attention is being paid to the persecution of Syrian and Iraqi Christians, despite the ongoing messages by Syrian Church leaders. The Syrian Christian high priests feel that Europe has forgotten about them. As a possible cause of inadequate attention, he notes the interests of international media, which, in his opinion, aims to maintain chaos. It is also possible that the news value of this issue is not high enough for the Hungarian media.

Kocsis also explains that as migrants are being treated as a single set, during the problem-solving procedures, Christians do not benefit by this help and aid because they are not mixed with Muslims. This is due to the fact that the tense atmosphere of the refugee camps and the dominance of Islamic believers could create a dangerous environment for them. He emphasizes, "The current support system and political approach are not favorable to the suffering Middle Eastern Christians." Primarily, local people's wish is to be able to stay in their homeland, or if they need to escape, Europe should help them improve their living conditions so they could return home.

Here are some of the central thoughts that should be highlighted in Kocsis' further responses. First, Kocsis was deeply shocked by the sight of the war zone and the high degree of destruction he faced during his visit. In addition, he says he did not see any trace of hatred or anger by locals, rather sadness. The main reason for this, in his opinion, is the "Christian-minded thinking" that teaches "if someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also." However, in Islam revenge is stressed. Kocsis strongly emphasizes that Europe has abandoned its Christianity, while Islam "has its incredibly strong spirituality in its own way." Thus, in order to prevent Europe's Islamization, one of the main solutions is to return to and

¹⁹ "Európa lelkét vesztette" *Hajdú online* 21 June 2017. Accessed: 12 January 2018. <http://www.haon.hu/kocsis-fulop-sziria-interju/3524341>.

strengthen the Christian faith. However, he says, "Christian people basically pursue affiliation, helpfulness, and lenience. When they do extreme things in the name of Christ, it is not true Christianity, because the fundamental message of it is peace and acceptance, as Jesus came to us as well. If we endeavor to live the gospel, the life of Christ, we can experience that peace to live even in the worst circumstances. In Syria's war zones, in families, where children were raped, family members were kidnapped, murdered, yet the answer was not hatred."

He also mentions another important topic on the issue, namely childbearing. He tells us that if the current situation does not change or turn around because of some special circumstances, Europe will become majority Muslim in 20 years. This is due not only to mass migration, but also to higher birth rates. However, he stresses that the commitment of bearing more children is not a Muslim thing, since many Syrian Christians have many children. He says, "This is the result of our [...] un-Christianized, comfortable life. We are afraid of having big families; it is part of the Islamization process in Europe."

In July 2017, the *Magyar Kurír* interviewed²⁰ Fülöp Kocsis, who personally took the 10 million-forint (35645.69 USD) donation and two solar-powered computers from the members of the Greek Catholic Church to the residents of Al-Dmeine (Al Damina Al Sharqiyah), Syria in early June. The community who received the donation is a Melkite Greek Catholic community.

During Kocsis's journey, he did not only witness the local conditions and level of destruction, but also had the opportunity to talk to families who told him of their trials. In this regard, he said, "It was terrible to experience the devastation. Everywhere, just like in Homs, I saw houses that were wrecked. Here, in the bishop's palace, Al-Nusra Front set up its headquarters; in large letters someone wrote that the new caliphate was established in this

²⁰ "Ott Istenre tekintve élnek – Beszélgetés Kocsis Fülöp metropolitával szíriai útjáról" *Magyar Kurír* 09 July 2017. Accessed: 26 October 2017. <http://www.magyarkurir.hu/hirek/ott-istenre-tekitve-elnek-beszeltetes-kocsis-fulop-metropolitaval-sziriai-utjarol>.

place. Their military hospital was located in the crypt. After they had left, many passports were found, revealing that many of the warriors were foreign. The question is who they are and what were they paid for?"

He talked about local Christians and that they feel nobody cares about them. This applies equally to Europe and the ecclesiastical leaders. Support usually reaches only the large camps. He points out further that the Christians here do not want to go west. Answering the interviewer, he says there was no enmity between ordinary Muslim and Christian people, the two religions lived in peace side by side until the Islamic extremists appeared. Kocsis adds, "It is also clear that this conflict was generated by the great powers; internal tensions were not as great in Syria as to have led to war." He shares that local people would expect Europe to talk more clearly and at greater length about their local situation. They do not consider it acceptable that Western Europe receives refugees with open arms while nobody cares about those who are staying there. Kocsis further states that reconstruction can only begin if the area is completely safe. Finally, as a lesson, he emphasizes the importance and strength of belief in God and lists his unexpected encounters and experiences which came along during the journey.

4.3. Lutheran Church

4.3.1. Tamás Fabiny

Tamás Fabiny, bishop of the Northern Church District of the Hungarian Evangelical Church, published his writing on *KötőSzó* blog²¹ in April 2016. Here he spoke primarily about duality and confusion, in which people "protect Christian Europe," although they do it with violent, extreme, or racist actions and manifestations. He also points to the confusion of the Pope's statements, which question the Pope's competence or true understanding of the

²¹ "Ha még lesz emberi arcuk... – Fabiny Tamás püspök a menekültekről" *KötőSzó* 03 April 2016. Accessed: 09 October 2017. https://kotoszo.blog.hu/2016/04/03/_ha_meg_lesz_emberi_arcuk.

situation. He also draws attention to the attitudinal change that has taken place in the minds of the Hungarians according to which, initially, they helped people in the summer of 2015; they saw the faces in the crowd, shocked by bloody acts. In September, "we all went to the Keleti Railway Station from curiosity to see the masses camping there from close." However, he tells us that, since October, the majority was content to have peace in Hungary, and they felt the European terrorist attacks and the subsequent reports of frightening events justified their feeling of revulsion. He then claims that after the wave of expert statements, people became neutral and insensitive to the subject. For instance, he adds, "We do not even notice the fact that Mother Teresa's nurses were slaughtered in a Yemen monastery." He tells us he is afraid that, "Many have come to the slope of prejudice and blind hate, from which it is no longer easy to return to peace." He also points out, "It would be good if everyone did their duty: politicians, economists, police officers, secret agents, and the churches. Everyone must do their own job. We cannot say anything else than what Jesus taught us."

The *Magyar Nemzet* interviewed²² Tamás Fabiny in May 2016 during Pentecost in connection with the holiday. Here, regarding the relationship between politics and the Church, he stated that the best option would be to separate the two from each other, while keeping common interests in mind. In relation to migration, he continues to maintain his opinion. "Last summer's poster campaign was such a social indoctrination, which is not worthy of the case, because the government put the emphasis on the exclusivity of the otherwise important security policy aspects while neglecting the humanitarian ones." He mentions that the various attacks have shown we have to take security policy seriously, but it is wiser for everyone to focus on their own fields. He believes, "Secret agencies should obtain information, the police and the government should ensure order, but churches and NGOs could enforce humanitarian considerations." He thinks it is important for churches to take a

²² Tamás Velkei, "Fabiny Tamás: Legyenek jó keresztények!" *Magyar Nemzet* 14 May 2016. Accessed: 04 January 2018. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/archivum/belfold-archivum/fabiny-tamas-legyenek-jo-keresztenyek-3944634/>.

stand on public affairs and to express their own opinion, and to not proclaim the views of others, especially political parties.

We will not repeat the shared video by Fabiny and Beer which was published on World Refugee Day. However, the bishop published an article on the site *KötőSzó*²³ responding to the reactions of the video in July 2017. Here, he says that the video was followed by a "tsunami of hatred" in the form of different humiliating comments. Among these posts, he mentions a few and tells us he is trying to ignore them, because he is sad that some people are trying to defend Christian Europe by curses and obscenities. Concerning the Church's reactions, he highlights the diversity of the comments, such as incomprehension, indignation, and accountability beside agreement. He points out he does not want to become a political factor, nor is he interested in political connections. He fears for Hungary due to "further moral debauchery and I feel responsible to prevent sizzling hatred from winning ground in our church."

In addition to reflecting on the reactions, Fabiny also expounds his point of view. "I admit that mass immigration is not desirable, because integration would be much more difficult as well. I feel right for those efforts aiming at remedying troubles where they originally came from. I support helping persecuted Christians in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia with all my heart and soul. Neither do I argue that Europe must guard the cultural traditions of Jewish-Christian roots. (Even if I seem immodest by saying that I am trying to do something about this in my close environment.) With Luther, however, I confess that Islam on our continent ("Mohammed," as he said) obliges primarily those Christian people for self-examination and repentance who became distant from God. I wish I could see a sign that as a result of the supposed or true Islamic threat, our churches and followers are closing their positions more passionately; that they are seeking the Trinity of God and accepting the

²³ "Féltem ezt az országot a morális zülléstől – Fabiny Tamás a püspökök videójáról," *KötőSzó* 07 July 2017. Accessed: 05 January 2018. https://kotoszo.blog.hu/2017/07/07/fabiny_tamas_puspok.

community with Jesus!" Finally, he described the personal story of a few accepted refugees he met personally in order to draw attention to the fact that "we cannot see the faces of refugees, the features of Jesus amid large-scale hatred."

Magyar Nemzet did an interview²⁴ with Tamás Fabiny in August 2017. In it he commented on the reactions to his video message with Miklós Beer, that, even though the worst attacks did not come from believers, he hoped the Church took a different atmosphere and style. He emphasizes that many people do not understand from both inside and outside of the church that the church does not support uncontrolled immigration, but needs to help those refugees who have received refugee status. Today, people indiscriminately reject anyone who is a foreigner, but the one who is in trouble must be accepted whether or not they are Christian. In addition, he says that integration can be feasible through small steps. For example, he mentions the integration houses in Germany and adds that many such initiatives would be needed. As for the question of whether the opinion he and Miklós Beer represent is a minority within the Church, he says it is not the quantity that counts, but to have a forum where people can hear of the positive examples to follow. "If we ask the question with the words of today's political propaganda, we may be in a minority. But if we were able to quit this conceptual system and ask questions about mercy, helping, and our Christian nature, I am sure that most of the members of the Lutheran Church in Hungary would respond similarly. As Christians we do not have to comply with administrative-technical issues, such as whether the fence or more frequent green border patrols are the more effective solution, but whether the voice of hatred or mercy becomes the norm."

In relation to the poster campaign, he stated the answer to serious problems that threaten people—which were present in some form during all eras—is not fear and threatening

²⁴ András Kósa, "Fabiny Tamás: Az anyagi korrupció a lelki korrupcióval kezdődik" *Magyar Nemzet* 06 August 2017. Accessed: 04 January 2018. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/archivum/nagyinterju-a-magazinban/fabiny-tamas-az-anyagi-korrupcio-a-lelki-korrupcioval-kezdodik-3886562/>.

others with the picture of a chosen enemy, but it is turning to God and settling the relationship with Him.

The Eötvös Group²⁵ organized a lecture entitled “The Role of Churches in Modern Societies” at the Jesuit *Párbeszéd Háza* (House of Dialogue) in September 2017. In this event, Evangelical Bishop Tamás Fabiny and the Jesuit friar Szabolcs Sajgó SJ, who is the manager of the *Párbeszéd Háza*, gave a presentation. The event was reported by *24.hu*.²⁶ At this dialogue, Bishop Fabiny stated that politics has intruded into the church, into the community, and it is a fatal phenomenon. He is convinced that fewer people would support his election as bishop now, because of his public statements made previously, yet he does his job with the same effort.

He also highlights the importance of two-way communication and that dialogue with all public figures should be maintained; one-way communication should be avoided. We have to listen to people, regardless of profession, wealth, or status, he said. This active listening, however, is not enough, because in the case of injustice we have to plead a cause, even if it does not affect us directly. The church must communicate with people in a language that everyone understands. “If we cannot speak in a true voice but play only a role, no one will believe us,” the article quoted Fabiny.

The *Magyar Hírlap* interviewed²⁷ Tamás Fabiny in October 2017 in connection with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The questioner asked him about the migration issue related to the topic of European Islamization. In his response, Fabiny shared that at the

²⁵“The Eötvös József Group was founded in March 2015 by Ákos Bod Péter, Attila Chikán, László Csaba, András Jakab, András Jóri, Béla Kádár, Tamás Mellár, László Sólyom, Péter Tölgyessy and László Urbán. Their aim is to create an intellectual and value-based community by regular gatherings, in which high-quality and honest discussion of public affairs can take place.” The quotation had been translated from the Hungarian invitation to the event. One can access it on the website: <https://jezsuita.hu/az-egyhaziak-szerepe-modern-tarsadalomban/>. Accessed: 07 January 2018.

²⁶ Márton Jankovics, “Még a lelkészársak is számon kérik a menekültekért kiálló püspököt” *24.hu* 28 September 2017. Accessed: 05 January 2018. <https://24.hu/belfold/2017/09/28/meg-a-lelkeszarsak-is-szamon-kerik-a-menekultekert-kiallo-puspokot>.

²⁷ Sándor Faggyas, “Bátrabban kell megélnünk kereszténységünket” *Magyar Hírlap* 31 October 2017. Accessed: 10 January 2018. http://magyarhirnap.hu/cikk/101869/Batrabban_kell_megelnunk_keresztenyseguket.

rise of the Turkish Empire, Luther, who called the events God's punishment, invited Christians to self-reflection, penitence, and repentance. Bishop Fabiny drew a parallel between contemporary migration and tells us it is not enough to complain and 'hypocritically mourn Christian Europe.' We should live Christianity more firmly and courageously. By doing so, immigrants of other religions or identities will not be able to suppress us. He tells us, "The message of October 31, in 2017, can be briefly summarized this way: the Protestant response to the European spiritual and moral crisis is to give the Bible in their hands saying that it is here, let's read it. Thus, we can live with the greatest gift of the Reformation; that it re-discovered the Scripture and by being bound to it, offering the possibility of orientation for the people in the world based on it."

4.4 The Calvinist (Reformed) Church

4.4.1. István Bogárdi Szabó

Magyar Idők reported in June 2016²⁸ about the conference of European Calvinist Churches in Budapest, which were attended by delegations from several European Reformed Churches. The conference addressed the issue of migration. The article underlines the speech of Bishop István Bogárdi Szabó, in which he explains that refugees and migrants need to be differentiated, because migrants are more like economic immigrants. According to the article, Bogárdi Szabó said the system developed by Italian Protestants deserves attention. It helps to filter out real refugees from migrants, so they can help those in real need. The bishop denied that the Hungarian government considers all refugees as terrorists, and he highlighted the importance of integration as a result of various tragedies. In addition, he said that the common values of Europe have Christian roots, so it is important to make refugees and Hungarians understand that these should not be abolished. Bogárdi Szabó also mentioned that

²⁸ Áron Nagy, "Különbséget kell tenni menekült és migráns között" *Magyar Idők* 04 July 2016. Downloaded: 08 December 2017. <https://magyaridok.hu/belfold/kulonbseget-kell-tenni-menekult-es-migrans-kozott-722374/>.

the press and media should be careful not to cause panic and promote hatred. The role of the media is significant if a false image is formed in the migrants' minds about Europe. He also says, "Europe offers a lot of opportunities, but it does not give anything for free. You have to work in Sweden as well as in Hungary. You must learn the language, a profession, respect the laws, and then you will be able to get citizenship sooner or later."

Magyar Hírlap reported²⁹ the statements of bishop István Bogárdi Szabó, which he declared during the morning show of the M1 television channel in September 2016. He said that the problem of mass migration should be solved locally; it is a Christian responsibility to remind decision-makers of this and to help facilitate the solution. He emphasized that the Reformed Church had always distinguished the migrant and the refugee question, and he also requested such differentiation from the faithful. In addition, he said that after the discussions with representatives of the German Reformed Church, he could not agree with the German way of thinking that "if a German child is born today, it takes him about thirty years to grow up and go to work and become a taxpayer. But for a migrant, three years are enough for this." He called it an incorrect calculation.

In October 2017, *Hír TV* asked³⁰ the bishop about the refugee issue. To them he said: "The most important thing should be to distinguish between refugees and migrants. Unfortunately, I have a feeling that partly the politics, and let me say this, partly the media conflate these two notions throughout Europe, and then the commoner has to try to differentiate. I am asking the media to help Hungary, to Hungarian people to understand this very important difference. Because if someone escapes from war, trouble, misery—unfortunately there are many—that is one thing. We have a Christian duty to help them, to

²⁹ "Bogárdi Szabó István: A menekültek problémáját helyben kell megoldani" *Magyar Hírlap* 19 September 2016. Accessed: 08 December 2017. http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/66476/Bogardi_Szabo_Istvan_A_menekultek_problemajat_helyben_kell_megoldani.

³⁰ "Különbséget kell tenni menekült és bevándorló között" *Hír Tv* 13 October 2017. Accessed: https://hirtv.hu/ahirtvhirei_adattar/kulonbseget-kell-tenni-menekult-es-bevandorlo-kozott-1405363.

support them, to do everything so that miserable situation where they are from can come to an end and they could return—and it is a completely different story if someone comes to immigrate."

The official homepage of the Hungarian Reformed Church contains up-to-date news and calls regularly, and it also has a well-functioning search platform. On it, the Reformed Church regularly makes calls and shares news about how to help refugees. It is important to point out, however, that the Mission of Love and the Charity Service do not only focus on the current Middle East refugee issue. They take care of every person who received refugee status, regardless of the country of origin, everybody who was forced to leave their home country for any reason.

5. The Hungarian Jewish Communities

5.1. András Heisler

In April 2016, *mandiner.hu* wrote an article³¹ about the MAZSIHISZ's press conference. Regarding Western European Islamist attacks, and the question of how safe Jews in Hungary feel, Heisler argued that everyone—government, police, and Jewish communities—has their own responsibility in this matter. Nobody can sit back in such a situation of increased risk. He also said it is not a secret that every Jewish organization has a team of security experts in Europe, and they have also cooperated with law enforcement organizations. In addition, he emphasized that before the migration issue became public, they already warned the government that the security risk of Jewish institutions would increase. In his view, this is not directly related to migration, but to extremist Islam and uncontrolled movements. He did not take a concrete side regarding the border fence; he claimed that the technical solution was not their business, but uncontrolled migration is never good.

³¹ Beáta Bakó, "Heisler: Biztonságban érzik magukat a zsidók Magyarországon" *Mandiner* 12 April 2016. Accessed: 04 January 2018. https://mandiner.hu/cikk/20160412_heisler_biztonsagban_erzik_magukat_a_zsidok_magyarorszagon.

András Heisler delivered a speech at the opening of the Conference against European Anti-Semitism organized by the World Zionist Organization (WZO) in September 2016, which was published in full on mazsihisz.hu.³² In connection with the subject, it is stated that MAZSIHISZ is neither the opposition nor the supporter of the government; it has nothing to do with party politics. They firmly believe that the unreflected conflation of antisemitism and the questions of European migration is, in many respects, deceptive and manipulative. Generating unnecessary fear never increases security, and, on the contrary, Judaism must oppose all hate speech because it is what its religious teachings and historical experiences require them to do. For Jews, hate speech is not only against Jews, but against Gypsies, Christians, gays, Muslims and refugees; all of this is unacceptable. Hatred is like a virus, it can inflict disease on society as a whole.

András Heisler gave a short interview to *HírTV*³³ also in September 2016. There he stated that the solution is the task of politicians, but the current problem, or more precisely, the solution to it, has not yet been solved by anyone. There are ideas and suggestions, but there is no real solution. In the name of his denomination, he points out two cornerstones: the question of refugees must be regulated and controlled, but human treatment must be kept in mind. To the question of how difficult it is to be Jewish in the radical Islamic environment, he answers that extremist Islam poses a serious risk. However, extremist Islam must be separated from the masses of people escaping from a war environment.

5.2. *Slomó Köves*

Cardinal Péter Erdő and Slomó Köves, the leader of the Unified Jewish Community in Hungary (EMIH) and the Rabbi of the Óbuda Synagogue, talked in May 2016 at the

³² "Heisler András beszéde a WZO konferenciáján" *Zsidó társadalom* 19 September 2016. Accessed: 12 February 2018. <https://zsidotarsadalom.wordpress.com/2016/09/19/heisler-andras-beszede-a-wzo-konferenciajan/>.

³³ "Heisler: Hiba volt túlságosan balra húzni" *Hír Tv* 28 September 2016. Accessed: 03 November 2017. https://hirtv.hu/ahirtvhirei_adattar/heisler-hiba-volt-tulsagosan-balra-huzni-1363854.

Párbeszéd Háza in Budapest. This was published by *Magyar Kurír*.³⁴ Here, Köves calls the migrant crisis a curved mirror in front of us, which brings our attention to problems we have forgotten about. He claims that because of welfare we became too comfortable and we lack motivation. He adds, "Due to the fact that the idea of God, and thus of the creation, has vanished from the European political conception, civilization has faded away. Now we can see that we cannot solve our problems without the transcendental fundamentals."

As to the question of how to do it correctly, Köves offers the answer. "Judaism, guided by fraternal love, says that every indigent needs help. We also think that we have most responsibility for our own community. The question of 'What to do?' is not just a moral issue. It is also necessary to analyze what should follow after direct help. It is not incidental if the one we helped will be happy in the future." He also says, "instead of self-identity based on political identity, religious identity must be strengthened" in Jewish local communities.

In September 2016, Köves was interviewed by *Magyar Nemzet*.³⁵ Here, he stated: "Many of them who are arriving are actually fleeing from war zones, and this fact defines the issue of migration as a sharp ethical problem. At the same time, it is important to note that this is not just a question of conscience and morality. The most natural thing in the world is to help a person in need, regardless of their origins or religious background. This consensus is one of the moral fundamentals of Judeo-Christian Europe. There are many other aspects of this issue including security policy, integration, labor market and economic aspects, and the combinations of these. But it is not a purely moral issue or moral practice to resolve our own psychological dilemmas, without simultaneously dealing with the problem and the responsibility. It is not good enough to say that I will accept those who are already here

³⁴ "Erdő Péter és Köves Slomó beszélgetett a Párbeszéd Házában" *Magyar Kurír* 19 May 2016. Downloaded: 03 November 2017. <http://www.magyardurir.hu/hirek/erdo-peter-es-koves-slomo-beszeltgetett-parbeszed-hazaban>.

³⁵ Ágnes Győr, "Górcső alá veszik az épülő imaházat" *Magyar Nemzet* 30 September 2016. Accessed: 08 December 2018. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/archivum/belfold-archivum/gorcso-ala-veszik-az-epulo-imahazat-3919340/>.

because of moral concerns, but those who are not here yet, I abandon them to the cruel Turkish border guards. Thus, we spare ourselves from the burden of dealing with the humanitarian crisis itself." He also pointed out it is the responsibility of political leaders to permit as little space as possible for incendiary, hateful voices. In addition, it is unfortunate that the line between extremists and peaceful Muslims may be blurred; however, the Muslim community should also be more active in setting these boundaries.

In September 2016, Slomó Köves made an announcement during the morning show on the M1 TV channel, which *Magyar Nemzet* wrote a summary about.³⁶ According to this article, Köves emphasizes that in the last five to ten years the quantity and severity of anti-Semitism has increased in Western Europe. He says that although the actions of Islamic extremists affect not just Jewish communities, Jews are generally a major target of terrorist attacks. In addition, the article highlights that Köves thinks, "this phenomenon needs to be properly attended to, and we should think through what tools Europe and the world have to stop this hatred."

Magyar Hírlap conducted an interview with Köves³⁷ in May 2017 on this issue. In it, he states that Western Judaism is increasingly a target of atrocities, most of which are with "extreme Muslim motives." For this reason, Jewish people feel less safe, which makes the issue of immigration for Judaism a complex and controversial one. He points out, "No one seems to have found the solution that is completely reassuring. It is still not clear if violence with religious references would be merely an integration issue or not. While it is understandable that second and third generation immigrants may be frustrated by their circumstances, such terrorist acts also took place that were committed by seemingly well-integrated people, who live under settled conditions. Therefore Islamic religious leaders have

³⁶ "Köves Slomó: Romlott a nyugat-európai zsidók biztonságérzete" *Magyar Nemzet* 22 September 2016. Accessed: 07 December 2018. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/archivum/kulfold-archivum/koves-slomo-romlott-a-nyugat-europai-zsidok-biztonsagerzete-3921690/>.

³⁷ Dániel Kacsoh, "A barikád hasonló oldalán állunk" *Magyar Hírlap* 20 May 2017. Accessed: 08 December 2017. http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/88480/A_barikad_hasonlo_oldalan_allunk.

a serious responsibility. Of course, in every religion, there is an imminent danger of violent solutions, but in the history of Jewish-Christian religions of two to three thousand years, there was the opportunity to learn from bitter experiences, from the zealots of Jerusalem to the cruelty of the crusades. It seems, however, that Islam has not yet come to the end of this process."

Figyelő also did an interview with Köves³⁸ in August 2017. Here, he speaks of his idea that the current conflicts are caused by the collision of civilizations, which was implied in all his later statements. However, he says that "such a conflict is much easier to channel to Jews who live their religion, and are clearly identifiable in their life form and appearance. Aggressive Muslim fundamentalists are looking for targets, and in this respect, a Jewish person or community that is easily recognizable by appearance is a plausible choice."

He claims that in European countries, besides Islamic fundamentalism, the approach of "how the political elite and the major society are confronting this issue, and when a Jewish community is hit by an identifiable physical attack" is dangerous. We often hear in connection with the Holocaust that we cannot let such things happen again, that we will be checking the suspicious processes. But in Western Europe, the above-mentioned processes are often understated. Or in other cases, it is argued that it is only a Middle East conflict "imported" here, in which "the Jews are also to blame and quasi-provocateurs."

In regard to another issue, he points out that, based on a number of surveys conducted by Muslims, it can be stated that "there is no concept of exporting democracy that could overwrite fundamentalism during a period of two or three generations." *Klubrádió* did an interview with Köves in November 2017, in which he claimed that the current crisis is a crisis of welfare morals. Although when we are in the middle of a situation, we are inclined to see everything as a crisis, but it will be revealed only later whether it really was a crisis or not.

³⁸ András Csanády - Pindroch Tamás, "Köves Slomó: „Ilyen alapon Netanjáhu maga is egy Fidesz-kreálmány” *Figyelő* 10 August 2017. Accessed: 27 January 2018. <https://figyelo.hu/koves-slomo-ilyen-alapon-netanjahu-maga-is-egy-fidesz-krealmany>.

The current situation is only partly an economic crisis as it is far more about the moral problems that are a part of the migration crisis. He emphasized that the moral order, whose basis is wealth, has crashed. Without the transcendental basis there can be no real moral foundation. Human beings have a fundamental tension when confronted with the circumstances of the refugees, namely that they have to live penniless, without any comfort while we in the west live in welfare. But they have strong faith. The other issue, however, is that such belief can lead to fundamentalism, and it can be just as damaging. Even if one can lead to evil, the other can also if it is exaggerated. In his opinion, there is a chance that Islam will shake up Europe, which is happening right now. It is another question to examine whether this process will result in Europe falling apart or if it will shape itself up.

Finally, in connection with Judaism, it is worth mentioning a partially related series of events which took place in the summer of 2017. In September 2017, a national consultation was held concerning the "Soros Plan," which was preceded by a poster campaign in Hungary. Here, Heisler addresses the prime minister in an open letter³⁹ claiming that the campaign poses serious risks, and although it is not openly anti-Semitic, it is capable of creating uncontrollable anti-Semitic emotions. Anti-Semitic remarks were painted on the posters by unknown citizens. He asks Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz Party to stop the campaign immediately and to withdraw their posters. He adds, "You, our elected leaders, have a historic responsibility not to let the hatred in our country get enlarged, not to turn the Hungarians against each other. These toxic messages hurt the whole country. We are not only talking for ourselves, but our Hungarian identity also includes the protection of our Jewish pride and dignity." In contrast, Köves clearly voiced the fact (in several forums) that

³⁹ "Mazsihisz elnök: A 'sorosozás' komoly kockázatokat hordoz" *Mazsihisz* 06 July 2017. Accessed: 01 February 2018. <https://mazsihisz.hu/hirek-a-zsido-vilagbol/mazsihisz-hirek/mazsihisz-elnok-a-sorosozas-komoly-kockazatok-at-hordoz>.

these posters do not represent anti-Semitism. In an interview to *24.hu*⁴⁰ he said, "I do not agree that everything must be categorized as anti-Semitism which is related to Jewish people and is negative, even when the provocative style of the campaign is not to my liking."

6. Islam

6.1. Zoltán Bolek

In March 2016, the Hungarian Islamic Community held a ceremony where it was remembered that Muslims have been free to practice their religion in Hungary for a hundred years. At the event, *Népszabadság* emphasized two elements⁴¹ from Zoltán Bolek's speech. One is that "our compatriots who are Muslim are often insulted; they are often identified with terrorists." The other thought Bolek drew attention to is: "We want to stay loyal, honest citizens of Hungary even if we experience negative discrimination."

In May 2016, Zoltán Bolek told *Magyar Idők*⁴² about a case of harassment in Lebanon. In this context, he said that all women must be honored according to the Qur'an and the Holy Tradition. In a Muslim country where Sharía is applied, such a case cannot happen. He emphasized that if one takes his religion seriously, he does not touch another woman other than his wife. He also pointed out that a significant part of migrants does not, or only loosely practices their religion. He also underlines that the terrorists' faith is not deep and true, they just "sought an ideology to cover up and gratify their violent instincts." He tells us the Qur'an is a complex opus, so it should only be analyzed as a whole. Terrorists take parts out of context and use them as a reference point, so it has nothing to do with God's message. For example, a true Muslim believer would never draw another Muslim's blood. In his

⁴⁰ József Nagy, "Köves Slomó: Nem kell mindenből zsidó ügyet kreálni" *24.hu* 03 August 2017. Accessed: 01 February 2018. <https://24.hu/kozelet/2017/08/03/koves-slomo-nem-kell-mindenbol-zsido-ugyet-krealni/>.

⁴¹ Anita Kőműves, "Nehéz Magyarországon muzulmánként lenni" *Népszabadság* 30 March 2016. Accessed: 04 January 2018. <http://nol.hu/belfold/osi-felelmeket-ebreszt-fel-a-terrorizmus-1608657>.

⁴² Áron Nagy, "Egy muszlimnak be kell tartania a törvényeket" *Magyar Idők* 23 May 2016. Accessed: 07 December 2017. <https://magyaridok.hu/belfold/egy-muszlimnak-be-kell-tartania-a-torvenyeket-683101/>.

opinion, Islamic radicalization is due to the intervention of the United States and their allies; before the Iraqi conflicts, not even the al-Qaeda could gain much importance. In the context of migration, he says, "Both refugees and economic immigrants, highly educated and uneducated people, believers and unbelievers, well-intentioned people and rogue people arrived and are arriving in Europe." He also expressed his disagreement with the admission quota. Finally, he said, "If we expect Muslims to enjoy the same acceptance in Europe like Buddhists, Krishna-consciousness people, Jews, Christians, or any other fellow-citizen of any other group, of course we cannot escape from obligations. Most of the followers of Islam will see this and surely accept it if their faith is honest."

In August 2016, the 11th *Szélrózsa* national evangelical youth meeting held an interfaith panel discussion with the title, *Islam and Europe*, in which Zoltán Bolek also participated. *Evangelikus.hu* reported about this⁴³ and made a video ⁴⁴ of the entire conversation available. In it, Bolek emphasizes that European Islamic communities are disavowing from terrorist acts, but he also finds it worrying that neither the Hungarian nor the Western media count it as news, and they did not report it. He also emphasizes that most terrorists cannot be called faithful Muslims and generally do not know the Qur'an or their "religion" properly. If it were not so, they would not commit such actions. He also voiced his opinion that al-Qaeda was not significant before American interventions. He tells us that the fact they wanted to export democracy into a tribal society caused, primarily, the current fragmentation and the foundation of the problems. Besides, he regards Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religions as three siblings.

He shares that, in his opinion, assimilation is not going to work because people must be allowed to follow the religion they have in their own way. Whether it is Muslim, or even if

⁴³ "Iszlám és Európa?" *Evangelikus.hu* 10 August 2016. Accessed: 06 February 2018. <https://www.evangelikus.hu/node/9402?language=en>.

⁴⁴ „Szélrózsa 2016: Iszlám és Európa” *lutheranhu* 09 August 2016. Accessed: 06 February 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llANBMzyRUK>.

their conscience leads them to become Christian or to take up the Jewish religion, everyone must account for their own conscience. It is necessary to leave the choice to them, whether they want to stay Muslim or choose another religion. In line with integration, he says that whoever wants to live here (in Hungary), it is important for them to learn the culture and language here. They have to accept European norms, otherwise they cannot stay. But this requires not only the cooperation of the state, but also of the Muslim communities. He also highlights the importance of taking integration trainings strictly and seriously, not shaking them off as is happening now.

Zoltán Bolek wrote a letter to Viktor Orbán in September 2016, which he published on his own Facebook page.⁴⁵ Because the post can be easily deleted at any time, we will quote the letter in full, as the various online pages contain only excerpts from the entire letter.

To Prime Minister of Hungary, Dr. Viktor Orbán
Honourable Prime Minister!

Because of the increasing hatred and threats against Muslims, which have repeatedly led to assaults, I invite you to speak to the Hungarian People, to the parliamentary politicians!

I respectfully ask you to guarantee the physical protection of our mosques and our families!

I can tell you we are afraid. We have seen the historical examples that have been committed against European minorities, from the Holocaust to Srebrenica!

There are atrocities against Muslim women with hijabs; we receive a lot of threats, and because of the ambiguous and irresponsible announcements of many politicians or journalists, people have a spite, now completely open, against Muslims who live here!

There are not many of us, Hungarian Muslims, and Hungary is our country; while a non-Hungarian Muslim has the opportunity to move back to his home country, there is no other place for us to "go home."

We are afraid because no one has ever been called to account for any incitement or physical assault or for the disgrace of our mosque!

If you think that Islam or Muslims do not belong today in Hungary, please indicate that and give us the opportunity to look for new places where we can feel peace, fearless and safe.

Because we are afraid that, just like in the case of Gypsies, someone may kill a Muslim or set a mosque on fire any time. In 2005, somebody shot through our mosque window without any consequences.

⁴⁵ One can access the letter in Hungarian on:
<https://www.facebook.com/zoltan.bolek/posts/10154486945978419>.

My father's family emigrated from the Felvidék due to the Benes decrees, my maternal grandfather was taken away because he was a kulak. In 1979, I was banned from public affairs for five years because of agitation against the system, and my passport applications were rejected based on "harmful public affairs." Then I was persecuted because of my political conviction, but will I get restrictive practice because of my religion in the future, or even now?

Waiting for your answer, yours faithfully,

Zoltán Bolek, President, Hungarian Islamic Community, one of many Hungarian Muslims

The Hungarian Islamic Community reacted⁴⁶ to one of the statements by Gergely Gulyás, floor leader of the Fidesz party⁴⁷ in November 2017. In an interview, Gulyás earlier connected the construction of mosques to the question of the security of the country. He then stated, "There will be no mosque in Hungary, that's how we can react to this. We feel sorry for those who are the victims due to this, but we cannot change that position because it is not just a matter of religious freedom, but a question of security in a country."

The statement by the Hungarian Islamic Community states:

Announcement of the Hungarian Islamic Community

Budapest, Sunday, 5th of November, 2017 (OS) – Regarding the announcement of Gergely Gulyás's statement

The Hungarian Islamic Community read with deep astonishment and indignation the statement by Mr. Gergely Gulyás that there will be no mosques in Hungary! The representative is going against the Constitution of Hungary, human rights, and international standards. We have been experiencing Islamophobia for many years on our own, and we find it unfortunate that, so far, neither the domestic politics nor the representatives of other churches have resisted against the statements about us! More than eighty years ago, the Nazis started the Holocaust just like this, and Islamophobia led to the slaughter of Bosnian masses. In Hungary, the great majority of Muslims live in a peaceful community, with serious historical traditions. We can think of both the Muslims from Árpád dynasty and the thousands of Bosnian Muslims in the First World War. Are they demolishing the statue of Gyula Germanus? Is it for us to draw distinctive signs on our clothes? Such speeches cannot be accepted from a responsible politician! Because then exile awaits for us. Such statements recall the darkest era of Hungary, the Holocaust. We are waiting for him to withdraw the statement and issue an apology, imputing the fact that, as the elections are approaching, the Muslim card is used to win their electors. We are not "migrants," this is our country!

Publisher: Hungarian Islamic Community.

⁴⁶ "A Magyar Iszlám Közösség közleménye" *Országos Sajtószolgálat*, 05 November 2017. Accessed: 25 February 2018. http://os.mti.hu/hirek/131397/a_magyar_iszlam_kozosseg_kozlemenye-ben.

⁴⁷ "Magyarország nem lesz mecset: tiltakoznak az iszlám jogvédők" *Index* 05 November 2017. Accessed: 13 December 2017. https://index.hu/belfold/2017/11/05/magyarorszagon_nem_lesznek_mecsetek_tiltakoznak_az_iszlam_jogvedok/

6.2. Zoltán Szabolcs Sulok

In May 2016, *hirado.hu* published an article⁴⁸ on the harassment already mentioned above. There were several specialists, including Zoltán Szabolcs Sulok, the head of the Hungarian Muslims Community, speaking about the topic. He said, "If one believes in Islam, one cannot rape women, because on the one hand, fornication is forbidden, on the other hand, in a Muslim country, the perpetrator of rape is condemned to death by a court based on Sharía, the Islamic religious law." He also emphasized, "We disagree with the way some European women dress in scanty clothing and lead a loose life, but that does not entitle us to anything. Neither to despise nor to hurt them. According to Islam, women should be respected, even if they walk naked." He added that someone could become a criminal irrespective of religion. As they do not call the community to account for a felony of an individual in case of Christians, there is a need for individual assessment regarding Muslims too.

The *24.hu* published⁴⁹ Sulok's thoughts in August 2016. There he mentions several important questions about the topic. He points out that those who claim that it is impossible for a Muslim to live in Europe because of the religious, dietary, or sanitary rules and cultural differences are wrong. As he puts it, "This [Islam] is a very livable way of life. Anyone can observe Islamic laws with great flexibility and freedom, regardless of whether they live in a cold or warm country, in the East or West." He shared that the increase of world-wide anti-refugee attitude and fear of terrorism are also perceptible by the Muslims in Hungary. Because of the anti-Islamic rhetoric of the Hungarian government, people hold Muslims responsible for the refugee problem, although not all refugees are Muslims and not all

⁴⁸ "Nem a vallásuk miatt molesztálnak a migránsok" *Hirado.hu* 23 May 2016. Accessed: 22 February 2018. <https://www.hirado.hu/2016/05/23/nem-a-vallasuk-miatt-molesztalnak-a-migransok/>.

⁴⁹ Imre Dávid, "Hiába a mesterségesen szított iszlámellenesség, egyre többen járnak mecsetbe" *24. hu* 15 August 2016. Accessed: 08 December 2017. <https://24.hu/kozelet/2016/08/15/hiaba-a-mestersegesen-szitott-iszlamellenesség-egyre-tobben-jarnak-mecsetbe/>.

refugees from Islamic countries are religious. "At a rhetorical level, people conflate the refugee wave with Islam, and Islam with terrorism," he said. This is done despite the fact that religious and intellectual leaders of the Islamic world openly and sharply condemn terrorism. He points out that 80% of the victims of the Islamic State are Sunni Muslims. He emphasizes that "ISIS is not an Islamic movement, just as Ku-Klux-Klan is not a Christian one. Neither in its principles, nor in its actions, can be linked to our faith; it just (ab)uses our symbols." He claims that the actions of ISIS and the opposition of the Shiite-Sunni are based on political differences, not on religious ones. The fact that Hungarians and most people do not know much about Islam makes anti-Islamism a more serious issue. The recently increasing number of inexperienced, ignorant "Islamic experts" make the situation even worse, whom Sulok clearly criticises for that reason. In relation to the frequently mentioned women's legal issues, he says that, contrary to public belief, Islam grants exactly the same rights to women as to men.

However, he says that the anti-refugee and anti-Islamic propaganda definitely works, because the Hungarian Muslims are subject to atrocities more and more often. Because of such rhetorics, many are fearful that the situation may get worse. He is of the opinion that Hungarian society is divided into two groups. "While some are open and tolerant to refugees and Islam, others are openly suspicious and rejecting," he claims. However, despite the propaganda, more and more people join Islam—more women—as propaganda increases people's curiosity. He also emphasized, "it is also good for Islam's popularity that they have recently been invited to much more public conversations and forums than before."

Sulok highlights that they will do their best to maintain social peace. "We are trying to establish a sincerely good relationship with the government and the competent bodies. We hope that sooner or later everyone will realize that it is not necessary to threaten social peace in any way because they could let the ghost out of the bottle, which will be difficult to

command back later. We live here in Hungary, and we pay our taxes, respect laws and comply with social expectations as well as any other honorable men. We do our duty; in return, we just want to live in peace and practice our faith without being verbally attacked or spat in the face in the street."

He also points out another criticism which is mentioned often, that Islam got stuck in the Middle Ages and cannot handle the challenges of modern times. "It is possible to give answers to social change in the context of religion. That's the good in Islam, that it can react to these changes, while his principles are not injured. Justice, honour, righteousness, good morality: these values are the cornerstones of our faith. These determine the framework of it, and Islam has always been able to keep up with the world—without stretching this framework. It did not need any reform like Christianity, where it was necessary as the rigorous dogmas obstructed scientific development. Remember, there was a time when scientists such as Galileo Galilei were forced to deny his own doctrines. There was no such thing in Islam. Muslim civilization was flourishing at the time when people were strongly attached to religion and complied with the orders. When they turned their back on religion, this stagnation and decline in what we see today occurred."

Although Sulok hopes the anti-refugee and anti-Islamic impulses are slowing down in Europe, he believes that the Islamic world itself will not be able to offer solutions to this problem as it is still in a "quasi-colonial" status. "As long as the Muslim countries are governed by external political interests, improvement can hardly be expected." In closing, he said, "All I ask from my fellow countrymen is that they should not judge us without getting to know us. Do not accept what you hear from politicians or the media without criticism; look for authentic information and study Islam instead. It is important that we people with different religions and ideologies get to know each other more thoroughly so we have the chance to live in peace."

Zoltán Szabolcs Sulok in November 2016, the *Biztonságpolitikai Szakkollégium* with *ELTE ÁJK Politológia TDK* held a conference titled "The Islam in Europe—Europe in Islam?", in which he also gave a talk. A summary of the conference was published by *biztonsagpolitika.hu*.⁵⁰ His main theme was what the Muslim community is like in Hungary. He explained that the Muslims in this country have a greater number of men because of the immigration, but more women take up the religion. He also emphasized that domestic Muslims are younger than the Hungarian average. However, "because of the high population growth, their standard of living is low, but they do not live in ghettos and they are full members of society," the article states. As for the challenges of Hungarian Muslims, Sulok said that besides the increased discrimination and provocation since the migrant crisis, poverty, the difficulties of community organization, the lack of infrastructure for religious practice and religious education are also considered serious problems.

7. The Congregation of Faith

7.1 Sándor Németh

In August 2016, *Sándor Németh*, the pastoral leader of the Hungarian denomination Congregation of Faith gave an interview to *Mandiner*.⁵¹ He stated that the root of his opinion on Islam comes from past events; the relationship between Christianity and Islam in its 1,500-year-old history. He does not agree with the "syncretistic trend," which aims to bring different religious systems to a common denominator, and thereby, integrating them into a unified system. The differences between Jewish-Christian revelation and Islamic teachings are so sharp that they cannot be integrated. "Though there were quieter periods, Islam has

⁵⁰ Márk Petróczi, "Az iszlám Európában – Európa az iszlámban?" 24. *hu* 08 December 2016. Accessed: 10 January 2018. <http://biztonsagpolitika.hu/egyeb/az-izlam-europaban-europa-az-izlamban>.

⁵¹ Ákos Gergely Balogh, Martin Bukovics, "Az iszlám és a balliberális oldal szövetsége fenyegetés – Németh Sándor a Mandinernek" *Mandiner* 31 August 2016. Downloaded: 12 February 2018. https://keresztény.mandiner.hu/cikk/20160831_az_izlam_es_a_balliberalis_oldal_szovetsege_fenyegetes_nemeth_sandor_a_mandinernek.

been hostile to Christianity since the beginning. Since the late '60s, radical Islam has increasingly been acting against Christianity and Judaism. This should be solved by a *modus vivendi*, insisting on the right of separation." He made the following statement on migration. "I understand that the vast majority of refugees are victims. I do not want to offend the victims. But they will undoubtedly be used in the future because they have always done so. *Hijrah*, spreading faith by escaping to a more peaceful place is not new; it is known from the history of Islam. Currently, it is about conquering Europe. In Western Europe, islands of modern-day-Caliphate were formed. In newspapers, they are called no-go zones. They have succeeded in setting up an ethnic melting pot where the religious affiliation is more important for believers in Islam from Morocco, Afghan, Iraq and Syria than their ethnicity."

Concerning the consequences, he emphasizes, "If we look at Hungary, this would mean the end of democracy. We separate the State and Church, but for Islam this is unknown. Anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism will increase. These [Muslim] countries had already been infected with Nazi conceptions before the Second World War. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* were still best sellers even after the Second World War. The threat of terror will increase—we will have to spend a lot to compensate it." In addition, another thought from him: "There is an unfortunate encounter between globalism and caliphate, because globalism also advertises the liquidation, the emptying of national identity and the surrender of national sovereignty."

Kossuth Rádió did an interview⁵² with Sándor Németh in September 2016 about migration. He stated there is a conflict and tension between nationality and globalization, which has been strengthened and sharpened by migration events. Before the "uncontrolled crowd" was invited to Europe, the Congregation of Faith had the opinion that the citizens and everybody who fled from war should be helped. This event has outgrown itself as a political

⁵² "180 perc" 29 September 2016. Accessed: 12 February 2018. <https://nava.hu/id/2458438/>.

and religious problem since it can no longer be distinguished who the actual refugees are, who the terrorists are, or who the economic refugees are. The internal motivation of refugees cannot be separated. He says that the masses coming to Europe will mean more serious problems and challenges for the host countries. In his opinion, the irresponsibility of Western politicians is the cause of "dissatisfied masses" who are arriving in Europe.

He mentioned his several travels to the Middle East, because he wanted to encounter the culture of the people there. However, he faced the fact that cultures of violence, anti-Christianity and anti-Europe reside in many of the countries there. This will mean such challenges for Europe for which it is not prepared. Explaining the possible vision of the future, he says that events will influence, not only the lives of believers, but also of non-believers. The terrorist threat will grow, so authorities need to receive more financial support because security measures need to be increased. This will increase taxes for the population. It is also important to pay attention to Western European experiences. Based on these, it can be said that migrants adhere to their own norms and cultures in host countries too. This leads to the creation of parallel societies, which also generates many problems. Finally, he adds that he thinks, concerning this issue, "it is necessary to insist on national resistance against the pressures of the globalists and their campaign of expulsion."

The newspaper *Figyelő* did an interview with Sándor Németh in February 2017. Unfortunately, this article is no longer available in its entirety online. Compared to bigger news sites, we finally found that the most detailed review was provided by a small *Vigyázó* blog.⁵³ In the interview, Sándor Németh answered the question of whether he supports migration and migrants or not. "Natural mixing has always existed between ethnicities, cultures, and religions under certain constraints and conditions. There is nothing wrong with that. But today's migration is perceived as a directed invasion, which seeks to artificially and

⁵³ "Németh Sándor a Figyelőnek: Sokan vagyunk, de nem elegen" *Figyelő* 10 February 2017. Accessed: 04 February 2018.
https://vigyazo.blog.hu/2017/02/10/nemeth_sandor_a_figyelonek_sokan_vagyunk_de_nem_elegen.

violently combine European, national and Christian identities with ethnicities, cultures, and religions, which confess malignancy against them. I cannot support this because I find the commitment of the majority of migrants to the common goods and interests of the host countries quite doubtful."

8. The Evangelical Brotherhood of Hungary

In November 2016, *Magyar Nemzet* interviewed⁵⁴ Gábor Iványi, President of the Evangelical Brotherhood of Hungary, on the refugee issue. "Every sensible and honest man argues for the refugees' acceptance within rational bounds. Nobody could think that everyone should be accepted without sorting and controlling, exceeding the reciprocity of the given country. But complete reclusion, criminalization of refugees is a sin. Yes, we should interpret Jesus' words [I was a stranger and you welcomed me] as we have to open our borders and homes for the asylum-seeker." In addition, he agrees it would be better to deal with the problem locally in their home country, but if this had been realistically achievable, there would not be so many people who are leaving their homeland. He emphasizes that these people must be treated with understanding and mercy. In addition, he says he deeply agrees with Pope Francis's statements and actions regarding the poor and refugees, and he calls those hypocrites who criticize and mock the Pope for this reason.

The Evangelical Brotherhood of Hungary officially addressed this matter when, in June 2017, it published an announcement⁵⁵ on the refugee issue.

Declaration on the Refugee Case - Gábor Iványi:

In the name of our church, the Evangelical Brotherhood of Hungary, I would like to thank bishops Miklós Beer and Tamás Fabiny, for their clear and decent speech concerning refugees. The experience of suffering from wars and economic worries is an inevitable part of human destiny. Today one half, tomorrow the other half of the people may be forced to show

⁵⁴ Tamás Velkei, "Nincsenek érdemtelen szegények!" *Magyar Nemzet* 28. November 2016. Downloaded: 11. January 2018.

<https://magyarnemzet.hu/archivum/belfold-archivum/nincsenek-erdemtelen-szegenyek-4238858/>.

⁵⁵ "Nyilatkozat menekült ügyben - Iványi Gábor *Wesley János Lelkészképző Iskola*" 22 June 2017. Accessed: 03 February 2018. <http://wesley.hu/archive/cikk/nyilatkozat-menekult-ugyben-ivanyi-gabor>.

or to accept the divine values of solidarity. We are joining the bishops' call. We have also supported and will continue to support our asylum-seeker fellow-men.

We also encourage our believers and those to whom our voice reaches to do so.

Gábor Iványi,

President of the Evangelical Brotherhood of Hungary

Budapest, 21st of June 2017.

9. Conclusion

In concluding this study, we could say the religious leaders had different opinions about the migration issue. It is important for everyone to have their own space expressing their opinion, whether in this or any other topic. This summary could be relevant to see the different and similar opinions in one article. On this basis, everyone can deduct their own judgement without any external pressure. In our study, we only wanted to point out that violence-free opinion forming and communication are definitely necessary in a situation like this, because it can later lead to a better solution to the problem.