





**How a  
Hungarian Atheist  
Became a  
New Testament  
Christian**

**Fehérvári Péter**

Based on a true story  
by:  
Fehérvári Péter

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Hungarian Atheist  
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a New Testament  
Christian**

**Can We Live Without God?**

## **Recommendation**

It is with great pleasure that I recommend to you Fehérvári Péter's new book. It was my special privilege to study God's Word with him during his search for truth. Peter is a well-educated and honest man, who has investigated very important questions about life and has found the answers in God's Word. Peter's search for truth has led him to share God's Word with others through teaching and preaching. His rebirth and spiritual growth after empty years of atheism are a tremendous example and positive encouragement for so many who know him. I know that this book will inspire many for years to come.

Charles Chandler, retired evangelist

USA, Texas, Farmersville

International Traveling missionary of the Church of Christ

# Foreword

What can a man think in the center of Middle-Europe, in the Carpathian Basin, in a republic called Hungary? What is his place in the world? What about his lifestyle, beliefs and his spiritual state and of those around him?

It may be interesting and instructive if I present, through my own example, the spiritual path a man can explore throughout his earthly life. This way led from “scientifically based” atheism, to learning the Gospel and the Word of God, the Holy Bible, to follow Jesus Christ and the New Testament.

A short description of our social background can also help in understanding, and add some color to the recollection.

I think it is my duty to warn the inquiring reader, who will read this writing from beginning to end, that it is my hope that your former belief system will waver, possibly fall, or that you will experience similar side effects. In any case I ask you to immediately turn to your spiritual doctor and pharmacist, the Holy Scriptures. You will not be disappointed.

For your journey, please, accept from me this guiding motto with love:

“You proud and self confident man, if you want good for yourself, bow your knee and head in front of your Creator. Receive what He offers you in His infinite love: grace, redemption and Jesus Christ, the example to follow. Then God will take you by your hand and will lead you to salvation.”

The Author





## **At the Very Beginning**

Being born in Hungary in the year 1949 meant that you entered into a social situation which was a part of a worldwide experiment. We were facing an uncertain attempt, to say the least.

After our country lost the war, the Soviet Union became our “Big Brother”. With their effective help, we began to walk on the rugged and largely untrodden path of Socialism. In such circumstances, being born into a middle-class family as a second boy child may seem like an optimistic undertaking but, as the proverb holds, youth is folly and my parents were quite young at that time.

Let us admit that to rebuild a physically and morally degraded country took some youthful optimism. There was a need for steady faith concerning the future even when it looked very uncertain. Somehow the driving desire for renewal suppressed the sensible judgment in people. Repressed, dormant energies broke forth from our people. After a short power struggle, we were pushing the knock-kneed wheel cart of the socialist people’s democracy. Of course at that time we did not know where we were heading. Only a minority realized that after this defeated fascist dictatorship another dictatorship was on its rise.

This was the background in which Hungary’s children, I included, spent our childhood, and later our young school years. We happily played soccer and scored goals on the grounds of the bombed-out buildings. We enjoyed all the benefits of carefree childhood. We never bothered about the ideology that was lurking in the background, whetting its teeth at us, because children are just like that.

Our emotions were not disturbed by the fact that at this time we had to be little drummers, with a whistle and a blue tie. Later we had to become pioneers, with a red tie and the “Twelve Points of the

Pioneers”, which was somewhat similar to the Ten Commandments. Of course this was to have a good influence on our moral education, but the true source of these ethical norms was successfully and deliberately centrally concealed.

Let’s admit that this ideological mischief has attained its goal. It succeeded in forming a materialist worldview which was based on trusting in the omnipotence of natural science, based on evolutionism.

Every dictatorship is most apoplectic and violent in its first period. It was so with us, too. Our small media was under strict state censorship, so relatively few people had information on the inhuman cruelties of this era which were exposed only through word of mouth. What happened to those who disagreed with the system, and were persecuted by it, was kept silent and was largely unknown to the masses. It was only after the change of the political system, (1989?) and after years of investigative work, that the veil was pulled off. Before that, the everyday people could not assume bad intent about their leaders who were always presented in good light.

That’s why they were relatively popular. One typical manifestation of this was the Labor Day celebration on the 1st of May in which workers, peasants and intellectuals, in an organized form, enthusiastically cheered their idolized leaders. After having our meal of hot dog and beer, we could go home satisfied and with a strengthened faith in a greater and more beautiful future.

With the passing of years, dictatorships soften up and slowly become more and more liberal. Because of outward political — and especially economic pressures — the inward economic situation and production influenced the direction of domestic politics more and more. The downside of the system popped up here and there. The artificial industrial structure, lack of economic competition, and the overwhelming power of joint-ownership made their impact by pulling everything backwards. Human creativity was forced into the background so that everybody could be “equal”. This did not

help the competitiveness of our economy. Lagging behind the world was encoded into the system. All this brought about financial debt, economic and fiscal crisis, and finally political bankruptcy of the country.

It became obvious that change was inevitable. The country needed a political will and independence, which would allow the influx of Western capital and modern technologies into the economy. The only chance for this was if we joined the capitalist world order and market economy. The change became possible by the historical need, brought about through the fall of the socialist world order and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Comecon.

We were just gawking around, breathing in the “free” air of the suddenly arrived new system. We tried to retool our self-defensive socialist habits, to fit the — for us — new world order, and the economic environment that belonged to it.

This is still going on with more or less success, as we try to catch up from the lag of half a century, compared to the developed West. Such an enormous paradigm shift in an economy cannot work overnight. After more than 25 years, we can see that we still have a long way to go, but a significant lag — which is probably even more difficult to fix — is in our minds and in our way of thinking. The distortion in our souls and in our spiritual state caused even more harm. These wounds on the body of our society are much harder to heal.

As I’m not an economist. I will not take it on myself to present to you in detail and in depth the economic anomalies of the previous era. There are authors who know more than I and have written on this subject. I’m only touching the surface of the matter, in order to give you a feel of the effect of this issue on our society.

I am mainly interested in the spiritual effects of this paradigm shift. I would like to present these to you honestly and with respect, through my own personal example. I feel that this path that I have walked on will be familiar to others also. And to those who are at the beginning of this spiritual journey, I would like to give direc-

tions, and maybe clues, hoping that they should not come to a halt, go astray, or if they do go astray, should find their way back. For all should start on this way, whether they like it or not. The good news is that the chance to travel to the end of the right way is given to all, equally. The bad news, however, is that few succeed in finding it. I can only hope that we will meet at the end of the road, and that my little story can give a little help.

Let's put up a warning sign right at the beginning of the road. On this we can read an important Bible passage from Matthew's Gospel, chapter 7, verses 13-14. This is Jesus speaking: ***“Enter in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be who go in there: Because narrow is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.”***

## The Way

I've already mentioned my carefree and feverish youth. This time for all of us in the same age group was like a game of destiny on a huge playground. We were preparing for LIFE with capital letters. We were testing our talents with sincere, youthful carelessness. We studied science, art, music, theatricals and we were involved in sports. We were having fun, wherever we could. I could do all these in the 6th district of Budapest, where I set behind the tarnished desks of the Felső Erdősor street elementary school, and Kölcsey Ferenc Gimnázium (high school).

Our spiritual training was taken care of through a compulsory curriculum. Our educational system introduced us to the natural sciences, on the basis of Darwinist evolution theory. So the education system was steeped in materialism, as the only acceptable ideology, which was given to us from the reigning political system. This was accompanied by the practically compulsory membership in KISZ (Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség = Young Communist League). The norms, which were drafted there, did not give us any real trouble. We had neither time nor motivation to search after their source. Our teachers could not deviate from the centrally controlled curriculum. They knew that this was in their best interest and if they came from a different ideological background, they kept it in deep silence. Naturally their attitude was influenced by the fact that their livelihood was hanging in the balance. However, often from their words with a special emphasis, or an enigmatic smile, we could conclude that their conviction in the curriculum they taught was not in full harmony with what they believed. But that was all, and no more. And this was not enough for us to begin thinking of alternative ideologies. For that we would have needed family motivation. I cannot remember seeing many examples of that among my companions. Or it just didn't come to light.

So the materialist world view slowly, but surely, was growing stronger in us, and in me. This happened in spite of the fact that after I was born, just to be sure, I was christened according to the liturgies of the Catholic Church which represented one of the “tolerated” religions. Of course I had no memories of that whatsoever. I could only have concluded that there was another worldview from the informative fragments coming from the “whispering family calendar,” or my godparents, who lived next door.

But somehow this faded away. My parents, probably with similar motives as my teachers, were entirely silent on this matter.

My father was trained as a craftsman, and began to work as a suitcase assistant. My mother learned to be a dressmaker, and worked in an inner city dress salon. My father was strongly drawn to the world of sports. As a young man, he was a middle distance runner in the Vasas Sports Club. After that he graduated from the Sports Organizer Faculty of a Physical Education College as a sports organizer, and he was accepted into the Ministry of Sports. There he quickly moved to the Economic and Finance Department. Later he became the department leader, until his retirement. He performed this responsible task with honor. To work in this position, it was required to be a member of MSZMP (Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt = Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party = Communist Party Member). In external manifestations, he had to look like one who had the same ideological orientation.

I will never know how deeply he was affected by the ideology of the system which he served in his job. In our family, questions of ideology did not arise between parents and children. I’ve only learned after his death, from my mother, that they met in a Catholic Student Society in the early 1930’s. When they were married in 1936, their wedding was held in a church building, with the ceremonies of this same church.

The Communist system, like every dictatorship, based its power on intimidation, and ran a large network of informers. Maybe

it was because of this that in our family, as in other families, the question of religion was so marginalized that it was virtually nonexistent. Still it is possible that there was some latent religious loyalty in our mother, because she christened all three of her children: my older brother, my younger sister, and me. It is also true that somehow our father could never participate at these events because of other commitments, so these happened in secret. Later we, as children, never met with any form of declared faith. Our parents raised us according to Christian moral norms, without saying a word about it. By their example they were guiding us in the right direction, and I will always be thankful to them for this.

My life in high school went on like this and my interests began to point more and more to one direction. It became obvious early that I was growing to be a lively, talented young man in various things. I tried several different sports such as gymnastics, soccer, tennis, handball, athletic jumping, etc. As I could not really make a choice from them, it seemed obvious that I would go in the direction of the Teacher's Faculty from The Physical Education College as a life goal. Biology and physical education were among my strengths so I applied to this school for further studies. As I was preparing for high school graduation, and I was training to reach the practical acceptance levels. Everything was going as planned, and "I never dreamed," that anything could distract me from this road. But it happened. This was the first time that I saw the proverb coming true, that "man proposes, God disposes".

It happened that, as I was training, a stretched rubber band escaped from under my foot, and struck me in my right eye with great force. This incident was not without consequences. On the retina of my eye, which was hit, a small rupture was formed. This was not diagnosed when first examined, but because of continued physical stress and the resulting inner pressure, the rupture became larger. At the edge of the rupture, the retina began to detach from my inner eye wall. This brought disturbing changes in my field of vision so I

went for another medical examination. A more thorough test showed that the problem was very serious and an immediate surgery was necessary if I did not want to lose my eye. After a one-and-a-half hour ophthalmic surgery, and 26 days of lying without moving, the good news was that my eye did not have to be removed.

The bad news was that I had to give up both the Physical Education College, and the teaching career. Now I was preparing for high school graduation, without being able to read for six weeks following the surgery. My classmates took turns reading my lessons to me. Thanks to them, I could complete my last semester of high school.

This, and a little push, gave me the chance to study radio and television engineering. I can't deny that this was not in my preliminary plans but the world of electronics opened a window to a new area, and "I never dreamed" that it would play a part in the most significant change of my spiritual life.

The year 1969 meant the beginning of LIFE for me. As a graduated radio and TV mechanic, I began to work in one of the centers of Hungarian communication engineering, the Orion Factory. I worked in the tool division and was able to learn this profession. My task was to repair broken calibrating and authenticating tools. It was an exciting thing to me, and often I was so occupied with the solution to a specific problem that I didn't even realize that my working time was up. For a while it didn't dawn on me that the income I received for this job was precious little for leading an independent life. Initially, this problem was overcome through the financial backing of my family home — up until the point when the son of man begins to think about marrying the daughter of man! This step brings a serious change into the process of independence, a new challenge in life that forces him to take another step forward. "I never dreamed," that this event would take me back to my old passion of sports, namely, professional sports.

From a higher government level, in the Ministry of Sports,



the decision was made to improve the Hungarian sports profession and, in the process, to purchase a Japanese video recorder. This camera — which was not available in Hungary with all the bells and whistles of its time — was brought into the country, but there was only one problem: no one knew how to operate it and there was no service support for it.

Facing this challenge, the Finance Director of the Ministry of Sports began to search for a solution. It was the year 1972, and my father was the head of the Finance Department for National Physical Education and the Sports Office. When he was informed of the situation, and knowing my special skills in telecommunications and my past experience in sports, he asked if I could take on the work to operate and service the equipment. I would also have to organize and operate the Recording Service which would help the professional work of the sport associations. This was quite a challenge for a young man. The high-tech would satisfy my interest in telecommunications, and it was also attractive because of my interest in professional sports, so I accepted the offer. The higher income would come just in time for my wedding, and the life which my “chosen” and I were about to begin together.

I began to work with great enthusiasm. Soon the VCR Service was an effective help for the preparation of Hungary’s top sportsmen and women from many different sports. So I became a part of the sport association’s professional team for the central training camps. It was a beautiful, effective and edifying eight years of my life, which also included some outstanding Hungarian results. There were several Olympic and World Championship gold medals in kayak, canoe, wrestling and judo. Németh Miklós received a gold medal at the Olympic games with a World Record, and the Regőczy-Sallay ice-dancing duo also won a World Championship. These are all beautiful memories for me. On top of that, during these eight years I had the chance to study at the Sports Organizer Faculty of the Physical Education College in Budapest. I graduated with

outstanding results, and my experiences there had a great impact on my future.

But “I never dreamed” that after these experiences in the sport profession my life would take another turn which would lead into the world of business enterprise, a very uncertain thing at that time. I had no idea then that we would stay there for 32 years.

I don’t know if the reader, by now, as noticed the phrase: “I never dreamed” in what I have to say. I noticed that it always came when my life took an unexpected and unpredictable turn. Life defies my plans. It’s as if someone always walks one step before me, and invisibly sets my course towards another direction — or was it planned destiny? It was becoming suspicious to me, but I didn’t know what to do with it.

I was married for eight years by this time, and my wife had presented me with two beautiful children. The financial state of our family was destitute as a result of home loan payments. My wife was an economist, and she found her paperwork job at the gas company unfulfilling so she applied for the lease rights of a state-owned perfumery, and she won it! This is how we became the leaseholders of a perfume and gift shop. It should be noted that, being ten years before the regime change (the fall of Communism), this was considered a very brave undertaking.

Well, if we didn’t have enough work until then, now we had. Starting and running a business, purchasing, uploading goods, receiving suppliers, maintenance, shop window dressing, etc. was an enormous amount of work. I don’t even have to say that my wife could not manage it alone, in addition to caring for our little children. This situation sucked me out of my stable job, as if I had never been there. I could only do what I had always done: I drew from the life lessons I had learned so far and took on the new challenge.

The following long period passed with the battles of entrepreneurship. The state dictatorship was softening and swelling, like leavened dough. The “I love you and I don’t” type relationship with

them made our daily 10-to-12 hours of intensive work even harder, with new taxes, discriminatory provision of goods, and infuriating policies. The regular, annoying inspections did not help our work either. This was a health-deteriorating, heroic- and sisyphian-struggle. Few undertook it in the uncertain hope of moving upward. Many dropped out during the long fight, but there were survivors and we were among them.

When we saw that our business had moved to the top of its profitability, we slowly but firmly pulled out of it and invested our hard-earned small capital and our credit in another area. We tried our best to do this honorably and correctly among the more and more difficult rules and heavy taxes.

Because of this, we had to find a new profession from time to time, which required continuous learning and flexibility. So we were perfume and gift traders for six years. After that, with a big jump, we ventured into the area of the catering industry. The inspiration to make this step was that we wanted to bring to our land some healthy eating. I had a classmate who was a caterer, and he was also encouraging me. The idea resulted in a salad bar/steaks/cold meals/fast-food restaurant which quickly became popular. In this second business we spent 21 busy years in one location outside of Budapest, which was well frequented by tourists and to which we were led by impulse.

You may still remember that my close connection to living a healthy lifestyle came from my long-time, sincere devotion to sports. Ironically, though, our businesses and the related lifestyle took their toll on our health. Years of stress, unilaterally sedentary days, and busyness, were not without consequences. Our bodies showed signs that we had to begin doing something to prevent serious health issues.

The mainstream of our lives had been in trading enterprises, but there was a secondary thread also which I had kept. This secondary issue was supported by what I had learned from my sporting

experiences. The truth that I formulated, and my conclusion was this: after a certain age, performance-based sport does not serve our health and, in fact, it deteriorates it. In my case, any time I tried to improve my fitness with sports, it always ended in grief. My body reacted first with acute, then chronic symptoms. This was not a small matter, especially if we consider the intense work I had invested in our business. The problem became even worse when conventional medical science could not do anything about my symptoms. After an unsuccessful knee operation and prolonged backache, I decided to take my health issues into my own hands. But “I never dreamed” the changes this would bring to my life, which were not uneventful even then. This “I never dreamed” slogan was very suspicious to me; I just didn’t know what it wanted again.

For me to achieve my goal of restored health, I realized that I would need new knowledge. Different knowledge. I thought that if I wanted to restore my health and keep it in the long run with some regular exercise, I would need to find new ways. It was a very serious challenge, so I began to search for a solution. An unexpected and strange event came my way, and my attention was turned to a completely new direction. One day I exchanged a few words with my next-door neighbor, and she said that she also had musculoskeletal problems, and suffered a lot. She had heard from someone that, in the city, there was a man who one day every week, effectively stopped painful musculoskeletal symptoms in people who could not be helped or healed. It was already the third month that my back pain resisted every medical intervention. In fact, it was becoming worse. I had nothing to lose, so the next time I went with her, and I did not regret it.

The following happened: we were sitting in the hall of a private house, several of us, waiting to get in. When it was my turn, a short man of about 50 to 55 came out of the room in white linen pants and white shirt. He was friendly and invited me in, sat me down on a chair, and he sat down on another in front of me. He lis-

tened attentively to my short report on about my problem and how the doctors tried to solve it, and then he said that my back had no problem whatsoever. So he stood me up, and stood next to me at my side. With his left hand he underset my back, he placed his thumb on my sternum, and pushed it hard. The next moment my back pain was gone! I was totally astounded. For the first time in three months, I had no pain in my back! Then he told me that I was not breathing well, and he pressed my right rib. As a result of this, I could take twice as deep a breath as before. After my second astonishment, he said that we were done. After paying, which was miniscule compared to my former treatment charges, I left without any symptoms.

Becoming free from chronic pain, more oxygen in my lungs, the surreal and quick experience threw me into a euphoric state. The whole “treatment” did not last more than 15 minutes. “This was unbelievable” — I thought to myself, and I could not stop giggling for minutes. The thing that had happened totally contradicted my picture of medicine until that time. My knowledge of anatomy, physiology and health that I had learned at the PEC about traditional Western medicine was strongly brought into question. Is this also a way? Can this work? How is this possible? These questions were running in my mind, demanding immediate answers.

I turned around and went back, and waited for the practitioner to finish his workday. I asked Uncle Tóni — this was the name of the “healer,” — to give me a few minutes, as I wanted to talk with him. He agreed, and we went back to his room. I went immediately to the point. I told him how surprised I was by the unusual cure that he effected in my case. I also asked him how could I learn to do the same. I assured him that I would be willing to commit my time, energy, and money to acquire it. Even I was surprised that I had made such a quick decision in this matter, as it was not typical for me.

First he turned me down, saying that he did not teach and that the work he was doing was not so simple as it might seem. But

as I insisted, he agreed that I could meet him at his Budapest office and we would talk about it.

This was the year 1986, and I began a special journey into the world of alternative medicine.

We had just closed our first business, and were working on setting up the second. This involved construction. In the morning I worked at the construction site, and in the afternoon until late evening, in uncle Tóni's Budapest office, I was learning the practical basics of "reflexotherapy". I was always interested in how humans could stay healthy, and the possibilities of helping others. At some point this had motivated my interest in sports, too. I spent almost a year gaining practical knowledge in this area, which was totally new to me. Meanwhile the basis of our second business was set up and our restaurant was ready.

The difficulties of starting a new business enterprise do not really allow for another regular activity. Because of this, my interest in alternative medicine took a back seat, but never ceased. Under the ashes, the flame of interest kept smoldering, waiting for the wind of history to blow off the layer of ashes. This wind rose in 1989, as a result of regime change which turned Hungarian society upside down and brought new economic activity (the fall of communism). The changes in the education system now made it possible to study certain branches of natural medicine at the Health Training Institute, in the form of post-graduate training. It seemed that my desire to gain a theoretical knowledge of alternative medicine, which I had already successfully practiced on my family several times, would come to realization. I was now sitting in the school with great enthusiasm and interest on the weekends. After completing the three-modules of 120 hours each in alternative exercise and massage therapy, I was able to take the theoretical and practical state exam.

Through my studies, a completely new world was opening up to me. This teaching showed a different method of approaching health. It proved that the working of human life and health could

be described in different ways. I had to accept that the Western and Eastern cultures approached the matter differently, and that in itself demanded an explanation.

Western medicine started on the basis of empirical anatomical cognition, and through the use of physics, chemistry, and fast-developing technical sciences, had reached its present form. This kind of healing always remained inside the framework of the materialistic and evolutionist worldview. It explains the working of humans from this basis. Experience showed, though, that a host of functions couldn't be explained in this way. Man is a material and physical being, but he must have soul and spiritual working also. However this refers to a higher order of unexplained working of the material. They trust in the development of science, which sooner or later will prove an explanation of this, too.

Eastern medicine, recognizing the attainments of the West, describes the human physiological processes and view of health in a holistic system, which manages the man and his environment as an energy-informatics unit. It refers to the possibility of intervention as the keeping and/or restoring the harmonic working of this. It has developed a variety of solutions, such as acupuncture, acupressure, the moxotherapy, massage, physical therapy, etc. It deems that this harmony is the source of the working of the human soul. These Eastern philosophies recognize some kind of picture about God, as the possibility of returning to eternal life. They think that they can attain this through perfect harmony of body, soul, and spirit. They think they can make it happen through cleansing, and by meditation exercises. This can be obtained through more and more life cycles. This belief system is special, somewhat mystic, and completely devoid of any real evidence.

Still, the concept of God appeared in my life through meeting these philosophies. They helped the formation of an alternative worldview, which was opposed to my exclusive atheist, materialist view. As is usual, the new information generated new questions,

which naturally cried out for answers. What powers are working in people, and according to what rules? What does this have to do with health? Is there a God, and if there is, what is His role in our lives? Do humans have a purpose in their earthly life? What is the relationship of man and God? Was there a creation? What does God want from us?

These questions were lining up for me, and I could not find anyone who could give me an answer. At that time, at the beginning of the change of regime, the desire for spirituality came to the surface in the country like steam from an overheated pressure-cooker through its safety valve. An incredible amount and variety of spiritual teaching and teachers appeared on the market. They tried to fill the suddenly arising void. The abundance and the uncertainty of the unprepared receiving masses made it harder to navigate in the diversity, which I just called “spiritual mush”. Representatives of various religious doctrines tried to convince people of uncertain emotional existence who were looking for “something”. Most of them looked at “converts” primarily as a source of livelihood. The waves of religious interest rose in our little homeland, from time to time, depending on the color changes of the political spectrum. In this area the so-called historical churches played a great part, which in itself would not be a problem if they had not been closely linked to the political power structure and had a privileged position, but let’s not get into this yet.

In this somewhat chaotic situation I, too, was looking for authentic answers. This endeavor was parallel with the formation of a freshly accredited institution. That’s how I became a student of the Academy of Parapsychology. I hoped that there I would receive answers to the depth and laws of mental and spiritual energies working in man, and the possibilities of using them.

At first it was interesting and exciting to hear about the results of para-psychological research, about the concepts of telekinesis, teleportation, thought transfer, and bioenergetics, and about



the possibilities of developing these human skills, and their roles in healing. But when it came to practical implementation, my initial interest turned into an instinctive dread. As time went on, this was becoming stronger in me. The practical demonstrations and methods that we were expected to learn began to take us to the area of magic, which I found to be mystical and totally uncontrollable. When once one of our teachers spoke in a totally alien voice and glaring eyes, I left the place in a panic and never again came close to this institution. I realized much later that, thanks to my well-working instincts, or the “author” of the slogan “I never dreamed”, I had escaped from taking on a very heavy and wrong spiritual influence. However, interestingly, this trip to the dark side of the spiritual world had a special and positive side to it. Because “I never dreamed,” that in this institution I would see a quote, which will be very important to me. This quote changed my uncertain view about the existence of God. Do you see it again, this “I never dreamed” slogan? It was very suspicious to me!

I can’t remember how it came about but one of our teachers read a quote from Max Planck, the famous German physicist who was, by the way, the father of quantum theory and who spent most of his working time researching atomic and sub-atomic particles. In 1944 in Florence at a World Conference for physicists, in his lecture called “The essence of material,” as the conclusion of his research, he stated and logically deduced the fact that God exists! You can read the whole deduction in this book, in the chapter: “The Role of Tradition in our Lives.” This was a real “wow” experience for me because this quote completely coincided with my knowledge from electrical physics, but before that I could not bring it together logically to reach a clear fundamental philosophical summary.

From this point on, the existence of a God was unquestionable for me.

Imagine my situation. Here is a middle-aged man, at the prime of his life, who has grown up on the mandatory subjects of the

PEC, with the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels. And he is just facing the philosophical fact that there is a God. To process all this took a complete paradigm shift, which carries the possibility of a mild schizophrenia because accepting the existence of God raised an additional series of questions.

Who is God? Where is God? God is how many? What does God want? Is Jesus God? How can I get the right answers? From the writings of the Eastern religions? From the Koran? From Greek mythology? Or maybe from the Jewish-Christian Holy Scriptures?

The selection was huge, and if I were to read all the main writings of all these religions, with their interpretations, it would take at least half a lifetime And I was about over my first half. I did not have time for all that. And let's not forget that our salad bar/steaks/cold meals/fast-food restaurant business was working in full swing. At first sight it looked like an unsolvable task. Many religions mean many pictures of God, but according to the laws of logic and mathematics, there is only *one* truth, or there is *no* truth. I had made a faint attempt to know the hazy images of God through eastern religions, but I admit that I could not understand any of those ideas properly so as to make an informed choice.

It occurred to me that since I live in a Christian culture, why shouldn't I turn to one of the historical denominations in my country? But my knowledge and experience about the priesthood of these churches, the liturgies, hierarchical structure, historical roles, and merger with power, somehow prevented me from that. I cannot say truthfully that I did not have prejudices, but I felt that that solution to the problem was not for me.

The thing that still turned my attention towards the Jewish-Christian culture was the interesting information from an interesting story.

But before I begin the story, let me bring your attention to a unique phenomenon. As time was passing, I can confirm this, and today for me it is an obvious fact. When someone seeks God with an

honest and open heart, he will find helpful information on the way, and when he needs it the most.

But let us see the story that I found when I most needed it. It happened that life brought it to me at a Bible teaching lecture.

Blaise Pascal, according to his contemporaries, was a genius French physician-mathematician. One of the units of air pressure still bears his name. As a natural scientist, maybe surprisingly, he became a Christian relatively early. One of his friends asked him how he, as a rationally thinking man, became religious, and why he chooses the Christian faith when there was such a wide selection in the spiritual arena. Pascal gave the following answers: “I became a believer in God because if there is no God and eternal life, and I believe in this, then my chance for it is 0%. If there is, and I choose it, then it is 50%. This is 50% more than for those who don’t believe in it. And I became a Christian because after reading the holy writings of the different religions which contain the essence of their creeds, I came to the conclusion that only the Christian Holy Scriptures have prophecies in them. And not only a few of them, but more than 6400. And they are prophecies which were fulfilled as historic facts, hundreds of years later. These facts with human measures are miracles because overruling natural laws, like bypassing time, are clear proofs of divine intervention. As a mathematician, I know that there is only one truth. None of the other religions have such evidences” – said Pascal.

I love people who have clear and open thinking. Pascal was like that. My acceptance of him as an authentic personality played a great role in my choice of religious direction.

It seemed that finally I could see clearly in two important areas. One was that there must be a God, the other was that the God of the Jewish-Christian culture is the one, living and authentic God.

I needed time for the new knowledge to mature in my mind. The thought structures had to be rearranged in my faith system while the desire to seek truth was becoming stronger in me. This process

of settling was helped by the continual work in the restaurant. It was also served as a secondary help by the teaching of the ancient Chinese health-preserving exercise therapy. I was doing this latter thing, as I had a certificate of natural medicine. It was a real alternative to the different sports in order to keep me in shape physically. I did this with great enthusiasm, helping some people whom I could manage to win for the sake of their own health. I could draw an interesting and far-reaching conclusion from this activity of mine. Really good things in the area of healthy lifestyle spread far more slowly than the worthless and harmful.

As in my mind the spiritual soup was cooking, with lots of ingredients, I still could not tell what would come from it: clear, well formed, strong based system of faith, and the possession of truth, or a maze of spiritual mush.

I have to bring a family thread into this story because one of the important events leading to the solution has to do with my oldest child. My daughter wanted to learn a language, and using the possibility of becoming an exchange student, she finished the fourth year of her high school in Oklahoma, USA. Later she was also admitted to a university there. The exchange student program, set up in the US, was well organized and had good security elements and control options. The majority of these involved families who did this voluntarily with a desire to help exchange students, and in charitable forms. Our daughter was with two such families.

At that time we could only keep contact through telephone, which was very expensive, so we could not do this very often. Once, after we exchanged general information, our daughter let us know that she was attending a church regularly with her host family, and that she had baptized into Jesus Christ. This announcement was followed by a few seconds of silence. Then lots of desperate questions came from us. Our first reaction was that our poor daughter who had not received any spiritual training from our family traditions except a materialist worldview was caught in a cult in America. Af-

ter exchanging some sentences, though, we saw that there was no cult involved. The family where our daughter was staying was made up of believing Christians. Every Sunday morning, on the Lord's Day, they attended the local gathering of the Church of Christ, with hundreds of loving people, studying the Word of God. We slowly calmed down, but as we knew almost nothing about this church from our country, a little worry still remained in us. During the next school break that our daughter spent at home with us, the rest of our fears disappeared. The first Sunday she asked that, if it was possible, we should take her to Budapest because she had seen on the Internet that the Church of Christ had a congregation in Hungary. We were surprised by what she asked, and by another thing also. She spent a lot of her time reading an English language Bible, which preoccupied her attention. At that time "I never dreamed," that it would become my custom too. Again this slogan is recurring as a synonym of the unexpected again and again. This was more than suspicious, but I still did not say anything.

My wife, hearing our daughter's question, took her to the service of the Budapest Church of Christ. Once she was there, she listened to everything. As my wife returned home, and I inquired, she said that the small church received them with great love. An American evangelist, who spoke good Hungarian, held the worship service in an apartment, which was set up for that purpose. They began the meeting with songs of praise without instrumental music. After an opening prayer, they listened to a sermon from the evangelist on a Biblical topic, with more songs following. After that they remembered the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ, with the Lord's Supper. Then there was a short break, followed by a Bible Class. The topic of the class was the sermon. This was all interactive, with questions, answers, and comments, with the evangelist moderating. It was like a family talking, with the desire to know the Word of God better. After the Bible Class, there was informal talking, voluntary donations, and drinking coffee together, eating homemade cakes,

and getting to know each other.

This intimate atmosphere, unpretentious simple liturgy and natural environment, which were worthy of Jesus in its externals, made my wife sympathize with them from the first moment. My daughter explained that this was done the same way everywhere on earth in the churches of Christ, because this is what God shows us in the Holy Scriptures. I was a little surprised by that.

This was our first encounter with Christianity in its original form, but at that time we did not know it.

At the end of the third week of our daughter's visit, I took her to the worship service. I sat down at the back as an outsider who "does not belong there, just needed to bring my daughter" and anyway... It was all as my wife described it. There is no denying that what I saw and heard was closer to my idea of a Christian religious community's exercise of faith than anything I had come across so far. As I was watching the events unfold, the evangelist surprised me with a very important piece of information.

He took his Bible into his hand, lifted it up, and asked the audience: "Do you know what am I holding in my hand?" Several of them confirmed the obvious: "The Holy Scriptures." "Good, good, but if you would want to say it in one sentence, what is this, what would you say?" It seemed that it is not so easy to give an answer in one sentence, so after some faint attempts, the evangelist gave the answer, which was this:

"This is none other than a personal e-mail message to you, from God, who is your Creator."

Then he added: "It is up to you, whether you open this e-mail, or not; whether you want to know His message, or not."

Well, this information, in this context, hit home to me!

Do not forget, that I already had a strong concept about the existence of God, thanks to Max Planck. We had a Bible on our bookshelf at home, but the few dustings and moves never brought

me into closer contact with it. What I learned about it, though, at that meeting stuck in my mind because if I accepted that God exists I could not ignore His message and what He wants to communicate to me.

This thought made its home in my head for a lifetime. I went straight home and opened the e-mail that God sent me.

After that my attitude concerning interest in the Bible radically changed. I received great help in this from the evangelist who made it much easier to understand. Among other things, he told me not to start reading the Old Testament but the New Testament, because that was written to the people of our day. As the two are a unit, I would get to the Old Testament as well, in time.

I may not have to say that my fabulous encounter with this little church was the starting point of a lifetime of brotherhood which is still going on to this day!

But I did not give my soul easily. Two years of intense learning from the message of the Creator followed. This meant that now I only read books which helped me with this learning. Works on the origin of the Bible, the divine structuring hidden in it, prophecies and their role, historical sources, etc. But all these were miniscule, compared to the quantity and quality of information that I received from the Bible which was opening up to me more and more, for if we take the Bible into our hands with honest faith, and accept its infallibility, it will open up to us in its fullness. We can access the whole truth it contains. The more information I gleaned from it, the clearer the message became. Statements that seemed incomprehensible at first took on newer and clearer meaning, and opened the door for more to come. This knowledge made the Bible exciting to me, as if it was a well developed thriller. The statement that the evangelist said once made more and more sense: "The Holy Scriptures is not only paper and ink, but much much more." And so that we would understand clearly, he read to us Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12, which says: ***"For the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than***

***any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”***

My wonderment concerning truth that we can know from the Holy Scriptures made this learning process incredibly intense. If I was stuck somewhere, I always had someone to help me understand more. Usually this was our evangelist who soon became a close friend of mine. It was also a huge help that this spiritual adventure was going on with full agreement with my wife. We were looking for answers to our questions together. We could talk about our doubts, and help each other's learning process. Also we received a lot of help from the answers to our questions from the interactive Bible classes in the church. In addition, we visited other protestant churches and heard their preaching so that we could have a comparison.

There was another important aspect in this process. Our evangelist asked us from time to time to listen critically to what he said or stated. If we had the slightest doubt, he said that we should check in the Word. If we thought we found that he was teaching wrongly, we should bring it to his attentions since he is also just a man and can make mistakes, even with the best of intentions.

Since then I have been persuaded that the divine structuring of the Bible, church organization, a well-prepared evangelist, and the effective help of the Holy Spirit in understanding the Scriptures, together, can help maintain our correct orientation in the Word of God.

And something else is very important. A basic condition of the correct interpretation of the Bible is that we look up all the verses which refer to a certain theme, and we compare them in order to reach the conclusion, drawing from the whole of the Scriptures. As they are divinely constructed, these cannot contradict each other. This is how we can find the whole truth. God in His wise foreknowledge made sure that, in this way, we can avoid a dogmatic view,



which is a result of picking a verse and absolutizing it. I've never seen this attitude before, anywhere else, nor since.

For us the Sunday morning services from this point were never obligations coming from habits, but were the result of the desire to know better our Creator. To this was added every time the expression of our honor and love to the Trinity. But let us not run forward, since according to our timeline we are still at the seeking stage.

Making a religious commitment in my mind is a decision which can be made only in possession of proper knowledge, after careful consideration, and out of free will. This is because it can determine the rest of our lives, and also our salvation. For two years we were gathering information from our environment and the Scriptures. We had to see that the statements of the Bible were 100% dependable, that they truly came from the living God, and that they contain the only sure and relevant source of the way to live our lives, which can be known by everybody. In fact, the Word of God says this about itself in Paul's 2nd epistle to Timothy, chapter 3, verses 16-17: ***"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."***

Here I have to mention a special experience about the Scriptures. My experience was that the more I read from it, the stronger my faith became in it and in God. This was the result of learning the divine, rational truth within it. We can read about this in Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 10, verse 17: ***"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."***

This transformation can be experienced by anyone who thinks it is important to know and receive the message that God sent to him. It is a very special feeling when an atheist, who was untouched by religion, begins to come to know God through His word and it affects him more and more. I did not even notice: when

did I realize that I had to rethink my life morally, in the mirror of the Word? I had to admit that at several points I differed from the norms that our Creator laid down as important. We found faults in many parts of our lives: In our marriage relationship to each other, our family relations, in our work, in other people, in our attitude to society, and I could go on. We were surprised that, as we were going forward in obtaining knowledge, we felt a need for change. The desire to comply with the laws of Christ began to shape our lives step-by-step. We saw the changes that we needed to make and we began to live a repentant life, or at least we decided it was important to walk in that way.

But the greatest surprise for us was that our problems that had seemed unsolvable were solved one after the other when we turned to our Creator in prayer! We learned to pray and trust in the power of prayer. We saw the Bible statement in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 6, verse 33 and chapter 21, verse 22 come true: ***“But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”; “and all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”***

It was obvious — and it is today — that the restoration of the relationship to our Creator is a process that is possible, and if we walk in the way that He says, we can partake of His blessings and will be led to a much better life, to eternal life.

I can almost hear the questions now that skeptic readers may ask. I asked them also from our evangelist and from the Bible: “Then why is there so much sickness, wars, suffering? Why are there so many denominations and cults in Christianity? Why are there so many kinds of approaches to how we make contact with God?”

I want to answer with a question. When Jesus established His church in the first century, and after going to heaven, His congregations gathered, one after the other, on the first day of the week, which is the Lord's day. INTO WHICH CHURCH DID THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST GO TO WORSHIP?

You found it! Bingo! They went into the One Church, as there was no other! The operating parameters and rules of His church are written in the Bible exactly. The Creator, Himself, took care of this, and in the years of 80-90 AD, in the form of scrolls, epistles and their copies, the Scriptures became complete.

As incredible it may sound, every modern scientific and historic research acknowledges the authenticity of the Holy Bible, which contains 66 books. As of now, this is the best-documented ancient collection of writings, and as time goes on, thanks to the science of archeology, it is becoming more and more evident to the world also.

So if anybody wants to establish a Church of Christ, anywhere in the world, which works exactly like the one that Jesus Christ established in the first century, he can do it by following the description in the Bible. But, there is one thing he cannot do. He cannot differ from it. Why? Because “on that day,” when Jesus will come back for His church, He will only accept what He left to us, according to promise. Nothing else. Jesus Christ Himself says this in Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 7, verses 22-23: ***“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out demons? and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.”***

When this information became obvious to us, there was one question that we could not avoid. If we believe in God, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, where do we want to belong and why? The answer already seemed simple and clear: to His church, because that is the only one which has divine origin. In this church we wanted to be simply Christians, without denominationalism.

Every deviation from the Bible has resulted in the formation of a new denomination or cult, and they always came from imperfect people. The satanic principle of ‘divide and conquer’ has reached a point in our day so that many choose for themselves a church to sat-

isfy their spiritual need, as if they would be buying from a webshop. They take from the shelf; they join the denomination, which fits their notion best, ignoring the expectations of their Creator, as they are written in the Holy Scriptures.

(add scripture)

This is opposing the divine perfection and His church, against which “the gates of hell shall not prevail,” according to the gospel of Matthew. Following something else, and diverting from His laws and rules is simply unwise. And even more important, these are the open manifestations of disrespect towards God. It is possible to go against His expectations because the Creator granted free will to every man, but it is not expedient because of the consequences; without His blessings we will be vulnerable to our spiritual enemy, Satan.

Let me stop again at this point for a moment because I know that for many people to accept Satan as a real being means accepting the realm of fairytales. Some time ago I was also like that. It was so until I have found in God’s revelation to us the scripture verses which call our attention to this reality.

When Jesus Christ says in John’s Gospel, chapter 8, verse 44: **“He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it”**; when I read in the first epistle of Peter chapter 5, verse 8: **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour”**; or when the apostle Paul writes in the epistle to the Ephesians chapter 6, verse 12: **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places”**; I had to think, who will protect my fellowmen from these powers? They, who live their lives without the blessed safety net of faith and God, are exposed to the devastating attacks of a spirit-being and his servants, who is more intelligent than they

are, and they don't even know it. I realize that their skepticism helps them jump over this problem in their mind, but to the questions and problems which make their lives miserable, God's word provides the adequate answer, giving comprehensive information to everybody. It does not sell "pig in a poke", so we should not have false illusions.

As God saw our fallen situation, in His touching love He made a plan which provides a route of escape for every man. He gave His only begotten, sinless Son as a perfect sacrifice to redeem our sins. Therefore He accepts only faith in Him, with a life that proves our repentance, and our baptism. This puts us in Christ's saving body, a validating seal of our adult decision. In the book of Acts, chapter 2, verse 28 we read it like this: ***"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."***

There is no other way; only this one leads through Jesus Christ to God. Our Creator acknowledges only this one. Any way that differs from this will not lead to Him but into damnation. As the Scriptures say, we can choose, but we cannot ***"halt between two opinions"***. And God does not acknowledge loopholes either.

We needed this Scriptural information, so that we could begin to live repentant lives, on the basis of our honest faith in Jesus and God, after the example of Christ, and to proclaim this by being baptized.

The 30th July, 2002 was the most important date of our lives, the day of our new birth.

A few days earlier, with my wife and Évi, her friend, who came with us on our spiritual journey, we met the evangelist of the church. We told him that we felt we have enough Scriptural information to proclaim our will, and we would like to be baptized. Our evangelist received our request with joy, and said that if we believe in God and in His only begotten Son, and want to live a repentant life, then we can do it, and we chose the above date.

Baptism in the congregations of the Church of Christ is a public celebration, and whoever can be present from the local members, will. The new birth is a happy moment for all of us, and we love to make it memorable. We experience the burial of our old life by immersion under water, and resurrecting to the new life by coming out from under the water. Our Creator saw fit to do it this way, through the example of Jesus, and other Biblical events. The explanation of this example is written in the epistle to the Romans, chapter 6, verses 3 and 4: ***“Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*** (You should know, that in most Hungarian Bible translations, instead of the correct Greek “immersion,” they consistently wrote “christening”. You may guess why. If not, you will find out.)

But let’s go back to the celebration. I thought that this very important event could be made even more memorable if we held it in a natural setting. As we live in Szentendre, we often went to the nearby Pócsmegyer mine lake, in the summer time. To me it seemed very appropriate for baptism. The idea was accepted happily by our evangelist and the others too.

On the morning of our baptism we were waiting in Szentendre for the brethren who were coming from Budapest by commuter train. We were thinking on how we would get into the area of the mine lake, which at that time was already operated as a beach with a fence around it and with a cash desk. We greeted each other happily, and were about 10-12 of us. We were planning on going to a certain area of the lake, where we would not disturb the bathers, and buy a ticket only for those who are being baptized, if possible. We could all fit in two cars and, in a slightly concerned frame of mind, we left towards Pócsmegyer. This was a 15-20 minute drive.

But “I never dreamed” that these concerns would be solved

in a moment. It happened that the beautiful, sunny summer sky suddenly turned cloudy, and became very dark. When we got into our cars, it was raining with big drops, and within a few seconds such a great storm came that we could hardly see the road. We were concerned that the rain would wash away our baptism because there was such thunder lightning and pouring rain, as it can be only in the summertime! One of us remarked that it is true that we were to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, but he did not think that the Lord ordered a prewash! So with unbroken determination, and in good spirits, we traveled on and a few minutes later we arrived at the lake.

To our greatest surprise, when we got out of the cars the rain completely stopped and the sun came out. We were standing at the entrance which was wide open, and there was not a single soul at the beach area — no bathers, no cashier. It seemed that the storm sent everybody home!

We thanked the Lord for the nice opportunity and, after waiting for a few minutes, we went to a suitable place of the lake. At the shore we sang some worship songs, and then our evangelist baptized us in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins as the Scriptures teach. We came out of the lake a little moved, and our brethren greeted us with hugs and congratulated each one of us on our new birth. We gave our burdens to the Lord, and He took the pressing weight of our sins from our shoulders. We could stand in His presence for a fresh start, now with the powerful help of the Holy Spirit, to go on living a repentant life, trying to remain on the narrow way, in the hope of eternal life.

The whole story and its precise timing, still seems unbelievable to me even today, so that it can be explained with the “I never dreamed” slogan. As I think back to the events which significantly changed the course of my life when this slogan had *raison d’être*, with the knowledge I possess today, I can say with Solomon: “...**The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his**

***paths***” (Proverbs 5:21). ***“Discretion shall preserve you, understanding shall keep you: To deliver you from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaks perverse things”*** (Proverbs 2:11-12). ***“Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths”*** (Proverbs 3:5-6).

I know that these things sound amazing, but all these words are true. Because our Creator has all the potential for these, and His loving attention for us does not wane. And as a moral being, the trustworthiness of His words is unquestionable.

Well, in our world today it is not a simple task to live as a repented entrepreneur. It is a great challenge and often not possible to do it all overnight. But we can meet the expectations of our Creator only if in our private lives, in our family, in our social standing, and in our relationships, we face our mistakes step-by-step, which go against the New Testament laws of Jesus. These are sins in the eyes of God and it is only when we see these clearly that we can begin working on them. Always, though, we have to ask God’s help for this, as alone we would surely fail.

The Scriptures show us the perfect example of Jesus, but we are not perfect, even the best of us. It is good that our wise Creator saw this clearly too. His wisdom is endless, and His love towards us, His mercy and patience and willingness to help is great. In His living Word, the answers to solve our problems are there. At baptism, according to promise, we also receive the help of the Holy Spirit, which can be a great strength as our thoughts are directed and our prayers are on target. We need to use all of this to change our faulty habits so that we can fight successfully.

With God’s help, the issues are solved one by one, in our experience. It is wonderful and comforting to know that when we ask in prayer, we receive blessings as answers, and we know that we are helped by a loving, superior Being’s fatherly care. We could not help but notice that in our family relationships, in our tolerance



towards each other, in our relationships to our brothers and sisters, we experienced profound changes. We saw the same thing outside our family also. These positive experiences of this new period were the result of the Bible, as it is kept in front of us as a mirror. From that we receive an objective picture of our qualities, which we may have even thought of as virtues in our subjective judgment. In many cases there were unpleasant confrontations.

I remember that I did not want to believe my eyes when the apostle Paul, God's inspired man, wrote about humanity, including himself: ***"There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one... There is no fear of God before their eyes."***

These are heavy words. And if we refer to the statements of Old Testament prophets, David and Isaiah, we can see that the situation was not better in the age of the patriarchs, or in the first century, and let's admit that it is not any different today, in the 21st century either.

It was since baptism that I really understood that, concerning sin, we are all in a lost condition and nothing gives us the right to judge our fellow man. And to revenge perceived grievances is not our task either. I think many hiss at this, and are ready with the objection that revenge is only fair when one has been wronged.

Humanity, in general, certainly believes this but according to the Bible the world is Satan's empire, and it is run mostly by his unethical standards. We, as Christians, have to know that following the devil is to be led surely into destruction and into eternal suffering. The only way out for us is to follow Jesus Christ, to restore our original relationship with God. I began to look at people differently. This brought changes into my decisions and actions. The Word of God showed me that we all struggle with similar problems, and we can only get rid of them if we live in a God-pleasing way. If we can meet the two great commandments of the Old Testament, that

Jesus Christ revealed to us in Matthew's gospel, chapter 22, verses 38-39: **"...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind"**, and **"...You shall love your neighbor as yourself"**, then we fulfill the will of our Creator. In our conversion, we understood His love for us; we restored the ancient love relationship which was broken so irresponsibly by the first human couple.

In our new, third business we tried to take into account, in every respect, the expectations of the Word of God. We began to sell a special, health-supporting medical device, the MBT physiological footwear, when an importer brought it into our country. The certificates which I received in the world of movement and handling, and completing an MBT crash course, gave me the right to do this. I can say that this Swiss world patent gave back health to many thousands of people, and it was uplifting to have a part in that. It was also good that we could run a business which met the expectations of Christianity in every aspect. It is true that we had to fight the leadership of the shopping center where our business was located in order to stay closed on Sunday, but we could negotiate this obstacle too.

Unfortunately after five successful years, the empire of evil, dealing with adulteration (counterfeit products) and illegal commerce, stopped this wonderful product. It choked it from production to marketing, so much so that only the ruins of the remainder still exist, proving the effective working of the spiritual enemy. In today's world, in Hungary, few businesses can say that they are run profitably and meeting legal regulations, while they also meet the righteous ethical expectations of the Creator. I highly respect all those who can accomplish that.

So with this one, our series of enterprises finally came to an end for several reasons. One was that we had reached the age of retirement. The other was that the social and economic background, sinking in recession, greatly set back our turnover. And the dumping of forgeries made our struggle for survival hopeless, so both my

wife and I retired and liquidated our business. Maybe it was time for us to have a little more tranquil and stress-free life.

The remaining exuberance in our lives still comes through our family and four little grandchildren. In our small church, knowing the Word and working in faith are also beautiful and noble tasks in our Christian life.

Looking back on my life I often think, “Why is it that at different stages in my life I could gain different knowledge, but I could never fully grasp or exploit my opportunities?” It is true that in any given area I always wanted to bring out the best of me, but I never felt that this particular thing under consideration was what I want to do, exclusively. I always admired people who prepared for their profession from childhood, and made a nice career. So now, as a retired man, I can think of the question we ask children: “What will you be, when you grow up?”

I had to ask this question from myself because, as we know, my life situations have changed directions hectically, and it seemed that a change was coming soon again. It happened that the evangelist of the church, brother Curry, who is an American citizen and has a Hungarian wife and three children, got into a state of emergency. Their first child has a special medical problem, and they could not treat him in Hungary anymore so, temporarily, they had to move back to Memphis, USA. As a responsible spiritual leader, he did not want to leave the church unattended. The only solution for him was commuting. This meant three weeks with us in Hungary, and six-seven weeks with his family in America. If we think about it, that is not a small physical, mental or financial burden, not to mention the seven-hour jet lag.

Our brother in the faith, however, is aware of the importance of his work. Serving the Lord, and leading souls back from the deviated course to the Creator is an amazingly beautiful task. Forming and keeping a healthy working of the body of Jesus Christ, which is the church, is great a challenge, especially in circumstances like

brother Curry's. He also had to take care of the important responsibility of having authentic preaching during the time when he was not with us, so we could continue in our faith.

With brother Curry, we now had spent twelve years together, in church work and studying the Word. As a sign of his trust, he asked me to try teaching the Word. I asked for some time to think. There was an interim when he entrusted me with the preaching which went pretty well, but to be entrusted with full responsibility, to continually perform such a task, is different. Also, our Creator holds the teachers more responsible in His Word, rightly. I had to think through thoroughly, whether I can perform this task responsibly. Throughout my studies I noticed that I could integrate new materials into my knowledge. Synthesizing the right connections was not a problem. At the College of Physical Education, we studied pedagogy and didactics, and that was an advantage in our present situation. As a young amateur musician, and later in my job as a course lecturer, and even later as a lecturer, communication was not a foreign land to me. I've done well as a Movement Therapist also. Thinking all these through, I had to see that the many unexpected changes of direction in my life were not accidental. The result of my evaluation cannot be anything else but that these were the shepherd-ing manifestations of divine providence and wise foreknowledge. I felt that I was ripe for the decision to accept brother Curry's request. I began to prepare for the task.

After all these I could rightfully think that if the Lord wants to, He will help my ministry. And to the question of what will I be when I grow up, then at the age of 67, I may have received the answer.

Although...

## **As Long As We Live, It's Not Too Late**

In this part I tell you a true story. I cannot think of it without being moved. It is about one who was an integral part of my life for 63 years, and who is not with us anymore. She was my mother.

At the 19th of December 2011, I received a phone call from one of the directors of the retirement home that my mother was not well, and they called an ambulance for her. I was a little bit surprised as I was with her the day before in the afternoon. It is true that she complained a little, that during her everyday walks it was windy and cold, and she was cold. At the time I did not think it was a big problem, but it was.

Mother lived in a small apartment in a retirement home for five years, which was a ten-minute drive from us. When I got there they were putting her into the ambulance on a stretcher. I managed to learn which hospital she would be taken to, and the ambulance hurried off with her towards Budapest. I went into her little apartment, put into a bag what I thought would be good to take to the hospital, and followed. After a short search, I found her in the Buda Hospitaller Order's Hospital, at the Intensive Care Unit of the Internal Medicine section. According to the nurse, she was taken in with breathing difficulties, suffocation symptoms and fever, and with suspected pneumonia. She was conscious when I saw her, with an IV. She received respiratory medicine, diuretics and oxygen through a mask. We could talk some words, and she felt a little better. The nurse told me that the next day they would have the lab results, and then they would know more. She also told me what I needed to bring to her. We parted relatively calmly, saying that I would come the next day, and I would bring what they asked for.

Next morning I gathered the necessary things and went to the hospital. On the way I called brother Curry who immediately said he would come also. We arrived almost at the same time. At the intensive care unit the nurse told us that my mother was not in immediate danger, she was receiving medicine and she would be taken to a ward of the Department of Internal Medicine.

Then the evangelist and I prayed for her recovery, hoping things would get better. I thanked him that he came in and supported us and after he left I looked for the ward where my sleeping mother was taken. The nurse brought printed forms to fill, which I did. Then I sat at Mother's bedside and took her hand which felt strangely damp. She was breathing slowly and haltingly, but she looked calm. The nurse told me she wanted to take blood for the lab tests so I went out to the corridor and called my wife to inform her of the situation.

Just at that moment the nurse ran out of the ward and went straight to the doctor's room, and then ran back to the ward with several doctors. During the emergency, I was not allowed to go into Mother's room. In less than five minutes the ward doctor came out and told me that my mother had died. It all happened so quickly and unexpectedly that I could not even realize it. When I went into her room, a little lampoon was burning on the table next to her bed, and my mother was lying there with a calm face, white and lifeless. I kissed her hand and forehead. Our prayer came into my mind. I had asked the Lord to heal her if possible, and not to let His child suffer unnecessarily if she could not be made well. It is good that our prayer was heard.

Mother survived her 95th year by a month. Nice age, anyone could say. She had health issues, but these did not really inhibit her everyday life. Mentally she was completely healthy. With the approval of the family, in her last five years she was in Budakalász, a nice, new, and remarkably good nursing home apartment, with her own furniture, with careful physical support and medical supervision. Seven years after my father's death, their apartment in

Budapest on the second floor (second floor in Europe is third floor in America), without an elevator, was not a suitable living space for her although she clung to it for a long time. Finally she saw, too, that the family could secure comforting care only with the help of a retirement home.

The last five years of her life have a place in this spiritual remembrance because the events of our relationship during this time are worthy to be spoken about.

When we chose the retirement home for my mother, these factors played a great role in our decision: it was a beautiful place, had good air quality, and was near our home. By car I could get to her in ten to fifteen minutes. Several times a week I visited her, and we would spend almost every weekend and every family celebration at our home together. We had a closer, living relationship, much more than when she lived in Budapest. We often went together with her one-hour daily walks, having good talks whenever we could. She was always interested in everything, and was up-to-date on current events of the world and her environment.

She was also interested in the fact that my wife and I were saved and were members of the Church of Christ, so it happened that as we would be walking and talking, questions about God and religion were raised between us. One time I even asked her if she had any relationship with her Creator, if she believed at all in Him, because from the way she raised us, I concluded “yes” and “no”: Yes, because in our moral upbringing in which the Christian principles were unmistakable but, at the same time, she never spoke to us about her relationship with God or her beliefs.

In her answer she told me what I had known only in part, that in her childhood she lost first her father in the great Spanish flu epidemic, and a few years later her mother died in a hospital from an infection. As a child she was raised a Catholic Christian, but her relationship with God was broken when she lost her mother. She could not understand why God also took her mother from her when she

had prayed so much for her healing. Sadly, poverty and the outdated hospital conditions at that time caused the death of many people. That's how she became an orphan.

Mother's godparents took her in and raised her until she was married. In her relationship with God, she felt cheated and abandoned. How interesting humans are. She could not forgive her Creator for the loss of her parents, but through her own example she raised her children according to His laws, without drawing their attention to it. It was touching to hear this from my old mother. We were both silent for several minutes.

Finally I broke the silence by drawing her attention to some facts. Thinking back over her life, she never suffered any need. She had a husband, a nice family, a home, a secure livelihood even in difficult years, and she had it now. So her Creator had never left her alone, even for a minute, and His love had accompanied her all her life. After a little thinking she admitted that this was true indeed. The Lord always helped her.

Further, we talked about how our own repentance had happened and the positive changes this had brought in our lives. I told her that I pray every day for my brothers and their families, asking God to open their eyes to the most important thing in people's lives. I told her that she could do this for them too, and then I asked if she wanted to put her own case in order with God, because I could help her in that. I added that I didn't think it would be difficult to restore this relationship since she had lived her life according to Christian principles. Our Creator is always waiting with open arms for His creatures to come to Him. To my greatest joy, she did not refuse! Now we could begin to talk about the steps she had to take for a return.

First of all, I got her a Bible as we can know only from that book what our Creator asks us to do in order to establish a relationship with Him. I guessed that, from her Catholic memories, her Bible knowledge was highly deficient. From Romans chapter 10, verse



17 and from my own experience, I could expect the strengthening of her faith only from reading the Word of God, so I tried to persuade her to read the Bible regularly. Often when she asked me a question, I would read Bible verses to her for an answer. I had to convince her that God gave His message to us in the Holy Scriptures, and that all the answers as to how to live our lives are in it. She had to realize for herself that her relationship with God had been broken for decades, because she did not know from the Word just what God requires of sinners. She could not understand His plan for us and the sacrifice He made for us because of His love.

As we would talk, she saw more and more that she could learn these truths from the Bible, and through personal knowledge. In our studies I was slowly bringing her attention to the importance of these things, and I also asked our evangelist to study with her from time to time. To this end he even held open Bible classes with her in her home and, later, would continue after she moved into the retirement home.

So it happened that, as my mother was getting to know the Bible, talking with me and with our evangelist, she realized that she was missing things spiritually. But what was even more important, she wanted to make up for them. One day when I went to her apartment she said that she understood that God wanted her to be baptized in order to fix her relationship to Him. She felt that this was what God asked from her in the Word, and she would like to do it. I was quite surprised at her request because I saw that there were still holes in her knowledge. I could remember that, not long before, she could hardly come to terms with Christ's conception, and Mary's pregnancy from the Holy Spirit as a virgin. But I had to realize that baptism is everyone's own decision, and who am I to judge their readiness? I told Curry what she wanted to do, and asked him to talk with her about the seriousness of her decision. They talked, and set the nearest possible date for her baptism.

That's how my mother, at the age of 93, of her own will, in

full possession of her mental faculties, in the large corner bathtub of our home, obeyed what her Creator asked by making the great confession and being baptized just as we read in the Word, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of her sins. After that the Lord added her to His church, as we see from the book of Acts, chapter 2, verses 38 through 41.

I've mentioned that I had uncertainties because a few times my mother had doubts about Jesus being the Son of God. This was a recurring theme in our conversations. But the Lord clarified this matter to me in a satisfying, although unusual way. After my mother's 95th birthday, not long before her fatal illness, our brother Curry and his wife, Dóra, visited her in her home. As they were talking, my mother told them that on her usual walking route — where only a few people walk — a complete stranger stopped her with the question, asking if she believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. To the unexpected question, she happily answered: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

My brother Curry told me about this special event after the funeral, to soothe my pain. We are convinced that this precious person can stand in front of her Creator "on that day" with a clean heart, in the hope of her eternal salvation. Amen.

## **The Role of Tradition in our Lives**

Reading the title of this chapter, many could ask: “Why are these boots on the table?” Why would I write a whole chapter concerning this theme?

Believe me, I have my reasons.

Tradition, as we know, plays an important role in people’s lives as it prompts the continual re-use of experiences in later generations. I believe it is also important to talk about this because in humanity’s *spiritual* life, tradition plays a decisive role. We know that religious denominations, throughout history, have added traditions to God’s Word, the Holy Bible, and they accepted these as co-equal guides for faith and practice. They explain that this is a natural necessity because of development and changing circumstances, and the appointed religious leaders slowly accept and introduce these into the operating system of the denomination.

In and by itself, a tradition is neither good nor bad, neither useful nor harmful. But it would be a mistake to think that tradition can only be good, because bad things can also be inherited and passed on for generations to come. In the end, the user must decide which of the traditions can be followed without violating the Scriptures. However, to judge this is not an easy task because so many influences play a part. In forming a tradition, decisive in the process is the person’s moral value system, faith system, and also the moral judgments of the society around him. These are continually interacting and changing, according to the society’s forms and arrangements.

We can see what a complicated area this is. To set up an order in a difficult but important topic like this, without being lost in the maze of anarchy, we need to find some dependable clues. To discern between useful and harmful traditions, we need a sure

foundation for our decision. What can be a sure reference that we can hold unto, and always depend on in the long run? To this basic philosophical question of humanity, we have to dig down make an important decision. Either we will believe in and build on “natural science” and Darwinist evolutionary theory, which trusts in random chance, or we will accept intelligent design: divine contribution, creation theory, the creationist concept.

In the last roughly 50 years, I had been searching for answers in materialist nature and social sciences, including biology, anatomy, life and health studies, electronics, radio and TV technology, communications and measuring technology, organization and leadership studies. I was left with many doubts concerning their content of “objective truth”. As I compared all these to the picture drawn by the creationist concept, my conclusion was that to follow the Darwinist evolutionary theory takes much more faith than to believe in God as the Creator. My decision was based on learning the Holy Scriptures, containing 66 books, in details and without prejudices, and a long list of irrefutable certainties that we can find in them.

The system of prophecies in the Bible had persuasive power for me, as the Creator — not leaving anything to blind chance — pointed out His spiritual superiority. God can see fully, how things will happen and when. Just as He created the natural laws, including time, so He is also able to surmount it if He wants to. This is a moving and conclusive proof. We can also speak about the multitude of divine miracles and signs written in the Bible, or the historically attested miracles and healings of Jesus Christ.

As I was learning natural sciences, outside of mathematics, I never had firm convictions concerning their statements. I could see and experience the subjectivity of their research and theories. The often changing and sometimes contradicting results made me more and more uncertain. I experienced the limitations of human wisdom several times, and comparing it to the wisdom of the Creator, I have to say that He is light years ahead of us! So it is no wonder that I put

my trust in Him.

I am certain that the achievements of true science should not be contrasted to the creation theory, but it should be handled in its own place. As the sciences — which search the natural laws — also come from God, they can only reach as far as God sees is right. I think it is probable that if the scientific world would accept God's supremacy, it would be much further along in true knowledge, and would go in less mistaken directions. The Holy Spirit, who comes from God and helps people according to the Bible promise, gives access to the wisdom of the Creator for the followers of Christ. This is what we read in the epistle of the apostle James, chapter 1, verse 5-7: ***“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally, and reproaches not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”***

In forming my opinion, I was confirmed by the bold statements of outstanding scientists who declared their honest and fruitful relationship with their Creator with confidence. Not many know the names but we can mention among them Max Planck (German physicist), Blaise Pascal (French mathematician-physicist, whom I've already named earlier), Isaac Newton (English physicist), who boldly confessed: “I have a fundamental belief in the Bible as the Word of God.” Louis Pasteur, microbiologist, claimed with faith that science takes man closer to God. I could also mention James Maxwell and Michael Faraday, who established modern electronics, James Prescott Joule, who described the law of conservation of energy, Werner von Braun, founder of space exploration, and I could go on with a list of noted scientists who, as believers in God, were not shy in declaring their faith.

But now let's see quotes from two scientists who played a fundamental role in changing my mind, a man who grew up on the teachings of atheism and materialism, but who did not get tired of

searching for the truth and then accepting it when he found it. The first quote is from Max Planck, physicist, father of the quantum theory, from a lecture he gave in 1944, Florence, Italy at a physicist's world conference. The title of his lecture was: **“The Essence of Matter.”**

This is what he said: “There is no matter, as such. All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force, which brings the particle of an atom to vibration, and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter. True reality is not the visible, temporal matter, but the invisible and immortal spirit. However, because the spirit cannot exist independently, every spirit must belong to a being, therefore we have to acknowledge the existence of spirit beings. But a spirit being cannot create himself, but has to be created. Therefore I am not ashamed to name the mysterious Creator, whom on the earth every people of culture, for thousands of years named, God. So you can see, that in our days, when we don't believe, that creation is the origin of every spirits, therefore we get away from God, it is exactly the tiniest material, what brings the truth to the surface, and from the coffin of today's materialistic frenzy, transforms the world. And the atom opens the door of the forgotten spiritual world again.”

The other quote is from James Prescott Joule, who described the conservation of energy:

“After the knowledge of, and obedience to, the will of God, the next aim must be to know something of His attributes of wisdom, power, and goodness as evidenced by His handiwork... It is evident, that an acquaintance with natural laws means no less, than an acquaintance with the mind of God therein expressed.”

Well, after knowing all this, I had to admit that to follow traditions with a strong foundation, we need to get hold of the assurance which is in God's wisdom, the truth He revealed to us in His Word.

From my reasoning now — probably it is already understood

but if not, then here and now— I want to summarize what I think is important about traditions, especially spiritual traditions. I agree that traditions, including traditions of faith, are very important. With the guidance of the Word of God, these enabled the historical survival and spreading of the Christian faith. But these traditions, even with the passing of time, *must not divert even a little from the New Testament laws*, or teachings which Jesus Christ outlined because only behind these stands divine wisdom. This is the wisdom we read about in the book of the prophet Isaiah chapter 55, verses 8-9: ***“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”***

Therefore human traditions can only be justified if they closely follow God’s laws and do not contradict them. We are informed about this in Paul’s epistle to the Colossians, in chapter 2, verse 8: ***“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*** By the way, in almost every country of the world, the Churches of Christ are and have been doing this from the beginning, following the original example.

In today’s world, “Christianity” is very diverse and divided, but believers in Christ need to be in unity. There are signs of *intent* for this in historical churches, but a solution based on denominationalism, by principles of ecumenism, carries the seed of failure. Finding the common denominator is possible only through an approach without denominations, and with adherence to God’s written Word, which is the one and indivisible truth. The unity that the Bible teaches is directly against the satanic principle of “divide and conquer,” Only for this we have a divine guarantee, according to the Scriptures.

This is the tradition that the living God expects from His creatures, and He gives us examples to follow throughout His Word. In the Old Testament what Solomon says in the book of Ecclesiast-

tes, chapter 1, verse 9, is all true: ***“...and there is no new thing under the sun...”***

As the Jewish priesthood and the scribes went from the Torah and the prophets, containing divine wisdom, to the rabbinic Talmud, which mixed human wisdom with it, so the Christian religious leaders went from the divinely inspired New Testament Scriptures, to catechism and unique liturgies, which were different from the original. They have done this all in the name of the so-called holy HUMAN TRADITION. According to the Word of God, this cannot meet God’s approval, as the above mentioned epistle from Paul to the Colossians, chapter 2, verse 8, tells us again and again: ***“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*** Or as we can read in 1 Corinthians, chapter 3, verses 18-19: ***“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness.”***

Let these be before our eyes when we think about spiritual traditions and decide to follow those that have origins other than divine. Let us be on our guard because we can easily fall into the way of sin and idolatry.



## **Man and Idols**

When I began to make plans to write this book, as my brother Curry encouraged me, I began to think though what were the topics that I definitely had to include. It occurred to me that I should not speak only to those who have not yet decided to take care of their broken relationship with their Creator, but also to those who are already walking on this way, and to those who began the walk but do not realize that because of religious error they are still walking on the broad way instead of the narrow one. The divine message, the Holy Scriptures, declare in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 7, verses 13-14, that they must be careful, because the broad way leads to destruction. That's why this part is written.

The majority of people today think that if they say something, and things turn out differently from what they have said, then it is not a big deal. This mindset is so widespread that we aren't even surprised by it. We almost accept it as normal. The proliferation of liberal thinking in our world verges on licentiousness. Sadly, in many cases, it steps over into it. I can remember when, 40-50 years ago, the given word had much more credibility than today. The world is changing quickly, and it seems that the direction is not good. As we read the Scriptures, we have to understand that our Creator does not agree at all with this mindset on the part of His creatures. We can clearly see from His word that ignoring His laws and expectations is not some trifling thing in His eyes. His creatures who go against them will experience the serious consequences of His disapproval. Even in human relationships, He does not accept the failure to keep our word.

Among these, the worst insult probably was when His creatures, in their prideful self-confidence, questioned Him being the divine Creator. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, they turned to idols, instead of their God. He could not accept this in the Old Tes-

tament times from His chosen people. Through His prophets, He expressed this, peremptorily. The Jewish people, throughout history, experienced the tragic results of turning from God to idols. Those who fell into idolatry often paid with their lives or with dire fate for their unfaithfulness. We can see a long list of examples of this in the words of the Old Testament, from the wandering in the wilderness to the dispersion.

Jesus Christ with His redeeming sacrifice, and bringing in the New Testament, did not change God's attitude concerning idolatry. The results and the retribution remained the same, but the settlement of sin is postponed to the second coming of Christ when every person will be judged on the basis of the words of the Bible. As we read in 2 Corinthians 5:10, or Revelations 21:8, ***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may be recompensed for the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad”; “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”***

We can see that our Creator has always been touched deeply by the practice of idolatry. As a parent, I can somewhat understand and feel it. If I think about the possibility of my children, whom I raised up in love, questioning my parental rights and denying me, I would surely feel deeply hurt. In the relationship of the Creator and the creation, this is even more so. The relationship of the idol and man is difficult to understand. It can almost be called surreal.

According to the revelation of the Bible, only a divine being can be worshiped, one who has life in Himself, and was not created. Outside of the beings in the Trinity, nothing and no one can be listed in this category. People who call themselves Christians have to see this clearly from the Bible. I can only advise with honest love that they should not lose sight of this expectation, if they don't want to fall into the sin of idolatry, and in this way deeply hurt their Creator.

The situation is even more complicated in the profit-oriented capitalist system, and with the appearance of the technical achievements of the newest age. Free information flow, and the emerging media and Internet empires make it obvious that Satan creates newer and more subtle kinds of idols. This makes it significantly more difficult for humanity to express and declare their belonging to God. Financial goods, “the love of money,” worldly or spiritual lust for power, as these are worshiped above everything else, are also idolatry. They are idols in God’s eyes, just like liberalism, excesses in sexuality, or work, or the following of celebrities as role models in our culture. Everything can be an idol if it stands between the Creator and the creature, and changes the main focus. I can only agree with the revelation of Scriptures that we can read in 1 John chapter 5 verses 19-21: ***“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”***

We simply cannot ignore God’s rightful law, which He put this way in the Ten Commandments, in Exodus chapter 20, verses 3-5: ***“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make unto yourself any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.”***

And we can in no way accept as an explanation that God gave this command only to the Jewish people because Jesus Christ, the author of the New Testament, gave the same for Christians to follow. We have to be able to accept the natural subjection of the creation to the Creator. We cannot dictate to God or, if we do, we must not be surprised if it does not meet His approval. We can also be sure that our disobedience won’t be without consequences.

Let us not forget that God is a moral being and He cannot

tolerate any form of sin. According to the Christ-like principles of the New Testament, opposition to God's laws is a sin which separates us from Him, but through His forgiveness and love we can turn away from sin and step onto the "narrow way".

In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 13, we read this: ***"There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."*** From this we can see that God in His infinite love does not tempt us, but our own lusts do this to us. However, He forgives our stumblings if we honestly repent and turn away from them.

Finally, let us accept from the apostle John his pleading call, that he wrote in his 1st epistle, chapter 5, in the last verse, 21: ***"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."***

## **The Destiny of a Nation in the Hand of the Creator**

I want to ask you, dear reader, if you are still interested in this theme, please give this book a few more minutes and continue reading. In this part I will change direction, and lead you into historical perspectives. I thank you for your trust in advance, and wish a good rest to those who fall behind.

When a human being starts to walk on this wonderful path which leads him back to his Creator, and he becomes a follower of Christ, sooner or later he will feel the responsibility for his fellow men and compatriots. He would like to share with them the discovery of the meaning of life, the Gospel (Good News). As he learns from the Bible, he will detect correlations, which point beyond their selfish personal interests. This is how it was with me, and this inspired me to write this chapter.

If I ask myself the question, “What is the factor which most hinders progress and development in Hungary?” and I want to know the answer, then I need to see a system of social connections which the spiritual conditions of our nation can very hardly bear. We cannot expect to uncover the roots of our problems and see the nation’s destiny get better by only scratching the surface. We have to go down to the deepest underlying causes, and we have to avail ourselves of the wisdom of our Creator which surpasses human wisdom.

If I continue thinking about getting to the problem, and digging down to its root which is most decisive concerning the destiny of our nation, then I want to clarify some things at the beginning.

First of all, I have to say that I’m not infallible. Secondly, I took courage concerning my conclusions because they are consistent with the thing that reveals divine wisdom, the Christian Holy Scriptures. I want to confirm this by using Bible quotations. And

thirdly, it is my personal opinion and conviction that the long term, historical destiny of countries and nations depends on their general spiritual state, the sum total of the personal relationships with the Creator. To see this, it is enough for us to look at the destiny of God's chosen people and the surrounding nations in the Holy Scriptures.

Let us see here for a confirmation Psalm 33, verses 10-12 and Psalm 9, verses 7-8: ***“The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing: he makes the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance.”*** ***“But the Lord shall endure forever: he has prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.”***

I don't even have to say that on the philosophical ground of materialism the problem cannot be examined and understood, but before anyone would blame me with having narrow-mindedness or partiality, I ask you to postpone this judgment to the end of the book. Because right here we have to decide *whether truth can be known*. Is it subjective or objective? Is it absolute or relative?

This question must be answered because the basis of my further inquiry is the following: truth is objective, absolute, and exists independently from us. It is a system of existence and relationships made by the Creator which can be learned from His revelation, the Holy Scriptures, the 66 books of the Bible, which contains the Old and New Testament. We can see God's message in it. From its inspiration, the circumstances of its coming into being, from its past and present status, prophetic revelations and their fulfillment, it is clearly evident that these are the thoughts and words of God.

Jesus Christ Himself, God's only begotten Son reveals to humanity in John's gospel, chapter 14, verse 6: ***“I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.”***

He is the “WAY”, because our return to the Creator is not possible without His redeeming sacrifice. Faith in Him without res-

ervation, taking on a repentant life, and accepting it through baptism is God's only "WAY" for us to have salvation.

He is the rational "TRUTH", because by faithfully following God's laws and revelations, truth can be found, and its detailed description can be learned by anybody through Jesus from the Bible. And in John chapter 1, He is the Word, God's message of Truth to the world.

He is the "LIFE", because the ability to create the living and lifeless world was given to Him by God, so eternal life for humans can be obtained only through Him, according to the New Testament.

As we get to know Jesus Christ from the Scriptures, we can access the truth. This is supported by the Scripture in John's Gospel, chapter 1, and verse 17: ***"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."***

If we can get across to people these philosophical starting points, then we can face the present spiritual situation of our country and can begin to honestly explore it. To my best knowledge, until now in our little homeland unfortunately this has not happened, even in the form of proposition. However, as we see the things happening in the world, and the situation of our country, these questions should be a cardinal, historically relevant and inevitable. In my opinion, without clarifying this, there is no progressive solution. Let this be thought-provoking to people, who reflect responsibly concerning their nation.

First of all, we have to go back to the first century to understand some fundamental things. In this scenario, we are in the first century AD according to the Scriptures. We can see prophecies in the Old Testament from hundreds of years ago that are being fulfilled: Isaiah 2:2-3, Joel 3:1-3 and Daniel 2:44. Then in the New Testament: Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 1:3-6, Mark 9:1, Luke 24:46-49 and Acts 2:41 and 47 we can see Jesus establishing His church.

Well, this may seem like a lot at once, but let's pick up one of the Old Testament prophecies, and we will see that it is authenti-

cated by its fulfillment later.

But before I do this, let me mention some basic facts. The 66 books of the Bible were written in about 1500 years, by 40 inspired authors, in three languages, on three continents, in fourteen styles, embracing our whole human history. In spite of this, what it says is detailed, without contradictions, and is joined in fine-tuned harmony. These are amazing facts in themselves, but its inspiration is also clearly proven by scientific facts as well (mathematical probability, historical science, archeology and Biblical scientific research).

But let us see the prophecies. In Isaiah chapter 2, verses 2-3 we read: ***“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”***

We can see this coming true hundreds of years later in Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 16, verse 18, as Jesus declares it, and we can see it in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 2, verse 41 in practice: ***“And I say also unto you, That you are Peter [petros=pebble], and upon this rock [Petra=big rock, a symbol of Jesus and God in the Bible] I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.”*** The explanations of the original Greek in the brackets are to dispel the denominational myth which tries to depict the apostle Peter as the foundation of the Church of Christ, and the first personification of the basis of papacy. It is an unjustified and erroneous interpretation to appoint the apostle Peter as the head of the church, and to claim that the line of popes started with him as, according to the Bible, Jesus Christ founded Christianity on the “rock” (petra) — Himself — and not on a pebble (petros).

***“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”***



I just note quietly that in the first century there was not an apostle who would have dared to call himself the head of the church or “God’s Vicar on earth”. They would not even have claimed to be the head of the local congregations they founded, because Christ is the only head of His body, which is the church, according to Colossians, chapter 1, verse 18: **“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”** This is the privilege only of Jesus Christ until this day, and logically only the infallible, divine Person can fulfill this office.

The one church — made up of the combination of individual congregations of churches of Christ throughout the world — was founded obviously by Jesus Christ. He is its high priest and name giver, and through the fulfillment of the Holy Scriptures He keeps it working even until today. This is how it will be, according to His promise, until His second coming when He will come for this church of His. Until then, His Holy Spirit helps the earthly life of His followers, as Jesus Himself promised in John’s gospel, chapter 14, verses 15-17 and 26: **“If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you.” “But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”**

For us to understand the authentic uniqueness of the Church of Christ, let us summarize it once more. Our Lord founded His own church, which He committed to His disciples, who began with what they learned from Jesus, and then with the help of the Holy Spirit they spread the teaching throughout the whole world, founding united congregations which wore His name and taught the one truth. These worked — and still work — independently from each other, but according to *the same Biblical principles*.

According to the latest research, the Bible was complete at about 80-90 AD, in the form of book scrolls and epistles. So to start and operate churches, they had the copies of the scripts of the apostles and the disciples, and also the authentic scripts of the Old and New Testament. The functional leaders were chosen from the church members: teachers, evangelists, elders and deacons served the members. They were first called Christians (followers of Christ) in Antioch in the first century; as it is written in the book of Acts, chapter 11, verse 26. On the basis of accepting and keeping Christ-like principles, as they were written in the Bible, Jesus Christ Himself added — and still adds — the obedient souls to His church.

According to the Word of God, against all contrary popular opinion, **this is how anyone becomes a Christian.** Jesus calls them saints, the church is His own body of which He is the head. In the Word we can read this clearly in 1 Peter, chapter 1, verses 15 and 16, in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 27, and in Colossians, chapter 1, verse 18: ***“But as he who has called you is holy, so be holy in all manner of conduct; Because it is written, You will be holy; for I am holy.” “Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.”***

In the church there is a natural functional order, but there is no hierarchical power structure. Also there is no hierarchy among the churches, and there is no central international organization. There is only **brotherly unity.** In its congregational worship there is prayer, singing to glorify God without instruments, teaching from the Word, voluntary giving, and communion every Lord’s day as a remembrance of our Saviour’s death, according to the Bible pattern. This is the model to be followed. The congregations’ identical working is controlled only By Jesus Christ, through the words of the Scriptures, with the effective help of the Holy Spirit. This way all can expect grace and salvation on an identical basis.

What are God's expectations of Christians, according to His Word?

– **Reading or listening to the Bible.**

We have to study the Scriptures, our only way to learn the will of our Creator.

Romans 10:17: ***“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”***

– **We have to believe that God exists, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**

Hebrews 11:6. John 5:22-23. ***“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” “For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father who has sent him.”***

– **Repentance is necessary. We must live a repentant life, according to the Scriptures.**

Act of the Apostles, chapter 17, and verse 30: ***“And the times of this ignorance God overlooked; but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”***

We have to give up sinful habits, being honestly sorry for them, and turning away from them. We have to realize that these separate us from our Creator, and will cause us to miss His loving blessings. In prayer we have to ask His forgiveness and help for this change.

– **Confession. We have to verbally acknowledge that Jesus is God's son.**

Matthew, chapter 10, verse 32: ***“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”***

– **We have to be immersed, baptized (immersed in water.) for the remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ, thus sealing our covenant with God. So we bury our old sinful life, and begin our**

new, Christ-like life, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2, verses 38, 47: 2:38: **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” “... the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”**

In Hungary someone could rightly ask why am I writing about immersion when in most Hungarian Bible translations we read “christening”. Well, I have several reasons.

First of all, in the original Greek New Testament the word “baptidzo, in Latin, ‘baptisma’”, immersion, full immersion in water, is written. That’s what God is asking from us, not anything else.

Secondly, Jesus through His personal example in the Gospel accounts requires this from those who want to leave the worldly life and become a part of His spiritual family, the church.

Thirdly, the steps of the process of immersion carry with them the God-approved form of burying the old, sinful man and the resurrection of the new man who is free from sin. This is biblical truth, even if some denominations in their liturgy arbitrarily deviate from it. This deviation can explain the “accidental” mistake in some Hungarian Bible translations of the word. The latest translations, fortunately, eliminate this error so they are free from the false teaching of previous centuries.

## **To the English reader:**

You have just learned something about how the mistranslation of *one word* can change the entire original message! In this case this “small” change of God’s word carries with it no small consequence. Is it just a coincidence that at *the very point* where God tells us what to do **in order to receive forgiveness of sin** and what we need to do in order to win over Satan and to receive eternal life, **that the original formula was changed?** Are people being “lost in translation?”

But please stay with me: how far reaching could the effect of such a mistranslation be? Is the Hungarian translation the only place where we see this switching of words (sleight of hands) taking place? Unfortunately not. English versions, while more subtlety done, have also experienced tampering with the original word, thus in many instances confusing or changing God's command completely. Most English versions use a transliteration instead of the correctly translated word. In English translations we often find the word "baptism" instead of "immersion". Baptism is a word made up from its original similar-sounding Greek word, but its meaning may not always be the same. *Immersion* is *exclusive* and gives only the meaning of dipping completely in water. Baptism, as it has come to be defined in the religious world, is not exclusive to just dipping into water. *Pouring of water* and *sprinkling of water* have also come to be included as definitions of baptism. If you are not convinced, look up the meaning in a dictionary and you will see that the word — according to human definition — can mean a list of things. While immersion is mentioned, many times it is almost lost among the other meanings assigned to the word baptism, which include pouring, sprinkling or *an experience*, the later leaving out water altogether.

According to the explanation of Acts 2:38, the apostle Peter answered the question of the people with this: ***"Repent, and be baptized (immersed, in the original Greek) every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."***

In John, chapter 3, verse 5, and Matthew, chapter 28, verse 19, Jesus Himself declared: ***"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*** ***"Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing (immersing) them."***

In the epistle to the Romans, chapter 6, verses 3-5, the apostle Paul detailed the rite of immersion as God expects it: ***"Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized (immersed) into Jesus Christ were baptized (immersed) into his death? Therefore we are***

***buried with him by baptism*** [immersion in water] ***into death: that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*** [coming up from water]. ***For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection*** [coming up from water].”

As a result of this immersion, God adds us to His church according to the Word, and that is the basis of our salvation.

I want to call your attention to a very important matter of Bible interpretation. The above mentioned verses all give the authentic divine answer to the same question: how can we become Christians according to God? All the conditions are necessary in themselves, but are not sufficient, individually. The fulfillment of the five conditions *together* gives the pattern to follow. If we pick out any one of them and interpret it, in and of itself, then we can derive the erroneous conclusions that we see in the denominational world. For example, there are the teachings that faith in itself is enough for salvation, or that our works or repentance have the possibility of eternal life in themselves alone. Unfortunately not! Neither is knowing the Bible or immersion alone sufficient. All these, combined, are conditions laid down by our Creator; otherwise they would not be in the Bible. Let us not be misleading ourselves or others by the fact that these commands are found in different places in the Scriptures. It is a rule of interpretation, coming from the structuring of the Bible, that *all the scriptures combined, referring to a certain subject, together*, give the complete answer, in agreement with the rest of the Scriptures.

The divinely originated Holy Bible is the only perfect safety to eliminate human imperfection. The created world was always in great need of a stable moral code, which was given by divine guidance, and it is not any different today. The *decentralized* organizational church structure and operational order, designed by our Creator and established by Christ, is the only way to secure the long-

term, undistorted preservation of Christ's own church. Opposed to this is the hierarchical structure, used by public administration, the economy, and alas in religious denominations as well. We can learn about the original form in the Scriptures, in the epistles of the apostle Paul written to Timothy and Titus and to the churches. If in a local church a human interpretation arises which differs from the Word of God, then there is a need to correct things in the minds *only locally*, and the whole church system is not "contaminated". God's supremacy, which is manifested in the Bible, and through the effective working of the Holy Spirit, with the help of the biblical model, is able to keep the health and spiritual purity of the whole system. This way the biblical perfection of the unity of content and form is proven.

The whole operation of the Church of Christ, the order of worship, teaching, organizational structure and mission, are all found in the Bible. These vital parameters cannot be based on anything else, as the church was founded by Jesus Christ and the guidebook — the New Testament — was written by the inspiration of divine wisdom.

This is how Christianity was started, simply on the basis of God's redemption plan, and after the example of Jesus Christ and faith in Him. It may be surprising, but these churches of Jesus Christ exist all around the world even today, and they always will, according to the promise. This claim concerning the unique oneness of the church may make some people stumble, but this is still the biblical reality of the Church of Christ that should be respected.

Unfortunately throughout history, driven by power interests and led by Satan, the "false prophets" made changes in "doctrine", which laid the foundation of the later schisms, denominations and sects. Some religious leaders, assuming positions of power and intertwined with secular power, formed a spiritual power structure. This was often accompanied by seemingly sincere good intentions, but it was always inspired behind the scenes by the "great deceiver".

The Early Christian churches in the time of persecution, accepting the martyr's death, always kept their original form. With the general spread of Christianity, their persecution stopped and they became accepted by the general populace. In time the state leaders made Christianity a state religion. This happened in the time of Constantine, in 311 AD. So the hierarchical structure of the state administration intertwined a significant percentage of the congregations of the Church of Christ. First, they forced territorial and then power distribution and structure on the world of the Christian profession. Of course this structure needed a worldly, human leadership and power hierarchy. These changes, however, brought significant deviations from Jesus' model. Because the congregations world-wide had not been bound together under one human head, some of them stayed faithful to the biblical pattern of autonomy and true doctrine, while others began to follow the new teachings and organization. From the corrupted churches which were called "apostolic", those in Rome and Constantinople became the strongest. Their rivalry brought about the first big schism — the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. Eastern and Western Christianity were split, and later became even more divided into what we call the first denominations. The German author, church historian Hans Godwin Grimm writes about this era in his book, **The history of the Church of Christ in Central-Europe**:

*"The mystery of lawlessness doth already work,"* told Paul to the Thessalonians in early apostolic times. So it is not surprising to learn that the generations which followed saw a growing centralization of power in the local congregations in the hands of a single bishop and the constitution of church conventions, episcopal assemblies, ending with the claim of the bishops in the two capitals of the Empire, Rome and Constantinople, that only they should be authorized to preside over the councils of the church. When in 311 persecutions stopped, and the emperor Constantine made Christendom the official religion, people swarmed into the churches, having but



a very little conception of the Christian faith and life. Looking upon the church as a state institution, they began to lower its spiritual and moral value. The worship of the church was gradually formalized and elaborated with the addition of Jewish, Chaldean, Persian, and Egyptian elements. The two directives of our Lord concerning His Supper and Baptism for the remission of sins became a sort of magic rites, executed by an organized priesthood claiming to represent God on earth. No wonder that all true followers of Christ began to sever their ties with the degenerated state churches of Rome and Constantinople.”

The Roman church was the one, which in its present form is called the Roman Catholic Church, led by the latest pope. The hierarchy is operated by hundreds of thousands of cardinals, bishops and priests in the world. This structure has its own Vatican state, bank system, amazing wealth, and a system of security and secret service. It forms a top-down international political and spiritual power hierarchy. Let everybody decide for himself how all this corresponds to Jesus Christ’s own church, which He founded. Does it look like the content and form written in the Bible?

**These changes however could not absorb every church. There were always congregations which, in spite of persecutions, insisted on Christ’s model and rejected human changes. They remained faithful, and they will remain faithful until the return of their Lord.**

These changes among the apostate congregations happened slowly, step by step, almost undetected, and they have continued for almost two thousand years. “Reformation” was the first instinctive attempt to go back to the original, but it also divided Christianity into new “denominations”. In the last two hundred years there have been a series of divisions, and it is still happening, fragmenting even more the so-called Christian religious world. Under the banner of freedom of religion, it is incredible that today there are 33,000 (yes, thirty-three thousand!) denominations and cults

in the world, which call themselves Christian. All of them are a little different from the others, but the bigger problem is that they essentially differ the biblical guidelines. Their founders, driven by their own interest, added to or took away from the principles of the original church which are laid down in the Scriptures. The satanic method of “divide and conquer” worked perfectly here on earth, and it is still working.

In the Scriptures this prophetically-foretold change, as we can see, came to pass. The apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 and Galatians 1:8 warned us about this: ***“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they draw to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto myths.”*** ***“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”***

Dear professing believers in Jesus Christ! Respecting the direction of your faith and your denominational affiliation, I ask you in love, to look at the sacrifice and example of our Lord Christ! Make sure and think about what He is asking from you in the Holy Scriptures! Do not accept anything else from anyone else! We will all be judged, one by one, according to our works, on the basis of God’s Word, the New Testament of the Holy Bible.

According to Revelation, chapter 20, verse 12: ***“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”***

On that judgment day we will not be able to defend ourselves by saying that this priest or that preacher said this or that, and we accepted it without verification on the basis of perceived superiority of the religious teachers. We have to learn personally the message that our Creator sent to us, and we have to find the congregations where the truths of its words are clearly preserved.

True, it takes committed personal searching, but it is most certainly worth every endeavor.

After this short Christian historical review, let's see what happened to the spirituality of the Hungarians. As I want to summarize hundreds of years of history, I can only write a brief overview.

Our forefathers, more than a thousand years ago and after long wandering, arrived to the Carpathian basin, and the Conquest took place. Let us put aside now the differences in the historical hypotheses. Let us forget about the spiritual state of the Hungarians before they submitted to "Christian" influence, and let's see what happened after the Conquest. The leadership of the Hungarians and our king Stephen wisely realized the pressing necessities of the historical and power relations of the age. He saw that the only hope for survival of the Hungarians was for him to submit his nation under the domination of the leading spiritual authority of the era. This way he stabilized its international political standing and statehood. So for the sake of these political interests, the Hungarians found themselves under the dominion of the Roman Catholic Church. At that time this seemed to be a rational decision, but this put the people of the nation spiritually into suffocating stocks of a religious political power structure.

The reader is reminded that by this time in history the Catholic Church was the central political power of Europe. It controlled Europe politically and economically, as well as spiritually. Later there were attempts to break away from this political structure. The sincere efforts of the Reformation could not improve much on the general spiritual state of the world nor of Hungary, though it rearranged it a little. However, there was an important aspect of the Reformation: it directed the attention of the people more to the Word of God and the things written in it. It directed the attention to people's personal responsibility, to know the Word and to restore our relationship with the Creator. Unfortunately the Reformation, despite all

efforts, still left too much deviation from the model of Christ. The objective to reform the Roman Catholic Church succeeded only in part, and so another schism was created. A new denomination, the Reformed Church, was started. Not much later, with similar motives, a number of protestant denominations began. Without us going into details, it is obvious that the reforms could not really solve the problem.

The restoration of the original Christ-like model that I've already referred to in the first chapter would have been the perfect solution, although it is still awaited in Hungary — but there is no other solution. God's expectations did not change through the millennia, and they never will because in the Bible He declares in the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 8: ***“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”*** We can read the same in James, chapter 1, verse 17: ***“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”***

The model of forming a united Christianity was always before our eyes during the last two millennia. It was so in Europe and in Hungary as well. Congregations of the Church of Christ are in existence today in England, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Ukraine, China, Canada, USA, and most countries of the world. Even when Christians were condemned as heretics and were killed by fire and sword, as well as by the denominational churches which held the power, the church could not be destroyed because God promised this in the Bible. Against all persecutions, the church has emerged again and again. These Christians keep the word of God today purely, shining bright in the present spiritual darkness. In Hungary we have its original model. We can find its traces on the old Christian sepulchers in the town of Pécs, Hungary, which date back to the **????** century and in different archival materials. (E.g. in the book of Göncz Árpád entitled “Sarusok” [Sandallers], the Waldensian followers of Christ were among the first in Europe to adhere again to the original teachings of

the New Testament.) More research is giving us more information from this period of time.

In the earlier time of the European persecution of Christians, many true followers of Christ found a peaceful new home in America. In time, large congregations developed in the new land, churches that were able to support missionary efforts in other parts of the world. Today, after the reinstatement of religious freedom in Hungary and Eastern Europe, faithful missionaries of the Church of Christ, primarily from the USA, came to us. As a result of their blessed work, new congregations which kept the Word of God purely and with responsibility were formed here. Missionaries now take the Gospel selflessly to almost all of the spiritually disadvantaged areas of the world.

In the Bible we have sure promises. One of those is that Jesus Christ will come back the second time for His church, and then every knee will bow before Him. God gave our final judgment into His hands with all power. Jesus Christ has established **only one church**. This can be followed precisely in the Biblical description. In Matthew chapter 16, verse 18, Jesus promised, ***“... on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*** Colossians chapter 1, verse 18 says plainly, ***“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”*** How many heads does a body have? ONE! How many bodies does a head have? ONE! In Ephesians chapter 5, verses 23-27 we read that the church is **the bride of Christ**. How many brides does He have? Surely we would not think that He is a polygamist with 33,000 wives!

In the last book of the Bible, in the last chapter, chapter 22, in verses 18-19, we read this: ***“I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and***

***out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”***

Certainly the Old Testament shows us countless tragic examples of what happens when people deviate in the slightest measure from God’s written rules for us. In this matter, the New Testament does not speak any differently concerning the outcome of disobedience.

The destiny of our nation and yours is in the hands of our Creator, as we can read in Psalm 33, verses 10-12: ***“The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord...”***

We can only obtain His help and blessings, which lift up a whole nation, if we personally consider and fulfill His expectations. As we have seen, these expectations can be learned from the Scriptures. This way we can obtain the greatest blessing of our Creator: salvation. Unfortunately, to remove the differences and hostilities which were fixed as habits centuries ago, and to create order again in people’s minds, is not an easy task but we should start somehow anyway.

In our day we are born into a world of religious denominational errors, but we have to contend for the original, Christ-given faith. We have to go back to the teaching of our Lord and the apostles. This is how the apostle Paul pleaded in his timeless words in 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 10-13, when he saw the initial divisions: ***“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment... Is Christ divided...?”***

To make the thousand-year-long suffering and adversity of our nation better, and that this nation should not disappear in history’s dustbin, we have to reconsider our spiritual state, but now we should do it strictly in the light of the Word of God.

Our eminent poet, Vörösmarty Mihály was completely right when he wrote to the nation in his poem, “Summons”:

It cannot be that all in vain  
so many hearts have bled,  
that haggard from heroic breasts  
so many souls have fled!  
It cannot be that mind and strength  
and consecrated will  
are wasted in a hopeless cause  
beneath a curse of ill!  
There yet shall come, if come there must,  
that better, fairer day  
for which a myriad thousand lips  
In fervent yearning pray.  
Or there shall come, if come there must,  
a death of fortitude;  
and round about our graves shall stand  
a nation washed in blood.

(Translated by: Theresa Pulszky; John Edward Taylor)

Let us just think through where are we in this matter, and what can we do to make a change? Can we do anything at all? I am convinced that we can. We have to get rid of the “curse of ill”, that Vörösmarty himself could not call by name, but almost prophetically he described its existence. And we should do this exactly as our Creator expects from us.

The Word of God emphasizes our personal responsibility in knowing the Bible and following Jesus Christ faithfully, without compromise. The modern man and society cannot long exist without these. We have to begin learning things on the basis of our Creator’s

message — the Bible — in our families and in our educational system. With the help of authentic teachers and evangelists, independent of denominations, simply as Christians, we should re-evaluate our lives. Only our personal spiritual growth can make the growth of the whole nation possible. We cannot live a lie forever, or if we do, we can start digging.

Will everybody find salvation? Unfortunately not. This is the bad news. But our Creator gives all men an equal chance. He calls everybody into His kingdom, which is made up of the body of Christ, the congregations of His own church. He will come back for this church, to take it to the Father. And at the same time He gives every one of His creatures a free will. The good news is that if, with faith and humility, we turn to God's Word and keep the purity of its thoughts, seeking sure answers from it, we will receive authentic guidance and the right to eternal life. Our Lord promised in Revelation chapter 2, verse 10: ***“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”***

As I see, the biggest problem for our nation and not for ours only, can be found in this area of faithlessness in adhering to the definitive word of God. All other problems can be figured out from this one.

If we look at the historical situation of different nations, their long-term social and economic relations, we cannot ignore one important fact: A close correlation can be found between these problems and the general disrespect of the divine laws. Beyond spiritual salvation, following God's laws for daily living ensures a high quality of life even on this earth.

Just an example: large-scale studies have proven that where corruption is on a low level in a nation's economy, there is a better economic environment which secures a higher level of well-being for the long run. The good examples are primarily countries in which a larger proportion of the population respects the moral teachings of the Bible. That's why I find it surprising that the liberalizing



European Union endeavors to push back the moral teachings of the Bible in favor of multiculturalism. This endeavor can easily backfire by degradation of the biblical moral norms, through the general spiritual conditions, to the life quality of the nations. We can see the same in the United States. When it was founded, it was declared to operate on the moral standards of the Holy Scriptures, and they surprisingly quickly built the world's greatest economic power. As the spiritual mindset is becoming more and more liberal, this favorable trend which is rich in God's blessings seems to slow down. It is a great irresponsibility to lose this advantage for any country of the world. It should be essential to the human race to know and follow the Bible as the Word of God, more and more precisely.

Sadly, I have to admit that the world is not moving in this direction, and this is not good at all. Every man and woman should recognize the forecasts in the Biblical prophecies, and how important it is for us to keep God's laws. We should live according to Christ's expectations without compromise. We should be a model in the face of the challenges of our day, to those who live without faith and God. Our responsibility is enormous. The only eternal and perfect life-path model that can be known is from the Christian Holy Scriptures, which contain divine wisdom. We have to believe that God knows His creatures perfectly, and that the love He feels towards us will never fail if we remain faithful to Him and His word.

In human history, there was a time when sin abounded so much and love grew so cold that God did not tolerate it anymore. Only Noah and his family escaped destruction, and the ark was the lifeboat. Today Christians are God's family and Christ's own church is the lifeboat. The analogy is obvious. We don't have to be afraid of another worldwide flood because our Creator promised this in the Bible. However, according to the prophetic signs, as wickedness grows in the world we are getting nearer to the second coming of Jesus Christ, and to the reckoning. It is true that only God the Father knows the exact time of the end, but our open door of opportunity

to return to our Creator is only NOW. There is no promise of tomorrow. ***“The days are evil,”*** as we can read in the Word, and nothing less than our salvation and our eternal life are at stake.

The question is: *are we prepared?* You, my dear reader, **are you prepared?** And you, my beloved nation, ***are you prepared?***

## Epilogue

I think I still owe you an explanation, which is the answer to the question of the subtitle. The question is this: “Can we live without God?”

The short answer is yes, it is possible, but it is not expedient. I would say more: to live our whole life without the Creator is like spending the time of our lives groping blindly, in constant uncertainty, locked into the finite reality of the material world. This life without God’s caring blessings, wisdom, and love can only offer an existence which is poor, full of pitfalls, falling more and more apart, and without hope. That is an unfulfilling life. Furthermore it is combined deep inside with an unrelenting feeling of lack, and this results in a constant state of dissatisfaction. This feeling at the bottom of our souls is fed by the fact of being separated from our Creator, and it can be eliminated only by coming to Him. In addition it should be noted that **eternal life without Him is impossible.**

This returning to Him is the Way, about which this biographical account speaks.

But as there is some good in every bad. I have to tell you that the 53 years I spent as a firm atheist, because of my upbringing, worked as a protective shield against the fossilized traditions of denominational ideologies. I did not have to recognize previously developed spiritual errors and a false religious belief system that had to be broken in order to bring it down so that I could build a new one! In my experiences that is much more difficult than developing faith in what had been a vacuum. Why? I think it may be because of human pride.

Recognizing that I had been and was still walking in the wrong way because of my own inattentiveness and ignorance was unpleasant, even when I could see that I was guided by good intentions in my search. However, being open to whatever the search revealed helped me to overcome the natural human pride.

Let me give a little cure from the Word of God. In most cases our wrong choice is not accidental. 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 8, uncovers the work of the “great deceiver”: ***“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.”***

This warning is fully justified and necessary. It speaks about a spiritual being who is more intelligent than men, and about his well-prepared servants. Of course we really need to be open and seeking the truth. Holding this scripture in front of us, it may be easier to avoid the false prophets that the Bible calls to our attention in several places. If we are not careful enough, they may lead us into sure destruction. We cannot do without the life-saving control of the Word of God.

In any case, I honestly hope that, in time, many of my fellow people will find the “narrow” way that leads to our Creator. I dare to hope that they can avoid everything the professionally marketed “broad way” offers. It is good to know that we can trust only one “narrow” way, which was shown to us by Jesus, and the other ways — contrary to all popular opinions — are unfortunately not the road to that new heaven and earth. Salvation is not for sale, and is not possible to haggle with God about it. Let us not do it either.

### **Contents:**

Recommendation

Foreword

Part 1: At the Very Beginning

Part 2: The Way

Part 3: As Long As We Live, It’s Not Too Late

Part 4: The Role of Tradition in our Lives

Part 5: Man and Idols

Part 6: The Destiny of a Nation in the Hand of the Creator

Part 7: Epilogue















