

CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 21ST CENTURY REFLECTIONS

Emese JASPER-MAKAY¹

Abstract

The study aims to investigate the possible intersections between Hebrews and contemporary issues which are called in question in the scenario of this conference, and lumped together under this umbrella expression: „Restart in theology”. Such title anticipates the lurking crisis in the Christian church which take insidious forms to fall for. The reflections that are expected to surface will not be satisfactory at all, on the contrary, only take a bird’s eye view and take the forms of questions to which the answers or solutions are to be discovered, worked out and understood by responsible Christian bodies.

Keywords

pastoral, social-rhetoric, liturgical, sacrificial, identity, restart

The Letter to the Hebrews has always been in the focus of scholarly interest, which implies that the text reserves issues that trouble readers of every stance, lay or scholar, in every era, contemporary and bygone. The text appeared to be just as intriguing in the first centuries of church history and canonization as it is today when the readers are shocked by the sacrificial language and symbolism which is at the core of this brilliantly composed rhetorical masterpiece. The value and message of the text can be puzzling for modern readers who, being philistine or simply misunderstanding it, might even dismiss it as obsolete. But this writing, as well as all the others in the Scripture, invites us to engage in conversation. The hermeneutic question immediately arises: what does the text mean now? As Paul Ricoeur argues,

„the mere fact of being *written* detaches a discourse from its author, its original situation and its first readers, so that they lose their authority as arbiters of meaning: the text than attains a free existence as potential meaning, having to be actualised, given reference, by each new reader in his or her concrete situation, for whom it becomes ’a possible world’.”²

Taking this liberty, the study aims to investigate the possible intersections between Hebrews and contemporary issues which are called in question in the scenario of this conference, and lumped together under this umbrella expression: „Restart in theology”. Such title anticipates the lurking crisis in the Christian church which take insidious forms to fall for. The reflections that are expected to surface in the following will not be satisfactory at all, on the contrary, only take a bird’s eye view and the forms of questions to which the answers or solutions are to be discovered, worked out and understood by responsible Christian bodies.

¹ Phd doctoral candidate, Lutheran Theological University, Budapest

² DUNNILL 9. Dunnill quotes Ricoeur. See original: RICOEUR, P. *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (ET Cambridge, 1981), p. 177, and cf. pp. 182–93.

An introductory glimpse on the Letter to the Hebrews

The date of writing, the authorship, the addressees, their location and situation, the content and structure, the language and genre of the text have proved to be a prolific field in scholarly research over the centuries, eventuating today in a considerable amount of disparate assumptions in that regard. As for the purpose of this study it is enough to review only a couple of these questions in brief, which contribute to the interest in deploying the resonating issues of our time in the 21st century. To this end the author, the addressees and the pastoral situation is going to be reviewed tententiously with an eye that seeks to discover the staples between the text and the reader of our time.

A sermon? A letter? A treatise? – As for the genre, structure and content it is this pastoral situation which prescribes what is needed to be applied. A widely accepted view is that the epistle to the Hebrews is rather a speech, a sermon, in effect, which alternates between exposition and exhortation, construed with carefully designed means of rhetoric.³ Besides this, many scholars are adamant that this writing can be regarded as a letter only to the extent of its external features, thus, notably „an encyclical letter addressed to a series of small churches of predominantly Jewish Christians, most probably in Western Asia Minor.”⁴ This opinion is largely grounded in the author’s interest in abstract doctrinal reflections, which is fairly conspicuous.

At the heart of the argumentation lies the sacrificial terminology and symbolism, which is proposed not only self-evident, but also axiomatic to the addressees who were raised and socialised in a culture profoundly pervaded by such religious understanding and practice. These sacrificial categories surely appear daunting to modern readers, who are baffled by the obscurity and the repulsiveness of such substances, objects, acts and meanings that are assigned to the efficacy of the religious practice and disposition. For example, „the emphasis on the shedding of blood, the priestly action and the element of the numinous, the necessities of sacrifice and purification” are compulsions that are alien to us today, or, at least, repressed in a way that it makes „dwelling on such themes psychologically painful and dangerous”.⁵

A committed pastor? – As the adage said, going back to Origen in the 3rd century AD, „*But who wrote the epistle? God knows the truth.*” Scholars have proposed a number of possibilities in identifying the author⁶, but what appears as matter of fact based on the Scripture is that the writer marks himself as „one who has been evangelised by the apostolic founders” (Heb 2:3), being „distinct from the audience” in terms of attributing himself to a circle of leaders that were responsible to „exercise authority over the apostle’s, i.e. Paul’s mission field, and seek to preserve his work.”⁷ His authoritative, yet caring relationship with the audience can be detected from him identifying with them as a „we” or „us” at every corner, when he expects them to honor his instructions in response to his rebuke and exhortations.⁸ This is immensely buttressed up by his excelling rhetorical skills, eloquence, and mesmerizing persuasiveness. All in all, as the writer of Hebrews evolves from the mist of anonymity in front of us, we come to recognise a deeply loving and resolute pastor in him,

³ DESILVA 697.

⁴ For further reading see: DUNNILL 22–24.

⁵ DUNNILL 6.

⁶ For example Priscilla, Luke, Silas, Epaphras, Aristion, Barnabas and Apollos make a compelling list, of which the last two have been approved of by the majority, especially the latter, having been acknowledged for his rhetorical abilities and cunning handling of the Old Testament. DESILVA 696.

⁷ DESILVA renders the probability that Timothy, having been part of this circle (Heb 13:23), its apostolic founder must have been Paul. DESILVA 696.

⁸ *Ibid.*

who has set forth on the mission to fight the seducing and destructing influences that began to erode the community, and reaffirm discipleship in unsupportive surroundings.

The author, or else, the mindful pastor, a charismatic spiritual leader aligns every possible means to dissuade the addressees from apostasy: his brilliant rhetorical skills, linguistic virtuosity, scriptural literacy demonstrated by reasonable applications of the scriptural examples and the sacrificial language to attain his goal, i.e. to urge them not to succumb to compromise or conform to patterns, models and ideals that the world imposes on them, but stick fervently to what they know and have experienced (Heb 6:1–2, 9–10).

A mixed group of addressees? – As regards the audience, it is a common view, the so-called „traditional” view, that this writing aimed to warn the Jewish Christians against the danger of reverting to non-Christian Judaism, whose conformity was quite diserable in order to appease tension between family and social bonds both on indivudal and system level. However, research has proved that the instruction and education of Gentiles into the Christian faith, ethics and worship, icluding the preparation for the conversion and practice of Scripture reading, allows us to assume that they were mastered in Old Testament narratives and symbolism with a profoundly Christ-oriented mindset, and so, able to take in the highly composite cultic language of sacrifice applied by the author, jampacked with examples from the Jewish history.⁹ Another, even more established argument is that the spread of Christianity in the cities of the Diaspora depicted in Acts took the forms of establishing rival synagogues, thus construing mixed communities of Christian worship, in which Gentiles and Jews got together on somewhat more agreeable terms.¹⁰ This could account for the complete omission of the circumcision issue from Hebrews that racked the Pauline mission.¹¹ It is conceivable, therefore, that by contrast to the second-century conjectural title („*To the Hebrews*”) the text could have addressed Christians of mixed ethnic backgrounds, not merely Jewish Christians. If this had been the case, it is all the more enthralling how empowering „the sustained comparison of Jesus with the mediators of access to God under the Torah and Levitical cult” was for the audience, and „contributed positively to the formation of Christian identity.”¹²

Evoking a contemporary urban congregation of the Western culture? – Much is revealed in the text about the addressees throughout the exhortations. That the birth of the community took place „in response to the preaching of the gospel by the witnesses of Jesus”¹³ (Heb 2:1–4) forms a solid ground in insisting to the existential experience of the divine call and work of the Holy Spirit. The congregation consists of members from all social levels, with potentials to charity and hospitality (Heb 10:33–34; 13:2, 16), even needed to be warned against overambition (Heb 13:5, 17). It goes without saying that they must have been considerably literate, i.e. capable of meaningfully grasp the message wrapped in the elevated style of the sermon, abound with images and symbols.¹⁴ An experience of tests in faith can already be ascribed to the history of the community to account for, which the author makes use of in praising the addressees for remaining „intensely loyal to Christ and to one another”, and endure suffering willingly. They could resist triumphally society’s pressure to succumb to the

⁹ For more arguments for the possibility of a Gentile audience see DESILVA 686–688.

¹⁰ DUNNILL 25.

¹¹ Although, we don’t know weather the circumcision question had been or not among the causes of the former hardships and persecution alluded to in the text. DUNNILL 25.

¹² DESILVA 688.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ DESILVA 688.

loss of their reputation, economic security, and the erosion of their connections within the patron-client system, which weaved through the whole society to ensure mutual existential care. These offences and humiliations were carried out by means of „shaming and reviling”, which were „society’s ways of neutralizing the threat Christians posed to the accepted worldview and values.” Thus, the author alludes to these past experiences as „a severe contest of sufferings” (Heb 10:32), „including insult, physical assaults, public disgrace, imprisonment and confiscation of goods, but no martyrdom”. The eloquent rhetor knows exactly how to win the audience for his purpose: he brings up the collective memories of the spiritual victories, and reminds of the big *why*, and so he encourages the Christ-set identity and commitment of the believers, which have weakened recently and is in danger now.¹⁵

Quite impressively, the author steps forward as a mindful pastor throwing his charisma into the scale when he brings the words of encouragement to the devotees amidst of daily temptations, extortions and seductive trends to compromise. The threats stem from some „drifting away” and neglecting the message that they received (Heb 2:1, 3), but they also take the forms of „turning away from the living God” (Heb 3:12), of failing to attain the promised rest (Heb 4:1), of neglecting to meet (Heb 10:25), of internal strife caused by some „root of bitterness” (12:15)¹⁶, of the slackness of disappointed hope (Heb 12:4; 10:25, 39), of failing through unbelief in the same way as the wilderness generation had done (Heb 4:11), of growing weary and losing heart (Heb 12:3), even of falling away (Heb 6:6), and, above all, of „trampling underfoot the Son of God, regarding as profane the blood by which you are sanctified, and affronting the Spirit of grace” (Heb 10:29).¹⁷ Faltering commitment is quite a dire threat to the Christian community, which placed them into grave spiritual danger.

Reviewing the character of this audience, perhaps it rings a bell when recalling our present day Christian communities mainly in urban area. Multi-ethnic congregations with diverse cultural background, social upbringing, status and emulations, not to mention mobility and fluctuation, are already a reality in the Western countries, which poses new challenges on the pastors, who struggle to survive, and stay loyal to their call. The shock that greeted the 21st century church ministry is suffocating. The pandemic even accelerated the ongoing processes.

Life-saving paradigms

A good crisis manager. Faltering commitment is quite a general symptom in modern day church of Western culture in particular, although it is triggered by different reasons. These reasons ought to be recognised and identified as *threats* in order to set up a strategy to ward them off and counsel communities as well as individuals on how to manoeuvre Christian life and remain appealing witness to the gospel. It is quite praiseworthy from the author that he is in possession of abilities that are indispensable in successful crisis management. Apart from the charisma and verbal talent,

- he **understands clear-sightedly the ongoing tendencies** that affect and deviate the community, down to the individuals’ level
- he is able to **present the Christian worldview and identity** in a way to which the addressees can bond with in their existential concerns
- he is able to **lift these concerns to spiritual level**
- he is able to **apply different narratives** to reconstruct the addressees’ self-reflection, e.g. the identity narrative (themes of sonship, citizenship, household, family, Heb 2:13; 2:16; 3:1; 5:12; 12:7) the faith narrative (faith

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ DUNNILL 21.

¹⁷ DESILVA 690.

paragons in Heb 11), the passion narrative (themes of suffering, Heb 2:9–10; 12:2–3), the secular priesthood narrative (Heb 10:10; 13:15), the freedom narrative (Heb 2:15), the sojourner narrative (the motif of „having and yet not having” (cf. Abraham sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign land, Heb 11:9)¹⁸

- he is **able to set up a strategy** which incorporates all this knowledge to subsume it to the aim of persuasion

The text discloses the underlying **pastoral strategy** with which the author works through his way to persuasion:

- He **helps them rediscover their priorities** in light of their Christian confession, as opposed to the priorities that would emerge from contemplating their disprivileged place in society.
- He **reminds them of the value of the gifts they have received** from God, the value of Jesus as their mediator with God, and the value of the ultimate benefit of an eternal homeland that they are yet to enter.
- Since sensitivity to shaming and reviling was a pressing factor, **he encourages them to continue to „despise shame”**, as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus did, with a view to attaining the promised reward.
- He **further insulates them** from the effects of being devalued and marginalized, turning their endurance of such hostility into **an opportunity for honor** in God’s sight.
- He **mobilizes the community members** to support one another, to keep watch for signs of straying, and to show such love for and solidarity with one another that each member finds the strength to press on.
- Finally, **he replaces any self-image** the believers might have formed on account of their neighbours’ censure and rejection with a powerful picture of their place in God’s plan.¹⁹

Helping a community in rediscovering their priorities requires a clear and appealing worldview. The author builds his arguments upon cosmological and eschatological grounds, thus depicting a trajectory between the visible realm and heaven that draws, embraces and holds the Christian identity embedded in firm principles.²⁰ He presents this worldview in such a palpable way that it immediately resonates with the audience’s deepest fears, concerns, insecurities and needs. Only such existential encounters have the power to reorient the wavering Christian. In the deliberation process triggered by the confrontations, the author constantly places the focal point on the Son, his mediatory and expiatory acts and role, and urges the addressees to respond to the person of Jesus, which is of utmost significance!²¹

Interests at stake. A social-rhetoric reading. – The argumentation undertakes the means of intimidation when it points at God’s wrath as the real danger for the ungrateful if Jesus is „trampled underfoot”. According to **the social rhetoric reading** of Hebrews the patron-client relationship was generally viewed to operate both on earthly, social grounds and in human-divine relations. That is why the person of Jesus as the mediator between God and human was

¹⁸ DUNNILL 30.

¹⁹ DESILVA 698–699.

²⁰ DESILVA 699.

²¹ Jesus’ „divine sonship, his exaltation to the high priesthood of the better sanctuary, and his session at the right hand of God” appoints him to be the most effective person to accomplish this. DESILVA 700.

of crucial importance. Bodily and spiritual ambitions, attitudes and deeds were all fuelled by the ultimate goal: to be in God's favour. „Who can effectively bring human beings in there? Who can establish and sustain a lasting relationship between God and humanity?”²² The author's answer is: Jesus *only*.²³ In a culture which is based on reciprocity²⁴, followers of Christ can enjoy the greatest gift ever, i.e. they can have direct access into God's realm „for which they have been prepared by Jesus' sacrifice and priestly intervention” (e.g., Heb 4:14–16; 10:19–25; 12:28).²⁵ The author backs up his argumentation with historical precedents, such as the story of the wilderness generation (Heb 3:7–4:11) or Esau etc. to shed light on the consequences of God's wrath in case of ungratefulness (Heb 12:16–17)²⁶ in order to deter apostasy.

In the above mentioned narratives that contribute to the reconstruction of the self-image the ones that evolve from the historical examples (Abraham, Melchizedek and Moses) and the addressees' own experiences of suffering (former persecution and now „drifting away”) carry dire warnings in the stances when God's wrath brought death on the unfaithful.²⁷ Whereas the ones that evolve from Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice transform death into hope, underpinning the worldview and Christ-like identity that is offered as an alternative to the audience.

Liminal areas. A liturgical reading. – The significance of Jesus' priestly sacrifice and the fashion the author portrays this tableau is even more scrutinized and celebrated in Dunnill's structural analysis of the text, which he words as a „liturgical reading”. He argues that the governing element of the composition is the „logic of sacrifice”, and everything is subsumed to furnish the sacred time and space which embody the „vision of worship as a face-to-face relationship between humanity and God expressed in a pattern of speech-acts”.²⁸ Verbal exchange – oaths, promises, blessings, curses and praise – takes over the role of the Levitical „trade in blood”, which is terminated by Jesus' sacrifice once and for all.²⁹ „What results is a liturgical understanding of the present moment, expressing a theology of *communion* in the actual presence of God, the destroyer and preserver.”³⁰ Dunnill concludes that the ambiguity of God, in that being feared and loved, the elements of risk and pain (filial discipline) are all essential both for readers of all time and for Jesus.³¹ Based on anthropological evidence,

„death is the subject of blood-sacrifice of all sorts (including the communion sacrifice), arising from a deep human need to recognise death at the boundary of human life, and so in some way to control it and remove its fear.”³²

The liturgical reading of Hebrews devotes much attention to explore the areas of marginal ambivalence (problem of impurity), which is experienced in the course of a sacrificial event, thus highlighting that the theology of holiness that unfolds in the Priestly code, is understood as *separation*.³³ The author of the Hebrews applies the common motif of the Tabernacle to

²² *Ibid.*

²³ DESILVA 700–701.

²⁴ „... receiving gifts well and returning gratitude in an appropriate manner.” DESILVA 701.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ DESILVA 702.

²⁷ DUNNILL 39.

²⁸ DUNNILL 262.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Cf. DUNNILL 261–263.

³¹ DUNNILL 262.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ DUNNILL 85.

illustrate the need for separation on dangerous, holy ground, but at the same time to give space for Jesus to enter the stage and spectacularly abolish the boundary between man and God. It appears reasonable that the author of Hebrews refers to the Tent of Meeting having been situated „outside the Camp” (Heb 13:13), so the interest in personal encounter as the mode of communication grabs the focus from sacrifice.³⁴ The typology of the sacred, therefore, takes on a personal-conjunctive character.³⁵

What is intriguing about this structural analysis is that it widens the scope of hermeneutic approach. From the perspective of ritual practice and symbolism the focus is shifted to direct communication between God and human. The question of boundaries, liminal experiences and concept of sin, weather transgression, rebel or defilement, the access to direct communication etc. are all food for thought for today’s readers. The golden thread that Dunnill follows in his analysis is the „Coleridgean argument that it is the property of a complex unity to alter the very nature of its constituent parts in the process of unifying them.”³⁶

Conclusion – „He made the large basin of bronze and its pedestal of bronze from the mirrors of the women who served.” (Exod 38:8)

The quest for identity. – Identity formation is a central means in the arsenal of the author and a forcing necessity in the process of persuasion. The author of Hebrews calls for the power of discourse, equipped with a refined illocutionary competence, by which the modern performative identity theory can be caught up. In addition, the success of applying this means effectively lies in one’s ability to understand patterns, models and ideals by juggling with the definition of the self. We have seen that sacrificial symbolism played a crucial role in helping people understand their cosmological position by representing the rigidity of boundaries, whereas by the deconstruction of these same boundaries helped people form a new identity in Christ. Separation and fusion, boundaries and freedom, negative and positive as the two sides of the coin have been the engine of identity formation in human history of old.

Byung-Chul Han, a modern day philosopher and cultural theorist, talks about „the dialectic of negativity”³⁷ as the main feature of a society of an immunological age. In that regard he marks the 20th century as such, and describes the epoch to have „sought to distinguish clearly between inside and outside, friend and foe, self and other.”³⁸ He ponders about the recent phenomenon that critique occurs when a paradigm declines. In this age of transition it appears that „more and more, contemporary society is emerging as a constellation that escapes the immunological scheme of organisation and defence altogether. It is marked by the disappearance of *otherness* and *foreignness*.”³⁹ The problem surfaces in that *otherness* is replaced with *difference*. As it does not entail any immunoreaction, „in terms of immunology it represents the *Same*”.⁴⁰ „*Otherness* provoking an immune reaction would work against the dissolution of boundaries. This proves to be incompatible with the process of globalisation,

³⁴ Exod 33:7–10; Num 11:16, 24–6, 12:4; Deut 31:14f. DUNNILL 87.

³⁵ DUNNILL gives a thorough description on how cultures differ in regarding divine power. The vertical extremes are labelled as IMPERSONAL-PERSONAL, the horizontal extremes are marked as CONJUNCTIVE-DISJUNCTIVE. The sacrifices corresponding these deities are as follows: 1. P-C, communion; 2. I-C, participation; 3. P-D, propitiation; 4. I-D, expiation/aversion. For THE description of these categories see DUNNILL 78–79.

³⁶ DUNNILL 3. See original: S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*. Ed. G. Watson, London 1956, pp. 137f.

³⁷ HAN, Byung-Chul 8–10. Byung-Chul Han: *The Burnout Society*. Stanford Briefs, 2015.

³⁸ HAN, Byung-Chul 6.

³⁹ HAN, Byung-Chul 7.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

therefore we are experiencing an era which is poor in negativity, while there is *an overwhelming excess of positivity*. As there is no place to discuss the whole theory within the frames of this study, we must pose the question immediately: how does this surface in Christian theology? This cannot be answered with ease. First and foremost, in terms of performative identity and its formation, it must be asserted that in order to define or, at least, orient the Own in one way, it is necessary to compare it to the Other.⁴¹ Otherwise, balanced self-reflection can never take place. One *must* look into the brass laver⁴² to be able to perceive and conceive his own self. Another, serious threat of the epoch of positivity is that it imposes on humanity a freedom narrative by making them believe that they can be and do whatever they want. This proves to be a dreadful violence on humanity as they are made to exploit themselves to death voluntarily while „pursuing their dreams”. Byung-Chul Han calls this the era of *neuronal violence*.

„The violence of positivity does not deprive, it saturates; it does not exclude, it exhausts. That is why it proves inaccessible to unmediated perception. [...] Neuronal violence does not proceed from system-foreign negativity. Instead, it is systematic – that is, system-immanent – violence. Depression, ADHD, and burnout syndrome point to excess positivity. Burnout syndrome occurs when the ego overheats, which follows from too much of the Same.”⁴³

The 21st century spiritual leader has to deal with and counsel more and more people who suffer from some kind of neuronal disease that can be traced back to latent identity crisis, which stem from surpassing professional ambitions, unfruitful private life, misconceived self-image. Surveillance capitalism has mastered its algorithms to transform human beings into products, and mould the individual’s identity to serve its commercial purposes.⁴⁴ Statistics and psychological research show that suicide and depression in gen Z has taken extreme rates.⁴⁵ The conformity of Christian faith to issues in sexual (LGBTQ) or political views, has lately become quite conspicuous. Many Christians happen define their faith on the basis of the self-enhancing, cosumeristic individualism: „what does it do for me?” Others nurture an image of a hugging and loving God on emotional basis which seeks for „good vibes only”. And then there are always the so-called „righteous ones”, whose doctrinal faith and practice rarely meet.⁴⁶ In the whirl of such influences and religious corruption church-goers’ identity has been shaken during the pandemic, and attempts to maintain virtual service brought up new losses and individualised community experience in screen boxes. What would the author of Hebrews say to this? Probably very much the same: Do not compromise! Fear God’s wrath! – Do we?

„Not without blood” (Heb 9,7) – As regards Jesus’ priestly sacrifice, admittedly, it is hard to bond with for a child of the Western culture, let them be gen X, millennial, or iGen. The

⁴¹ A very simplistic wording, though.

⁴² Looking into and washing the hands in the brass basin used to be part of the purification ritual in the court of the Tabernacle.

⁴³ HAN, Byung-Chul 13.

⁴⁴ For further reading see: ZUBOFF, Shoshana *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. Profile Books Ltd. 2019. p. 704. ISBN: 1781256853

⁴⁵ For further reading see: TWENGE, Jene M. *iGen. Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids are Growing up less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy, and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood – And What That Means for the Rest of Us*. Atria Books, 2017. p. 352. ISBN 1501151983.

⁴⁶ For further reading see: McCracken, Bratt 5 Foundations that Fead to Compromise on Sexual Ethics. August 3, 2021. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/foundations-sexual-ethics/>

sacrificial symbolism depicted in Hebrews is not any more part of our everyday experience or worldview, nor is it constitutional in constructing the identity of the self. Birth and death depend on human decisions (abortion, artificial insemination, euthanasia). How could, therefore, people not interested in free access into God's realm through Christ's blood be expected to act responsibly in such matters? How could such a 21st century youngster, absorbed in social media, find a firm basis for self-interpretation, for whom blood is a mere healthcare substance, vampire drink or paint in a paintball match, or an everyday prop and sight in video games? If the church wants to survive and continue to fulfill the task of spreading the gospel, persuade devotees not to conform to the influential zeitgeists, trends and fashions, and avoid becoming corrupt at an individual and institutional level, we are compelled to rediscover the staples between Christ's priestly sacrifice and the way we interpret Christian identity. That would be a real „restart"! The world is spiritually starving for a genuinely competent Christian identity. We must „see to it" not offer them corrupt ones!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] DESILVA, David A, *An Introduction to the New Testament. Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. 2nd ed. IVP Academic, p. 897. 2018 ISBN 978-0-8308
- [2] DUNNILL, John *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*. Society for New Testament Studies, Mon. series 75. Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed. 2005. p. 297. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511554926>
- [3] HAN, Byung-Chul *The Burnout Society*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, p. 74. ISBN 978-0-8047-9750-4, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804797504>
- [4] McCracken, Bratt *5 Foundations that Lead to Compromise on Sexual Ethics*. August 3, 2021. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/foundations-sexual-ethics/>