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FUNDAMENTALIST TENDENCIES IN THE ORTHODOX BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP SOME EXAMPLES AND HERMENEUTICAL OBSERVATIONS

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Abstract

The article deals with the topic of fundamentalist approach to the biblical texts within the Orthodox biblical scholarship. After a brief description of the fundamentalist approach to the Bible and an attempt to question them from the point of view of the concept of Christian Scripture and contemporary epistemology based on the interpretative structure of knowledge, author briefly points to the strangeness of the fundamentalist approach to the Orthodox theological tradition. The fundamentalist readings of the Bible inspire or follow tendencies within the Orthodox Church, such as anti-intellectualism, anti-ecumenism, and a specific call to spiritual revival. One possible answer to the dominance of these phenomena in the Church is the promotion of the historical-critical method in interpreting the Bible on the Orthodox educational institutions, as well as insisting on a scientific-critical discourse in the context of the present time. The fundamentalist approach should be seen as a challenge, but also as an invitation to dialogue. Given the dialogic structure of interpretation, there is no reason to replace fundamentalist approach with another type of fundamentalism. The Church is a space that encompasses different expressions and phenomena of faith, but above all it is a space of dialogue and mutual understanding, not exclusion and rejection.

Keywords: fundamentalism, Bible, Orthodox Church, historical-critical method.

»Fundamentalism has never been accepted in the Orthodox Church, yet the resistance to biblical criticism may encourage crypto-fundamentalist tendencies in some Orthodox circles.«¹

¹ Veselin KESICH, *Biblical Studies in Orthodox Theology. A Response*, in: *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 17 (1972.) 66, 63–68.

1. How Does the Fundamentalist Way of Reading the Bible Work?

A fundamentalist reading of the canonical and normative scriptures from the past can be found in every religion and confession. Such a reading and understanding is often one phase/stage in the religious development of individuals. The theological roots of Christian fundamentalism can be found in the USA in the 19th century in the premillennialist movement and in »Princeton theology« with its Reformed background.² Of course, the question of how to understand the Bible – as a divinely inspired book essentially different than other books – is much older. It had been extensively discussed in the past, but in its modern form it is a consequence of the claim »sola scriptura« in the reformed theology.³

However, this issue is not constrained only to Protestant communities. There are individuals and groups in every Church or Christian religious community who argue that they are reading and understanding the biblical text, the whole text, and nothing but the text. The text must be taken as it stands. This text is divine, inerrant and inspired by God, and therefore true. The Bible offers the truth that remains as valid as ever. Therefore, Christian fundamentalism is characterised by its specific approach to the Bible.⁴ Fundamentalism became known for its commitment to inerrancy, the belief that the Bible is without errors. The legacy of fundamentalism, at least practically speaking, has been that we should think that every word in our particular translation of the Bible is absolutely true,⁵ and every idea that comes into our head when

² Cf. Heinrich SCHÄFER, Religious Fundamentalism, in: Julio de SANTA ANA (ed.), *Religions Today. Their Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva, 2005, 274.

³ Cf. Peter STUHLMACHER, *Vom Verstehen des Neuen Testaments. Eine Hermeneutik*, Göttingen, 1979, 148–149.

⁴ About the fundamentalist approach to the Bible, and a balanced consideration of this issue see Anto POPOVIĆ, *Načela i metode za tumačenje Biblije. Komentar papina govora i dokumenta biblijske komisije Tumačenje Biblije u Crkvi*, Zagreb, 2005, 200–212. See also Ernst LERLE, *Bibeltrue. Ein fundamentalistischer Zugang zur Bibel*, in: Ulrich LUZ (ed.), *Zankapfel Bibel. Eine Bibel – viele Zugänge*, Zürich, 1992, 39–54.

⁵ The problem is that we do not possess the autographs of the biblical texts, but only a number of the manuscripts (copies). Every text we use for the translation is a reconstructed, and therefore artificial text. Textual criticism as the method by which biblical text is reconstructed involves looking for and discovering manuscript witnesses of the text under consideration, recovering their often corrupted text, reading and understanding them within their historical and literary context, collating them with other manuscripts, discussing their differences, applying various scholarly criteria about authentic or secondary renderings and deciding, often through disagreements and long discussions, on the writing that should be preferred as being closer to the lost original. Shortly, there is no *one* and *single* biblical text which can be considered inspired in all its words. See Eldon J. EPP, *Textual Criticism in the Exegesis of the New Testament, with an Excursus on Canon*, in: Stanley E. PORTER (ed.), *A Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament*, Boston – Leiden, 2002, 45–97.

we read our Bible is absolutely true. Finally, our own theology, which we find every time we open our Bibles, must be absolutely true. The fundamentalist approach to the Bible promotes the idea that a divinely inspired book reads differently than other books: The Bible is so true that there is no need to interpret it. For readers such a reading offers certainty so that they are not swallowed up by the waves of historical and social changes. This certainty is usually followed with a strong expectation of the return of Christ.⁶ Reading the biblical texts as they stand is not actually an active process. What is at stake is rather hearing or receiving their alleged clear meaning – there is no interpretation needed. The reading subject is a passive receiver of the meaning of the text. There is no scholarly, personal, historical, or interpretative engagement in the reading process at all. Such a reading that excludes reflexivity, and requires turning off all questioning, must end up theoretically in a naïve Biblicism, and ecclesially in separation of fundamentalist groups – their claim for the absoluteness of their truth necessarily develops into a universalist politics of power.

2. The Bible and Its Readers

Two group of questions are to be posed in this regard.

- 1) Can the Scriptures be read in this way? Do they allow for such an unquestioning and passive reading? Do they convey all truths in such a way that they are plain and obvious to every reader, no matter where, when and how he or she lives?
- 2) Is there any reading and understanding without interpretation? Is the truth something to be found outside of our interpretation or should the truth be understood as an interpretative procedure which involves conversation, an ongoing dialogue with the canonical texts, traditions and other interpretations?

1) The Bible is not only one book, but also a collection of books (in Greek τὰ βιβλία means »books«, »Scriptures« in plural). The books of the Bible were written at different times, by different authors, in very different historical settings. These books were subsequently collected and united in one book, the canon of the Bible. Although the canon, recognised and accepted as inspired Word of God by the believing community of the Church, provides a certain hermeneutical perspective for interpretation of the biblical texts, the singular books should not be deprived of their own theological identity. When reading

⁶ Cf. Heinrich SCHÄFER, *Religious Fundamentalism*, 275.

biblical texts one must respect contexts within which their literal activity and theological reflections occur. Context – historical, political, social, economic etc. – exercises a decisive influence on theological reflection and its »truthiness«. Therefore, the Bible should be understood as unity *and* diversity. This is evident, for example, when studying the different features of the New Testament (a collection of 27 books): four Gospels (Matthew and Luke interpreting Mark!), the proclamation of the first churches, the role of tradition (for example, Pauline παράδοση and Deutero-Pauline παρακαταθήκη), the concepts of ministry, Christological formulations, the practices of worship, the spiritual experience, interpretations of the Jewish Bible, etc. but, the cohesive focal point was faith in Jesus Christ.⁷ The diversity of theological expressions are all focused in the Christ event. The enduring principle of unity of the Bible is Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ remembered and interpreted. Since we know that memories are never »objective« and always interpreted from a certain perspective, our task as theologians is to continue to interpret, to make sense of the Christ event in our theological discursive praxis today. The diversity and interpretative matrix of the biblical texts based on their contextuality resist and challenge fundamentalist readings.

2) Today we seem to live in the Age of Interpretation, announced by Nietzsche's formulation »there are no facts, but only interpretations«, and Foucault's sentence »everything is already interpretation«.⁸ Interpretation »can only be argued as an interested response to a particular situation – not as the objective registration of a fact that remains external to it but as itself a fact that enters into the makeup of the very historical situation to which it corresponds«.⁹ Therefore, knowledge is always interpretation made by interested subjects. The reading subject is not a neutral screen but an interested subject

⁷ Cf. James DUNN, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, London, 2006.

⁸ See Michael MAHON, *Foucault's Nietzschean Genealogy: Truth, Power, and the Subject*, New York, 1992, 116: »As early as 1964 Foucault argued that since nineteenth century, since Nietzsche, Marx and Freud, interpretation has become an infinite task because there is no thing to interpret. 'There is nothing absolutely primary to interpret, because at bottom, everything is already interpretation, each sign is in itself not the thing which is offered to interpretation, but interpretation of other signs. There is never, if you will, an *interpretandum* which is not already an *interpretans*.' Signs are interpretations which attempt to mask the fact that they are interpretations.« See Hubert L. DREYFUS – Paul RAINBOW – Michel FOUCAULT (ed.), *Michael Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago, 1983, 107.

⁹ Gianni VATTIMO, *The Age of Interpretation*, in: Santiago ZABALA (ed.), *The Future of Religion*. Richard Rorty and Gianni Vattimo, New York, 2005, 45.

with a certain pre-understanding. When fundamentalists argue that they simply read and receive the obvious facts and messages from the biblical texts, they also take an interpretative decision. Their readings correspond to a set of prior beliefs, and are therefore, an interpretation. If we really want to respect the biblical texts we should take them seriously in their own contexts and discourses – that means that our interpretative work must be speculative, analytical, and critical; always questioning presumed results and assumptions on which they are based.

3. Does the Fundamentalist Way of Reading the Bible Have Something to Do with Orthodox Theology?

When Orthodox crypto-fundamentalists insist that they are faithful to the Tradition, that they read the Bible and believe in the same way the Fathers did, then we face a problem of understanding of the Tradition and its role in contemporary theology. In this regard J. Meyendorff writes:

»While essentially and permanently self-identical, the Church lives in history. The divine Truth which abides in her must, therefore, always face new challenges and be expressed in new ways. The Christian message is not only to be kept unchangeable, but it must also be understood by those to whom it is sent by God; it must answer new questions posed by new generations. Thus enters another function of Holy Tradition: to make Scripture available and understandable to a changing an imperfect world. In this world, treating problems in isolation from Tradition by simplistic references to Scripture may lead to error and heresy.«¹⁰

This is a clear and unambiguous statement against fundamentalism, against the »simplistic references to Scripture«, which does not take into account the living, dynamic tradition. This tradition pays attention to actuality, believing that the Church possesses not only questions and dilemmas *per se*, but that there are »new questions posed by new generations«. An unquestioning reading of Scripture, and Tradition as well, cannot answer these questions. With regard to the possibility of theologising, speaking about God, the consequence of the fundamentalist reading would be either silence or unreasonable repetition – both strange to the Orthodox Tradition. When we look back to the rich patristic tradition of interpreting the Scripture, we can observe an intel-

¹⁰ John MEYENDORFF, *The Meaning of Tradition*, in: John MEYENDORFF, *Living Tradition. Orthodox Witness in the Contemporary World*, New York, 1978, 17.

lectual and spiritual openness of the Fathers to pagan methods of interpretation and to rhetorical and philosophical traditions of the ancient world. They accepted ancient approaches and methods and applied them – certainly with a new hermeneutical optic of the faith in Jesus Christ – to the sacred text, in order to make the message of the Scripture culturally recognisable and available to their contemporaries. In sum, the Fathers did not merely read and repeat the words of the Bible, they interpreted them. Only in this way could they develop a communicative theology, which a Christian theologian should consider as a model and paradigm of theological thinking for all ages.¹¹

The theologians of today must be aware that similarly to their predecessors, their theological reflection is usually set in motion by some specific event, question, or crisis. Because these occur in every generation and in different settings, the need for theological reflection never ceases. In some cases, the things that trigger our theological reflection closely resemble those things that triggered the New Testament writings and writings of the Fathers. In other cases, the questions that drive us to seek fresh answers are completely new. For many of our questions, the theologians search in vain in both the biblical text and the tradition of biblical interpretations for precedents that might provide answers.¹² Thus, the theologians of today are doing theology in a way similar to how it was done by the Fathers. As a part of a hermeneutical continuum, we struggle to make sense of God's action in Christ.

4. Crypto-Fundamentalist Tendencies in Orthodoxy

I now return to the first sentence of the article, to the statement of V. Kesich that »the resistance to biblical criticism may encourage crypto-fundamentalist

¹¹ When the Orthodox biblical scholars of today insist on the legacy of patristic exegesis and repeat it without further reflection, without seriously taking into account these and the other aspects, as though the exegesis of the patristic age is timeless, then they find that there is hardly any reasonable connection to their own contemporaries. See Savas AGOURIDES, *The Orthodox Church and Contemporary Biblical Research*, in: James D. G. DUNN – Hans KLEIN – Ulrich LUZ – Vasile MIHOC (eds.), *Auslegung der Bibel in Orthodoxer und westlicher Perspektive. Akten des west-östlichen Neutestamentler/innen-Symposiums von Neamt vom 4.–11. September 1998*, Tübingen, 2000, 147: »The Fathers of the Church, brilliant though they were, were the children of their own time, as we are the children of ours [...] The Fathers absorbed the material for their own time and for the problems current then. They could not do this chewing for us, as they could not know our exact situation; in addition, there is the spiritual principle created by them that everybody must do his or her own chewing.«

¹² Cf. Carl R. HOLLADAY, *Introduction to the New Testament. Reference Edition*, Waco, Texas, 2017, 23.

tendencies in some Orthodox circles«. He wrote 'crypto', because these movements use to call themselves 'Orthodox' or 'originally Orthodox' or 'truly Orthodox'. There is obviously an emergence of fundamentalism in the Orthodox Churches. The identity marks of this fundamentalism are first and foremost anti-intellectualism, anti-ecumenism, and call for spiritual life, based on or following fundamentalist reading.¹³

1. Anti-intellectualism. One Serbian theologian who prefers the fundamentalist approach writes: »The words of Elder Sophrony (Saharof), that modern theology offers only intellectual understanding without actually elevating to the sphere of the Divine Being, prove encouraging to all those who want to deal with this issue in the accurate manner. Since a critical attitude towards academic theology has been present in theological history for quite some time, the experience of the Holy Fathers proves decisive, for they in their times responded to any form of intellectualistic approach to the mystery of the Divine knowledge.«¹⁴ Attacking »intellectualism« the fundamentalists attack academic theology and critical thinking. The exponents of fundamentalism often attack Orthodox biblical scholarship, arguing that the reading of the Bible needs to be a spiritual and ecclesial matter, not academic. These »spiritual and ecclesial« approaches are often paired with hostility towards the West. Orthodox biblical scholars trained at Western theological faculties are often accused of »secularism and Protestantism«, and even anti-ecclesial activities. The deep distrust concerning the Western intellectual tradition reflects the rejection of historical criticism and exegetical scholarly methods: the Western biblical interpretation is rationalistic to the point of being atheistic and godless. There is a clear connection between the rejection of historical-critical interpretation and the expansion of fundamentalism. Furthermore, there is a serious gap between academia and large groups of the clergy and monks, between scholarly exegesis and the fundamentalist interpretations of the Bible. For example, in Serbia, fundamentalist circles attack biblical scholars. One Serbian New Testament scholar writes that the Western biblical scholars are »heretics«. ¹⁵ Another

¹³ For the situation in Romania see Korinna ZAMFIR, *Exegesis in a Multi-ethnic and Multi-confessional Region. Challenges and Responsibilities*, in: *Sacra Scripta*, 15 (2017) 1–2, 51–72.

¹⁴ Здравко ПЕНО, *Интелектуализам као богословски проблем*, in: *Богословље*, 1 (2014), 223, 222–233 (Zdravko PENO, *Intelektualizam kao bogoslovski problem*, in: *Bogoslovlje*, 1 [2014] 223, 222–233).

¹⁵ Сф. Мирко ТОМАСОВИЋ, *Говори Господ. Свето Писмо и Свето Предање као израз живе саборности*, Београд, 2008, 35 (Mirko DJ. TOMASOVIĆ, *Govori Gospod. Sveto Pismo i Sveto Predanje kao izraz žive sabornosti Crkve*, Београд, 2008, 35).

Orthodox Serbian biblical scholar dismisses Western biblical scholarship, and disregards questions posed by it.¹⁶ Orthodox crypto-fundamentalists attack even respected Orthodox scholars, like Savas Agourides. Agourides is counted among the »unorthodox«. He has come under fire because of his critical thinking, positive attitude toward Western biblical scholarship, his historical, non-futuristic interpretation of the Apocalypse, allegedly against the revered tradition of the Fathers. However, such a stance does not do service to faith, and even less to theology, which needs to preserve its intellectual dimension.¹⁷

2. Anti-ecumenism. The same circles that condemn critical biblical scholarship and often recur to an unreflective use of the patristic tradition also regard ecumenism as the supreme heresy. The rejection of the ecumenical movement is sometimes supported with biblical proof-texts used to show that the unity of the Church of Christ and of the apostles endures solely in the Orthodox Church. The anti-ecumenical trend puts pressure on moderate and open-minded scholars. A talented and truly ecumenically minded Orthodox biblical scholar may feel uneasy about presenting the critical conclusions of his research, as his Orthodoxy comes under suspicion due to his involvement with ecumenical undertakings. Another moderate scholar felt the need to remove any suspicion regarding his Orthodoxy by stating that ecumenism is in fact a »dead enemy«.¹⁸

3. Media. The spiritual, hyper-Orthodox circles often use virtual space to promote their ideas. They widespread ideas through internet. They often postulate an ideal believer (often with photos from monastic life), and mount an attack against those who believe in, live, or practice scholarship in a different manner. Countless religious websites and blogs have emerged to defend the allegedly endangered Orthodoxy and to promote so-called traditional values. These sites are hotbeds of nationalism, intolerance and anti-ecumenism. The impact of the internet, of the online propaganda is much wider, more profound, and more efficient than that of traditional instruments like the homily or regular scholarship. Ideas circumscribed thirty years ago to a remote region are now instantly accessible, read, believed, liked, commented and shared, and they gain authority regardless of the incompetence of those who promote them. Sharing the posts

¹⁶ Cf. Предраг САМАРЏИЋ, *Исус Христос у мраку историјске критике, уз критички осврт на књигу Милан Вукомановић »Рано хришћанство – од Исуса до Христа«, Требиње, 2004* (Predrag SAMARDŽIĆ, *Isus Hristos u mraku istorijske kritike, uz kritički osvrt na knjigu Milan Vukomanović »Rano hrišćanstvo – od Isusa do Hrista«, Trebinje, 2004*).

¹⁷ Cf. Korinna ZAMFIR, *Exegesis in a Multi-ethnic and Multi-confessional Region*, 63.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

leads to the multiplication of the effects.¹⁹ The answers from the other side are quite modest. There are fewer web portals and blogs which promote critical theological thinking (as a good example one can mention publicorthodoxy.org or the brand-new web page теологија.нет [teologija.net] in Serbia).

5. Interpretation as the Permanent Task of (Orthodox) Biblical Scholarship: The Church as a Place of Communication

The reception of the historical-critical method must be a permanent undertaking in the educational system of Orthodox theological faculties. The historical criticism that should be adopted in the biblical studies is not the same criticism as that which dominated in Western biblical studies in the 19th and the first part of the 20th century. The main objections against this kind of historical criticism in biblical and theological studies are that it bypasses the question of God and truth and, therefore, misses the purpose of reading the Bible. Furthermore, it is obsolete in its scholarly profile and existentially sterile, and is thought to be un- or anti-theological. Additionally, the roots of historical criticism, at the time it emerged in the Western Europe, are considered highly ideologically and politically motivated.²⁰ The fact that historical criticism did not have any remarkable impact on the daily life of the Church in the West could therefore be an important lesson for scholars and theologians in the East. Shall we, therefore, import something so strange into our spirituality, which, by the way, is in advance doomed to fail? It is not enough to argue that historical criticism is an important instrument in academic studies and that it makes theological studies able to participate in the academic life of a university. This is certainly true, but the Church encompasses a much wider space than merely the academic community and so the fruits of historical criticism ought to be felt in the whole Church. What then can we learn by studying the Bible in a historical-critical way? Can we expect a theological benefit from this enterprise? The answer should be yes, because it protects theology against inherent ideological hazards, demarcates perspectives, and renders theology culturally relevant. Since Christianity considers historical experience to be a locus of revelation, historical criticism is essentially theological.²¹

¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁰ Cf. Michael C. LEGASPI, *The Death of Scripture and Rise of Biblical Studies*, New York, 2010.

²¹ Cf. Knut BACKHAUS, *Aufgegeben? Historische Kritik als Kapitulation und Kapital von Theologie*, in: *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 114 (2017), 260–288.

In the biblical tradition – oral and written alike –, we see a recurrent tendency to transcend original meanings of the previous texts through new readings in the light of new experiences. Original meanings have always been transcended for the sake of the new »significance« for each generation. A search for original meanings at such places and the historical contexts in which they emerged means reading and interpreting Scripture theologically: By so doing one can learn how theology functions and how human beings are enabled to speak (write) about God. In this way, historical criticism can serve theology and help us to grasp the patterns of how theology was done in the past in order to gain insights for the present. Hence, the first and basic exegetical task in the academia is, and remains, historical-critical work, the critical and accountable dealing with texts. The outcome of this work helps us to consider the means through which the texts responded to the challenges of their own age and how they built the Church in the times of their emergence. A basic trait of a theologically contrived historical criticism is the effort to explore the possibilities of transcending the hypothetical original meanings of the biblical texts, which have to be established through the historical-critical method. Today, this could further offer us paradigms for doing theology for the new contexts in which we live. By pursuing historical-critical exegesis, we respect the otherness of biblical texts, and we continuously allow them to question our identity.²² As the Orthodox biblical scholar Savvas Agourides pointed out:

»Historical criticism and other methods of biblical research presuppose love for and confidence in the truth, a certain minimum level of spiritual maturity and internal freedom which make possible the adventure of quest, the possibility of objections, of doubt, and even of error. But for us this constitutes something like a dream on the part of a minority, since the more general, spiritual, and theological climate imposes above all a convergence of views which express the fundamental laws of society and of our ecclesial life.«²³

The fundamentalist approach is perceived as an ideology that grants its adherents the belief that they possess the absolute truth. The result is often the social domination of the individuals and groups over the others who supposedly do not possess the whole truth. This has serious ecclesial consequences. The Church should not revert to being a tiny fundamentalist sect, only be-

²² I extensively deal with this thematic in my article: Predrag DRAGUTINOVIĆ, *Is there Orthodox Exegesis? Engaging Contextual Hermeneutics in Orthodox Biblical Studies*, in: *Ortodoksia*, 55 (2015), 7–42.

²³ Savvas AGOURIDES, *The Orthodox Church and Contemporary Biblical Research*, 145.

cause fundamentalist among us are loud and hyper-active. The main difference between Church and sect is the grade of openness *ad extra* and *ad intra*.²⁴ *Ad extra*: In contrast to a sect, the Church *communicates* with the external world in culturally recognisable way. The Church is open, not only to offer a space for a new life-style in Christ, but also to receive *difference* in this space. A sect expects from others to accept the absolute truth it offers, without questioning, without feedbacks. A sect offers certainty expressed in uniformity. *Ad intra*: In contrast to a sect, the Church is a wide space, open for very different expressions of faith. In the Church there is also space for fundamentalist readings of the Bible. There are people in the Church whose current spiritual needs can be covered by a fundamentalist approach to the Bible. The Church should not reject or exclude those people. A dialogue should be offered to them. Fundamentalism should not be answered with another kind of fundamentalism. A dialogical structure of interpretation obliges openness to others. The fundamentalist approaches can be considered as conversation partners (if they accept this invitation), but their voice should not be allowed to become authoritative, normative, or representative for the whole Church. The fundamentalists should learn that they can be only one voice in the diversity of the expressions of the faith in the Church. An inner dialogue, maybe without fruit and concrete results, must be offered again and again.²⁵

²⁴ Cf. Gerd THEISSEN, Kirche oder Sekte? Über Einheit und Konflikte im frühen Christentum, in: Anatoly. A. ALEXEEV – Christos KARAKOLIS – Ulrich LUZ, in cooperation with Karl-Wilhelm NIEBUHR, *Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament*, Tübingen, 2008., 84–85: »Dennoch unterschieden sich Kirchen und Sekten gerade in ihrer Haltung zum Pluralismus: Eine Kirche muss intern eine Fülle von Lebens- und Glaubensformen tolerieren, eine Sekte muss nach innen hin einen hohen Einheitsdruck ausüben. Man sollte daher zwischen internem und externem Pluralismus unterscheiden: Kirche verbinden internen Pluralismus mit einem externen Exklusivitätsanspruch, den sie meist nur dort sozial durchzusetzen versuchen, wo sie in einem Territorium die Mehrheit vertreten.«

²⁵ I am grateful to Nicholas Harold Lackenby for linguistic improvements to my manuscript.

Sažetak

**FUNDAMENTALISTIČKE TENDENCIJE U PRAVOSLAVNOJ
BIBLIJSKOJ ZNANOSTI
NEKI PRIMJERI I HERMENEUTIČKA ZAPAŽANJA**

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U članku se obrađuje tema fundamentalističkog pristupa biblijskim tekstovima u okviru egzegeze pravoslavnog konteksta. Poslije kratkog opisa fundamentalističkih postavaka tumačenja Biblije i pokušaja da ih se dovede u pitanje s gledišta koncepta kršćanskoga Svetog pisma i suvremene epistemologije utemeljene na interpretacijskoj strukturi spoznaje ukratko se ukazuje na stranost fundamentalističkog pristupa pravoslavnoj teološkoj tradiciji. Fundamentalistička čitanja Biblije ili inspiriraju ili pak prate tendencije u okviru pravoslavlja, poput antiintektualizma, antiekumenizma i specifičnog poziva na duhovni preporod. Jedan od načina da se suprotstavi dominaciji takvih pojava u Crkvi jest promoviranje historijsko-kritičke metode u tumačenju Biblije na pravoslavnim obrazovnim institucijama kao i inzistiranje na znanstvenokritičkom rasuđivanju u kontekstu suvremenog doba. Fundamentalističke zahtjeve treba promatrati kao izazov, ali i kao poziv na dijalog. S obzirom na dijalošku strukturu interpretacije, nema razloga da se na fundamentalističke zahtjeve odgovara drugom vrstom fundamentalizma. Crkva je prostor koji obuhvaća različite izraze i očitovanja vjere, ali je prije svega prostor dijaloga i razumijevanja, a ne isključivanja i odbacivanja.

Ključne riječi: fundamentalizam, Biblija, pravoslavna Crkva, historijski kriticizam, metodologija.