

The Appendices include a conversation entitled “The Expected Future for Religion after Metaphysics”, dated 2005, that occurred between Vattimo and Richard Rorty (1931-2007), one of America’s leading philosophers of the second half of the twentieth century, and moderated by Santiago Zabala (born 1975). The second Appendix is Kopic’s rendition of “Vattimo’s Philosophy of Religion.” Mario Kopic (born 1965) is an accomplished translator of the Croatian language (for example, the translations of Giorgio Agamben), but is primarily a philosopher who, in his writings, for example, *pescanik.net*, does not spare religion and Christianity. He writes in a language which could be defined as Serbo-Croatian, using the “ijekavica” dialect with Serbian vocabulary, with the exception of some words, such as: *Židovi* (Jews), *Babilon* (Babylon), *nogomet* (football/soccer), *sudac* (referee), *spolni moral* (sexual morality), and *stoljeće* (century) which do not belong to the Serbian lexicon.

A dialogue between philosophy and theology is a real thing. Theologians often think that they are the only ones that read the Scriptures critically, but this discussion demonstrates that a number of philosophers undoubtedly read the Bible too. It would be a pity if Vattimo’s essay is not printed in a Croatian edition, perhaps in a kind of extended form along with “A Marxist and a Christian: A Dialogue between Prof. Branko Bošnjak and Prof. Mijo Škvorc on Some Topics of the Book, Philosophy and Christianity” dated 1969, with the subtitle, “Philosophical and Theological Commentaries.”

Mislav Miholek

Translated by Juliana Kovačević

C. Arnold Snyder

### **Povijest i teologija anabaptizma (Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction)**

Zagreb, Theological Faculty „Matija Vlačić Ilirik“, 2009., 507 pages.

The book *Povijest i teologija anabaptizma* written by C. Arnold Snyder was published in December 2009., as the 9<sup>th</sup> volume of the “Bibliotheca Flaciana” of the Theological Faculty “Matija Vlačić Ilirik”. The book was excellently translated by the untimely deceased dr. Davorin Peterlin from the original text under the title *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, Ont: Pandora Press, 1995). Reviewers dr. Antonia Lučić Gonzalez and dr. Zrinka Nikolić Jakus gave their positive opinion of the translation of the book, and dr. Lidija Matošević is signed as the editor.

After the translation of the book *The Anabaptist Story* (Istina je neuništiva, Novi Sad, 1977) by W. R. Estep, and occasional articles in the baptist journal

Glas evanđelja and in the pentecostal journal *Izvori* from the 1980-s, there has been very little published about Anabaptism among Christians in Croatia, even though almost all churches of the reformation heritage call on Anabaptist principles along with the generally accepted protestant principles. There hasn't been any significant scientific research on the radical tradition of Reformation, nor on Anabaptists. This is understandable, because the Anabaptists in Croatia in the 16th century did not have any significant influence, regardless of the attempts made to start mission stations. Very scarce information gives us hints that there were mission stations in Zagreb, Istra, Kvarner and Dalmatian islands.

It is worth noticing that translation of the book *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* is published by the lutheran-baptist Theological Faculty "Matthias Flacius Illyricus", which has accented throughout its functioning over many decades a humanistic-melanchtonic-ecumenic orientation of reformation and postreformation thought, in which the radical biblical teaching, both Anabaptist and the teaching of Flacius, did not have a significant place. The publication of this book awakens the hope that the faculty will, after over forty years of existence and several years of publishing, finally publish in their "Bibliotheca Flaciana" some of the several hundred books written by Matthias Flacius Illyricus, whose name it proudly bears.

The author C. Arnold Snyder (1946-) earned his doctors degree in church history at the McMaster university (1981), and his scientific interest is Europe in the sixteenth century, especially the history and theology of Anabaptists. He has published several books, among which the following were noticed: *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler* (Scottsdale, Herald Press, 1984) and *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: the Anabaptist Tradition* (New York, Orbis Book, 2004). He was an editor of the journal *The Conrad Grebel Review* (1991-1998), and he published articles in the journals *Church history*, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, *The Conrad Grebel Review* and in *The Archive for Reformation History*.

In researching and writing the book, the author used models of new social and cultural history, especially the approach of Robert Scribner, which is very successfully applied in research of the German Reformation. Scribner writes in *The German Reformation* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Humanities Press, 1986), "Reformation can no longer be interpreted according to its most famous representatives; reformation should rather be understood as a complicated unit of social, political, economic and religious processes that necessarily include ideas, aspirations and actions of a large number of people" (p. 22).

Along with the author's foreword, the foreword of the Croatian edition by Antonija Lučić Gonzalez and the introduction, the book contains four parts in twenty seven chapters. In the first part, the author tries to explain in three chap-

ters the historical and theological atmosphere of Anabaptism in the context of the late middle age and the challenge of early Reformation; he points out the appearance of radical reforms and theological deliberations of Andreas Karlstadt, Thomas Müntzer and Caspar Schwenckfeld, and he gives a short review of the common elements of Anabaptist theology concerning Holy Scripture, salvation by grace through faith, human nature, the person and activity of the Holy Spirit, baptism, the Lords Supper and priesthood of all believers.

The second part of the book is a complex story about the geographical expansion of Anabaptists, elaborated in eight chapters, which provide different insights into the topic. The author bases his historical overview of the sixteenth century Anabaptism on today's most accepted theory of "polygenesis", which is the thesis of several geographical points and central postulates of faith that were shared by all. In this part the author describes the genesis of three fundamental streams within Anabaptism: the Swiss Anabaptism, southern German/Austrian Anabaptism and northern German/Dutch Anabaptism. In six chapters he considers the origin, theological and ecclesiological core and expansion of Swiss and southern German/Austrian Anabaptism. These two streams are united in the discussion because they came into existence simultaneously and for five years they affected each other (1525-1530) before the northern German and Dutch Anabaptism appeared; the origin and expansion of it is discussed in the tenth chapter. At the end of the second part, in the eleventh chapter, the Anabaptist approach to the Holy Scripture is elaborated, whose fundamental characteristic is insisting "that every true reading of Scripture has to be permeated with the Spirit" (p. 199). The second part concludes with an overview of three interpretative approaches to Holy Scripture on which later theological discords of Anabaptists are based.

The third, most extensive and central part of the book follows the development of Anabaptism from 1525 to year 1600. This part, in three large sections and fourteen chapters, focuses on the development of Anabaptism in political, socio-economic and religious circumstances. In the narrative of Anabaptism, the author describes many tensions and differences, changes and development, as well as solutions that were finally found by members of the movement. In his writing of the story of Anabaptism, the author wanted to especially research the dialogical process which resulted in the formation of later traditions.

In the first section, called "Anabaptism and the political circumstances", the political environment in which Anabaptism occurred is considered, different biblical arguments upon which the Anabaptists called while defending their beliefs are studied, and special attention is given to the development of Anabaptist stance about the "sword" (the authority of government) and the "oath". In the section "Anabaptism and socio-economic circumstances" the development of Anabaptist views of economy, the equality of men and women and Anabaptist marriage is

followed. In the third section “Anabaptism and religious reform” questions of church structure, teaching and practical living are considered. Also, the process of Anabaptist teaching of restoration of believers and living a new life, as well as water baptism, excommunication and the Lords Supper are investigated.

In the last, fourth part of the book, the author contemplates the problems and processes which have, by the end of the sixteenth century, resulted in the rigidity of Anabaptist theological and ecclesiological traditions. In the penultimate, twenty sixth chapter, the author compares and confronts later Swiss, Hutterite and Mennonite traditions with core postulations of the early Anabaptist movement.

The last chapter abandons the narrow specific area of historical research and narration, and it asks questions about the possible significance of the history of Anabaptism for todays churches that expect the manifestation of personal faith from their members. In the appendix, the book offers a synopsis of works in Anabaptist history, a list of chosen and used works, as well as index of names and terms.

The book is written fluently and in an informative way, and it offers a documented overview of the recent research of the origin and development of Anabaptists. The scope and erudition of this book, considers D. Roth (The Conrad Grebel Review, Fall, 1996), sets a new standard for Anabaptist studies. It offers an expert overview of the recent scientific literature, while offering an original and creative synthesis. The book is intended for readers who are interested in the history and theology of Reformation, especially those who are interested in the genesis, development and specificities of particular schools of thought of Anabaptist communities.

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