

The Exponents of the “National Church”

Together with the German Folk Group in Romania 1940–1944 on the Way to “De-Judaization”

ULRICH A. WIEN

The Political Intention to Replace Religious-Church Socialization

TRADITIONALLY, THERE was a church monopoly on youth care for the German minority groups in interwar Romania. The local parishes (*parochies*) were usually responsible for this in the mostly rural areas. Until the 1920s, it was customary to provide a catechetical education for young people, supplemented by an academic and spiritual education based on moral upbringing. This began with domestic education, religious socialization in the extended family, in which mainly the parents and especially the grandparents were involved. It continued with religious education at school and was rounded off with the church’s youth work.¹

In contrast, the local National Socialist leaders oriented themselves toward the idea of the—ideologically highly charged—*Volksgemeinschaft* (“national community” or “people’s community”) in Romania. In Transylvania in particular, from the beginning, they pursued as a clear goal the total capture and subordination of all German youth to the National Socialist ideology on a racist basis. Following their programmatic, educational principles, they instilled the ideas of *heroism* and a *fighting spirit* in the male youth, and they assigned the female sex the role of “mother.” Both concepts were clearly linked to the central value, the “sense of custom/ethics and morality of the Germanic race.” This idea of morality claimed by the NS supposedly formed the “ground of positive Christianity.” The NSDAP claimed this religious foundation for itself. It also served as less than truthful advertising. According to Martin Bormann’s definition, this term was clearly understood in racist terms, but—typical of the *lingua tertii imperii* (Victor Klemperer)—it disguised the utilitarian philosophy of life thus founded. This term, “positive Christianity,” initially suggested a multiplicity of reception possibilities of a diffusely definable religiosity.² In it, the party suggested naming the religious dimension of the National Socialist ideology. In doing so, the NSDAP transformed the definition of the term “Christianity” in a National Socialist sense and reinterpreted it using its “species-specific” (*artgemäß*) interpretation. Superficially, it sought to create the impression of religious adherence to tradition. However, sharp-eyed analyses from the German Roman Catholic episcopate and

from Protestantism publicly exposed the contradiction between Nazi ideology and the core of the Christian message as early as the beginning of the 1930s.³ In Transylvania, there was also a critic who raised his voice in 1931: Dr. Viktor Glondys (1882–1949), the Evangelical Lutheran city pastor in Kronstadt (Braşov, Brassó) and later bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania (*Landeskirche*), from 1932 to 1941 and in the period 1944–1945. Even if he had declared National Socialism incompatible with Christianity because of the “racial hatred” it unreservedly advocated,⁴ this ideology found lively resonance among Romanian Germans, and especially among a large part of the younger generations. In this milieu, whatever initial reservations still persisted against National Socialism melted away almost completely. In the beginning, the Nazi movement in Romania pursued a policy of concealment. In the medium term, the Nazi exponents—however “fanatically” or “unbendingly”—strove for the complete substitution of Church influence on youth, first in schools and in the extracurricular youth work. In his performance and situation report of early summer 1942, the leader of the National Socialist-led organization entitled the German Folk Group in Romania (GFG),⁵ Andreas Schmidt (1912–1948), finally trumpeted what he considered to be the complete success of the strategy adopted in 1933: “The denominational and other youth associations have been completely eliminated.”⁶ This assessment was not entirely correct, but Schmidt was (largely) right with this tendentious report of success.

Schmidt’s “performance and situation report” brimmed with self-confidence. A few weeks earlier (31 May–3 June 1942), the 39th General Assembly of the *Landeskirche* had met. The central resolution of this Church assembly had been the “General Agreement” between the *Landeskirche* and the GFG. It had the superficial character of a treaty between the state and the Church. However, it meant a far-reaching surrender of the *Landeskirche* to the totalitarian leadership of the GFG. The quasi-autonomous GFG, legalized in the national-legionary state of Romania in November 1940, had been granted a domestic political life of its own, and the folk group leadership had acquired a kind of “government status” for the German minority. On this basis, which was steered by the determining influence of important party and government agencies in the German Reich (for example, the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*), the GFG leadership, in close consultation with these agencies, decreed its content guidelines for this agreement to the *Landeskirche*. In Romania, the GFG leadership dictated this agreement to the higher church authority/administration, the church government, and the deputies from the church districts in the General Church Assembly. In this way, the GFG leadership had already staged the usurpation of the bishop’s office in 1941. Because the Church Order (§ 85.1) was violated, the preparations for the “election” were illegal but were enforced by the GFG leadership. The act of election itself corresponded to the wording of the law; nevertheless, the delegates’ decision was not free but took place according to the previously announced party order of the leader of the GFG, Andreas Schmidt. Following this coercion, Pastor Wilhelm Staedel (1890–1971), who had been disciplined and was ineligible at the time of the election on 11 February 1941, was “elected.” Staedel had thus more or less forcibly seized the office of bishop with the help of the GFG leader: a clear “usurpation.” Since 1938, the “directives” had been issued as party orders. The “party” (after a complicated prehistory since 1932) was finally the NSDAP of the GFG,

officially founded and legalized in November 1940. The party comrades on the three Church decision-making levels (local congregation, church district, overall countrywide congregation) had to submit to the respective party order; otherwise, they had to expect negative sanctions.⁷

The Demand of the Local Nazi Leadership to Hand over the Schools to the GFG

AT THE same time as the national-legionary government under Ion Antonescu (1882–1946) took office, the GFG was legalized. An additional protocol to Hitler's dictate of summer 1940 (the Second Vienna Award) had forced the Romanian government to accept the establishment of a quasi-autonomous political organization led by local Nazis to govern the political, economic, social and cultural life of the German minority in Romania. Even before the official establishment of the GFG by Decree-Law in November 1940, an informal Nazi leadership, which seized the control of the German minority in Romania in September 1940, under the SS man Andreas Schmidt, had targeted and demanded the transfer of the schools and the real estate of the Landeskirche in autumn 1940.⁸

After the formal legal requirements had been met (with the Decree-Law 977/1941 establishing the national school),⁹ the leadership of the GFG then pushed ahead with the handover of the schools in the winter of 1941/1942 by all means possible. This sometimes laborious procedure was not without tension and, in some places, met with stubborn opposition from within the Church. The last pockets of resistance were broken just before the meeting of the General Church Assembly, and approval in the parishes was politically enforced by party order. Finally, the Nazi faction leader in the General Consistory, Dr. Hermann Schöpp (1902–1944), who had been in office since 1941, rejected all requests for modification that had been put forward from Church circles and—with one exception—pushed through the contractual text agreed with the authorities in the Reich without modification. The straitjacket, which in Nazi jargon was called *völkisch* discipline, was formulated for the institution of the Church but also its decision-makers (for example, in the General Church Assembly) by the faction leader, with absolute sharpness:

The adjustment of the relationship between the Evangelical Church and the [German] Folk Group had become necessary in order to take into account the new legal situation and the tasks of the [German] Folk Group and to be able to carry out the classification of the Evangelical Church in the new form of life of the [German] Folk Group. At the same time, this division of tasks and classification was intended to eliminate the tensions that had been straining relations with each other for almost a decade. . . . This includes above all the observance of the völkisch discipline, which is now made obligatory for everyone by the agreement, in that the Church expresses its unopposed integration into the new way of life of the [German] Folk Group.¹⁰

Quite a few of the pastors of the Landeskirche had already seen themselves as supporters of National Socialism at the end of the 1930s. A "self-Nazification" had already gradually begun in the previous years and gradually intensified. The leadership of the pastors' association, the representative body of the Protestant clergy, could also be considered a space for the concerns of National Socialism. However, it did show a certain "theological reserve" and strove to hold on to traditional elements, which can also be attributed to a particular desire for self-preservation. However, in a phase that was also understood by themselves as a "revolution" and was at least "joyfully," if not enthusiastically, welcomed, many were prepared to engage deeply with National Socialism as a principle of life: in a mixture of enthusiasm, benevolence, naivety, readiness for transformation as well as self-restraint or self-sufficiency, but also in partial reticence or alienation or distance (towards the Führer principle: for "Christ is the Lord of the Church"¹¹). This "self-synchronization" and the so-called *Gleichschaltung* (enforced conformity) mentioned above thus went hand in hand. The result was the "general agreement."¹² The archived files are incomplete; preliminary files are partially preserved, and the actual minutes of the negotiations and voting results are missing. The deputies of the General Church Assembly unanimously approved the agreement despite the objections occasionally voiced—allegedly. The administrative handover of the school system hitherto run by the Protestant congregations and the Landeskirche (including the rent-free use of the real estate) to the GFG could come into effect.

Religious Education As a "Reserve" of the Church

IN THE opinion of the Church leadership headed by Wilhelm Staedel, only a "reserve" remained in the summer of 1942,¹³ a modest remnant of the possibilities left for the churches to make a lasting contact with the youth. This was compulsory religious education at school. The Church leadership got involved in this,¹⁴ albeit in a very one-sided way from the point of view of Church policy. A curriculum for religious education was hastily created, and templates from the Reich were used.

At the beginning of the school year (1942/1943), however, the curriculum for religious education was not yet ready. It was not until the meeting of the regional Consistory on 29 September 1942 that it was adopted by the Church leadership and made binding.¹⁵ Its content triggered partly violent counterreactions among the conservative opposition within the Church and in some deaneries of the Protestant Landeskirche. Following the example of the *Church Movement of German Christians in Thuringia*, the ideologically one-sided *German Church's* (or rather "national church") basic orientation had been adopted almost unchanged in the preamble of this curriculum and its concrete explanations. This "plagiarism" was enough to inspire opposition. But criticism was just as fierce regarding the fact that the curriculum work requested by the Church leadership in the past months¹⁶—the preliminary work in the parish conferences and church districts—had been given virtually no consideration at all.¹⁷

This can be attributed to the fact that the group supporting Bishop Staedel inside the Church had voluntarily and enthusiastically made itself ideologically dependent on National Socialism and the *German Christians*. At length, Staedel had lobbied the General Consistory to join the *Institute for the Study and Elimination of Jewish Influence on German Church Life* in Eisenach as a supporting member. This institute was founded after lengthy preparations at the end of March 1939 and opened on 6 May 1939¹⁸ at Wartburg Castle—a place of remembrance of the German Reformation.¹⁹ It had the following goal: “The de-Jewing taking place in the entire field of German life must have an effect on the religious and ecclesiastical sphere of life;” indeed, beyond that, it was programmatically emphasized that “the Jewish influence in all spheres of German life . . . must be exposed and broken.”²⁰

Staedel appeared as a prominent foreign German church representative at a conference in Weißenfels/Saale, held a ceremony (*Gottesfeier*) there, and was appointed to the institute’s supervisory board. This institute in Eisenach saw itself—in close cooperation with the universities of Jena and Leipzig—as a complementary scientific research institution with a focus on religious studies, in association with other “de-Jewification” institutes operating throughout the Reich. Susannah Heschel,²¹ Oliver Arnhold²² and Dirk Schuster²³ have analyzed the profile of this institute in relevant studies. Even before the founding of the institute, the predominantly voluntary staff of the institute had advocated their *völkisch* view of a symbiosis, or rather a synthesis, of National Socialism and Christianity. The controversial aforementioned institute offered staff members a demonstrably ample but widely criticized (both in the Church and in the National Socialist milieu) resonance space that reached Scandinavia and the Netherlands.²⁴ Wilhelm Bauer (1889–1969)²⁵ was closely connected to the institute. Together with Walter Grundmann (1906–1976),²⁶ professor of New Testament at the University of Jena and later director of the institute, he had already presented a printed draft curriculum in 1938. This draft was intended for teachers in Thuringia to test in practice. However, it faced obstacles. After an initial political push by Minister Wilhelm Frick (1877–1946),²⁷ the curriculum for “religious education” was ultimately shelved in the formal curriculum reforms in the German Reich that generally did not begin until 1937/38. Although the situation in German Protestantism was highly heterogeneous and disparate, those interested in religious education made strenuous efforts with influential bodies of the Nazi regime in Germany to achieve contemporary and legally secure curricula. Time and again, proposals and drafts for guidelines to reformulate the religious education curriculum were discussed and officially submitted.²⁸ In order to receive official approval, the content of these had leaned further and further towards the National Socialism, but this in no way diminished the fundamental political rejection from the party chancellery (Martin Bormann). Until 1939, and in the following years, the pre-National Socialism valid curricula for religious education remained unchanged.²⁹ Jörg Thierfelder has identified this failed adaptation strategy: the works mentioned above

show a disastrous tendency. To still obtain Reich guidelines recognized by the state, the authors increasingly dilute the theological substance and increase the influence of Nazi ideol-

ogy. This can be shown especially in the question of the treatment of the Old Testament in religious education in elementary schools.³⁰

The history of the Reich Guidelines for Religious Education is a "history of failure" (and of illusions that, my addition) one could create curricula that would be accepted by both the Church and the Nazi state. Martin Bormann was certainly more clear-sighted here, when he formulated the following in his letter to Rosenberg in 1940 on the question of state recognition of religious guidelines: "However these guidelines may be designed, they will in no case be able to find the approval of the churches and the party at the same time."³¹

Bauer's and Grundmann's draft curriculum,³² which is "more religiously"³³ accentuated than other drafts, can also be classified in this line of curricula that are largely ideologically tailored. Folkert Rickers comes to the following assessment: in Bauer's guidelines, "the *völkisch* framework is somehow always present, at least indirectly, but the direct reference to National Socialism is limited to only a few terms and phrases." Thus, his concept could be described as "*völkisch*, Christian pedagogy of Religion that also takes into account individual religious needs."³⁴

Against the background outlined in the previous section, it can thus be stated that the General Consistory essentially adopted an extreme curriculum draft developed in the Reich from the national church milieu of the *German Christian Movement*. Although this had been denied state legitimacy in the German Reich and Thuringia and had not come into force anywhere, it was adapted in Hermannstadt (Sibiu, Nagyszeben). With minor modifications, this construct was introduced as a binding curriculum for Protestant religious education at the German "national school" in Romania (in the area of responsibility of the National Socialist-controlled GFG).

A Meandering Curriculum Concept

AT THE end of the 1930s, the Vice Bishop responsible for religious education, D. Friedrich Müller, had initiated a curriculum revision.³⁵ He and Bishop Glondys endeavored—at this point together—to put together a concept corresponding to the primary popular missionary impetus of both theologians fruitful in the curriculum work.³⁶ Finally, in a review, Müller recommended the two-volume *Handbuch für den biblischen Unterricht* by Martin Rang as a reference work.³⁷ With the *Gleichschaltung* of the Landeskirche, the objectives had been completely reversed. Now came the hour of Dr. Gustav Göckler (1902-1962), pastor of Birthälml (Biertan, Berethalom) and later city pastor of Mediasch (Medias, Medgyes).

In the years before, Göckler had already assimilated Ernst Krieck's (1882-1947)³⁸ *völkisch* conception in detail and promoted it in lectures. At the district teachers' meeting on 30 October 1940—in statu nascendi of the GFG—he once again presented his plea for a collaboration between National Socialism and Christianity, thus propagating the largely uncritical adoption of this concept. Göckler—as Wilhelm Wagner reports—was a

bearer of the Golden Party Badge³⁹ and rose to be the deputy of the vice bishop during the Staedel period. He played a decisive role in the curriculum work from 1940/1941 onwards and probably advocated the adoption of the work of Bauer and Grundmann after—for incomprehensible reasons, but probably also due to a lack of time—an independent curriculum revision of the landeskirche had been abandoned. In his 1940 paper “Church and School—Pastor and Teacher,”⁴⁰ Göckler defined National Socialism as a “freedom movement of the German people” that encompassed all classes and strata; it had “in the German motherland . . . become above all [a] youth movement.” Therefore—analogue to Krieck—“national political” education became a main task. The “ultimate goal” of National Socialism was to acquire a “living space” for “development and . . . growth.” Accordingly, the task of education was subordinate to this goal: “thus today German education comes entirely under the authoritative rule of the National Socialist principle.” The problem of “the relationship between National Socialist education and Protestant-Christian education” could necessarily not be determined as a relationship of neutrality or competition. However, one could “strive with a clear conscience . . . as good National Socialists and good Christians” for the “main goal” of “cooperation.” Göckler’s concept of coordination and cooperation remained naïve and straightforward: “only an orderly cooperation of the ethnicity’s leadership [of the GEG] and the Church in education can bring salvation and blessing.” Thus, he consequently demanded:

- I. Religious education is a compulsory part of the school curriculum. . . .*
- II. The choice of content and the spirit of religious education shall be the responsibility of the Church. . . .*
- III. The choice of content and the spirit of religious education shall be organically integrated into the whole school. . . .*
- IV. Religious education should introduce children to the religious home of the German people. . . .*
- V. The teacher in religious education exercises an office which is at the same time also an office of the Church. . . .*
- VI. Outside religious education and confirmation classes, the right is reserved for the Church to make special arrangements in the service of Christian education.⁴¹*

With a recognition of these basic demands, it would be possible to realize an integrative educational concept for those “who seriously want to be Christians!”⁴² It is remarkable how the ideological subordination of religious education to National Socialism is dressed up here using a Luther quotation as a rhetorical template. In previous years, tendencies that became decisive for this concept were also realized in teaching practice. A preliminary evaluation of the minutes of the district teachers’ meeting in Sächsisch-Regen (Reghin, Szászrégen) revealed that the teacher Frieda Möckesch had dealt with the “Little Red Riding Hood” (Rotkäppchen) fairytale in the first grade during a religious education lesson observed by the district teachers’ meeting on 18 October 1938 and had it theatrically performed. This was followed by the transition to the next one, namely “The Seven Little Goats.” The minutes of the subsequent discussion of the lesson note the criticism expressed in the didactic-methodological area. However, there was

no profiled statement on the principle of questioning the ideological premise of using folk tales in religious education.⁴³ In this respect, it can be assumed that—although not across the board and in general—a process had gradually begun, in which a reorientation had already taken place at an individual level.⁴⁴ However, general conclusions can only be drawn after a systematic evaluation of the archival holdings. Nevertheless, Göckler was not alone.

Conferences were organized. On 4 and 5 March 1942, the founding meeting of the Working Group of the Institute for the Study of Jewish Influence in Romania took place in Hermannstadt with 43 participants. In a conference report, Pastor Ekkehart Lebouton, the managing director, described it as the common goal of those present to bring about "the creation of a new religious curriculum." Following a paper by Staedel, in which he had largely distanced himself from the Old Testament, the debate resulted in "the unanimous commitment to a new path in religious education and, beyond that, in the treatment of the Old Testament in general." Staedel had already specified what was meant by this in his twelfth thesis: "And so, with Chamberlain, we are in favor of a far-reaching elimination of the Old Testament from the religious life of the Germans and thus from Protestant religious education." This long-term objective of the working group was subordinate to the general goal which had previously been communicated to the leader of the GFG, Andreas Schmidt, by telegraph: "The goal of de-Jewing in teaching and life shall be our serious and conscientious task."⁴⁵

Lebouton had also become active. Furthermore, when the General Church Assembly finally ratified the general agreement in June 1942, only three months remained until the start of the school year. Thus, in the summer of 1942, work must have been hectic in implementing the revision of the curriculum.⁴⁶ The only remaining point of access for the Church into the school was religious education. Lebouton reported to Eisenach on the date of 10 July 1942:

From 1–3 July we were able to hold our second main meeting in the Luther Home in Heltau, in which, however, only 26 people could take part, since the home does not offer enough room for more people. The curriculum drafts prepared by the working group were discussed and approved. The curriculum of Bauer–Grundmann was adopted for the primary school, with a few minor changes and alterations, as our special circumstances made them seem necessary. The significant thing about this is that the School Authority of the German Folk Group officially took part in the preparatory work for religious education through a representative and gave him the authority to involve the teachers of the national minority in this work he considered necessary. The result is also very pleasing: the Bauer–Grundmann curriculum was received with enthusiasm by the teaching community and recommended to the School Authority and the General Consistory as the official curriculum. As a result, the threatened rift between the Church and the teachers has been avoided and the agreement with the GFG has brilliantly passed its first significant test. The teachers have now declared that they are pleased to keep religious education under these circumstances.

For the secondary schools, however, we have worked out our own curriculum, which, however, takes into account the basic ideas of the Bauer–Grundmann curriculum, as well

*as suggestions from the Ellwein curriculum. As soon as it is ready for printing, I will also send it to you.*⁴⁷

Lebouton saw difficulties in “material procurement: “We have taken over the teaching material and teaching aids from Bauer–Grundmann, but for the most part, we are not in a position to procure them so quickly.”⁴⁸ What was not expected in the overzealous enthusiasm was that the problem could not be solved at all. The Bauer–Grundmann syllabus had not been approved, and therefore the disparate material could hardly be presented in a handy printed form.⁴⁹ Thus, from the beginning, the curriculum had the character of a hastily launched project, which was only barely concealed in the preamble with the phrase “experiment.”

The 1942 curriculum preamble shows in several places that it had taken over at least parts of another work because formulations in the first person singular had been left unchanged.⁵⁰ Transcription errors can also be found throughout the syllabus. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the school year, the state consistory could only publish an interim decree, which for the time being “only” advised the elimination of Old Testament material.⁵¹ Only after the—unanimous—decision of the General Consistory on 29 September 1942 did the work, which was hastily “composed,” come into force and was printed and sent out.⁵²

Transfer of Ideology: The Profile of the Curriculum

THIS NATIONAL church-oriented curriculum draft had been published under the title *Der Religionsunterricht in der deutschen Schule: Ausgeführte Lehrpläne für die Volks-, Mittel- und höheren Schulen* by W. Bauer and Walter Grundmann. It was published by Diesterweg-Verlag, and covered all areas of general education. Significant to the profile of the curriculum is the position of the Old Testament. It is qualified as a “part of the general history of religion,” which is only of more or less interest to German Christians as a “sourcebook of Israelite-Jewish religious history.” Excluded from this—to preserve tradition—are the 10 Commandments, conveyed by Luther’s Catechism and accepted as universally valid, which have been “Germanized and Christianized,” as well as some Psalms, which have been “stripped of their Jewish character and have become testimonies of faith in pious German historical experience.”⁵³ In contrast, “the New Testament is the most anti-Jewish book.”⁵⁴ This inherent contradiction was why this draft curriculum failed because the Christian tradition had become subordinate to the *völkisch* principle of National Socialist ideology.⁵⁵ This elaborate text neither found official resonance nor attained binding validity. Due to the historically close academic and cultural ties to the German Reich, models in the Reich were imitated—often uncritically—and the developments that had emerged in Western Europe were followed analogously in the Landeskirche. However, there was no supposed pressure to conform to the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession in Romania in this specific case. The text devised by Bauer and Grundmann was plagiarized. It was officially introduced for trial solely

because of the ideological authority of the Landeskirche "camarilla" around Wilhelm Staedel vis-à-vis the "de-Judaization" institute in Eisenach.

In the publication⁵⁶ of the General Consistory, three curricula stood side by side. The curriculum for the primary school was expected to have the greatest response. For about 90% of the Protestant pupils in towns and villages, it defined the contents of religious education. Its first section would certainly be sufficient for analysis. Its intentions can be understood in some places with the appropriate knowledge of the discussions in the Reich. However, the ideological background or abysses become recognizable compared to the second or third part of this publication, the curriculum of the high school. The curricula for the high school (first for the lower grades but later for the upper-grade level) was formulated according to the profile of the *national church*. In this respect, an analysis of the elementary school curriculum must also include the variants of the other two types of curriculum intended for the high school (secondary levels one and two). The following part of the article will deal with these issues.

Significant Focal Points of the Curriculum: The Almost Complete Elimination of the Old Testament and Its Prehistory

IN COMPARISON with the curricula of the denominational schools of the Transylvanian Saxons from the first decades of the twentieth century, a key aspect becomes clear at first glance: the Old Testament is almost absent from the 1942 curriculum. This approach indeed did not correspond to the suggestions from the pastors' conferences. Therefore, some explicitly protested against this concept. Until then, the Old Testament had essentially determined the teaching in the first years of school. The 1906 curriculum placed Old Testament Bible studies at the center of the first four school years. Although discussions had already taken place at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century in the monthly educational journal of the regional church, *Schul- und Kirchenbote*, there was no fundamental turning away from this concept of preparing the Christian proclamation based on the Jewish Bible. In 1906/1907, *Schul- und Kirchenbote* had already discussed whether the Old Testament was appropriate for children and whether it really had to be studied in detail during the first years of school. The question was also discussed whether the contents would be helpful for Christian ethics. Germanic myths and fairytales were suggested as an alternative to biblical stories. They would supposedly be more in keeping with the German mind. Another heated discussion was held in 1915. Referring to current university research on the Old Testament, Pastor Hans Lienert had rejected the use of the Jewish Bible in Christian teaching on principle out of an attitude hostile to Jews.⁵⁷ This position received much criticism, not only from Dr. Heinz Brandsch,⁵⁸ but also from Dr. Friedrich Hofstätter.⁵⁹ Although an in-depth study of this controversy would be worthwhile, it cannot be done here. Further discussions also took place in the 1920s. The second half of the 1930s shows a substan-

tial intensification of anti-Jewish attitudes with increasing clarity. An example of this is a handout for youth work in the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession in Romania published under the title *Youth Training Booklets* in 1936.⁶⁰ The racial conceit imported from Nazi Germany is recognizable throughout. According to this view, “blood,” “race”⁶¹ and “soil”⁶² correspond to the will of the Creator. The critical question, “The Old Testament, a Jewish book?”⁶³ must accordingly be answered in the negative. In the Old Testament, no “model examples of moral conduct”⁶⁴ can be discovered for a Christian milieu, but abstract, “eternal laws of life of the peoples” can be derived, which “thus also gain significance for our German people . . . in the time of the *völkisch* awakening and becoming new.”⁶⁵ Following a cultural-critical approach⁶⁶ and in accordance with corporatist thinking, the peasantry is also heroized.⁶⁷ In addition, there is a warning of the “death of a nation.”⁶⁸ According to the authors, the health of the people is reflected in ethnic solidarity, which is ultimately defined as an “ethnic folk community.”⁶⁹ In this community, all members must “completely fill their God-given place”⁷⁰ and even practice it, especially “our youth, especially in the work camps and in the hiking groups.”⁷¹

In this official publication of the Landeskirche, the *völkisch*, racist Nazi ideology is fused with an antisemitic interpretation of the Old Testament based on a theologically liberal hermeneutic as early as 1936. This idea of a synthesis of National Socialism and Christianity was also represented at the same time by the *Church Movement of German Christians in Thuringia*. In particular, this ideological common ground enabled a fairly unbroken reception of the rejection of the Old Testament in Protestant religious education as prescribed in the Bauer–Grundmann curriculum. This became relevant for religious education in Romania after Pastor Wilhelm Staedel (1890–1971) usurped the bishop’s office. With the help of the GEG, which had instructed to elect him as bishop in 1941, he came into office. Theologically, he represented the ideology of the *Church Movement of German Christians in Thuringia*, as already mentioned. Through cooperation with the Institute in Eisenach, Staedel and his comrades (especially Dr. Gustav Göckler) became acquainted with the curriculum concept from Thuringia. It corresponded to their ideas on “de-Jewing.” As described above, they adopted this version almost in its entirety. Less than two months after his usurpation of the bishop’s office, Staedel wrote to Walter Grundmann, thanking him for his “expert opinion on our theses on the Old Testament in religious education.”⁷² Staedel himself became a permanent member of the Eisenach “Institute” supervisory board on 13 October 1942.⁷³

Significant Focal Points of the Curriculum: *Völkisch* Racism and Antisemitism As Hermeneutical Application

FROM a purely formal point of view, it can be said that biblical passages from the Old Testament are rarely treated, if at all. It is above all verses from the Psalter that belong to the, so to speak, undisputed basic stock of the biblical-Christian tradition. In the first year, there are two, in the second year three, in the third year a repetition and the Decalogue, and in the fourth year, five Bible passages from the Old Testament.

According to the hermeneutics mentioned above, these passages were considered universally valid wisdom without explicit reference to Judaism.

Each year in the primary school curriculum—from the first to the seventh grade—had a yearly motto. It began with "Father's House," followed by "Home," then "Jesus the Savior," and finally, in the fourth grade, "God in Nature and Conscience." In the last three school years, "Christology" was presented: first "Jesus the Herald and Fighter" and then "Christ and His Message of the Kingdom of God as the Power that Determines Life and Nations." The last topic is specified in the sixth school year with "The Savior of the Germans I" where the history of the Church up to the time of the Reformation is dealt with. In the seventh school year, its second part follows, and the last section is entitled "Positive Christendom in the Life of the Awakened German Nation." This outline alone shows that it is a closed curriculum concept. It ranges from the (Germanic) "ancestors" in the patriarchally understood "father's house" (in the first grade) to the topic of family as the kernel of the national community or "Our nationality and its preservation of purity as God's will for us." The introduction to social behavior in grade two is related to comradeship, obedience, and fulfillment of duty and the "birthday of the Führer." Applying biblical impulses to the present intensifies in the fourth primary school year. Here, the holidays propagated by National Socialism are on the agenda, not least when Jesus' time of suffering is linked to Sunday of the Dead/Fallen or Heroes' Day. Jesus is called "the hero in suffering." In the final year, this theme corresponds with "The obligation of the ethnic conscience," "Sacrifice as a true ethnic community," "The German as a warrior for God," or with the mobilization for sacrifice in favor of "Winterhilfswerk, Soldatenhilfe, Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt" (Winter Aid Organization, warriors' help). Nevertheless, in the second grade, the earthly homeland was initially placed in the center, including "The Church As the Home of Our People," "Our Cemetery," and finally, the "Child-Oriented Narration of the Christmas Story." The curriculum remains committed to pantheism ("God is everywhere") and pursues an immanent, i.e., world, nature, anthropology, and social ethics-oriented concept. In the third year, the focus is, therefore, on the "earthly home of Jesus" and his earthly way of life and selected parables from the Gospel of Matthew. In the understanding of the *German Christians*, Jesus' life journey culminated in the "Sacrifice," the event on Good Friday interpreted as a heroic death in the fight against evil and Judaism. This interpretation is deepened in the fourth school year ("Jesus the hero in suffering").⁷⁴ This profile can be seen very clearly in the fifth school year. In the seventh year, it corresponds with heroic stories from Christian and National Socialist traditions. What is meant by this is illustrated by the curriculum for the lower grades of the high school. In class level 4, it is to be shown that "German Christendom . . . is combative and sacrificial. . . Here are the sources of German bravery and sacrificial courage ready for death." In parallel, the eighth grade of the grammar school curriculum before the Abitur (baccalaureate) prescribes:

*Classification of race and ethnicity in God's creation. Moral duty to maintain the purity of the ethnicity and race and the resulting militant attitude of the Christian. . . . Moral duty to the complete commitment to the honor of the German Volk.*⁷⁵

This essential attitude, which characterizes the curriculum, educates about racism and militarism.⁷⁶ These basic attitudes and educational maxims are already introduced and prepared for in the third grade, when the topic “Friends and Enemies of Jesus” and his suffering and death are brought into focus. This perspective is deepened in the fifth grade when Jesus is portrayed as a “herald and fighter.” The “deadly enmity” of Jews, who now become recognizable as “enemies,” is highlighted from this grade onwards. There is an opportunity to apply this hermeneutic in classroom practice at several other, more innocuous points. Beyond this, however, the rejection of the Old Testament and the anti-Jewish profile is explicitly formulated in grade six. In the last grade of primary school, Luther’s anti-Judaism, “the predatory capitalism of Judaism,” and selected texts from the Gospel of John are represented in the curriculum, which offers relevant points of connection to the antisemitism of National Socialism. Since the curriculum presupposes the synthesis of National Socialism and Christianity,⁷⁷ these curriculum references can be implemented in a consistently antisemitic manner if applied stringently from the first to the final grade. Thus the curriculum emphasizes: “Here is an opportunity to emphasize the religious value of the Old Testament, but also to make clear demarcations (God in history).”⁷⁸

In the Transylvanian Saxon milieu, where biblical first names were widespread (Mary, Michael, Samuel, etc.), the General Consistory functioned as a transmission belt for the radical direction of the *Church Movement of German Christians in Thuringia*. Lebouton even claimed

*that our work is progressing rapidly and that the national church—as far as it may lie in the ecclesiastical circles among our people—is no longer a phantom. The overwhelming part of the Protestant and also a large part of the Catholic people in our country would most joyfully welcome the formation of a national church.*⁷⁹

With the help of this insinuation, Lebouton outlined a profile contrasting to the referred idea of the leadership of the GEG that “a Christian Church is no longer necessary.”⁸⁰ The very project of introducing a national church-oriented curriculum thus also had a partial apologetic character—directed against the intentions of the politicians of the GEG as a relief strategy.

Significant Focal Points of the Curriculum: Fairytale and Mythology As a Substitute for Content or As an Illustration?

THE PREFACE to the curriculum places the fairytales in a changed hermeneutic context. Whereas fairytales had previously been presented in a psychologizing way and treated as religious teaching material, this was to change according to the will of the curriculum makers:

Fairytales are indeed treated in religious education, but not as a religious teaching, as has been the case up to now, especially in the first year of school, but as comparative and connecting material to enrich and enliven the lessons. Legends, too, retain their value when used sparingly, insofar as they beautifully illustrate a Christian truth in poetic form. It is correct what is said in the draft Mediasch curriculum [for which Dr. Gustav Böckler was responsible, my addition] that whoever rejects the legends must logically also reject the story of creation, the story of paradise and the story of the birth of Jesus, since they all have a decidedly legendary character. As a preparation or conclusion to the treatment of Christian material, extra-biblical exemplary stories can also be used quite well and effectively.⁸¹

This concept was thus seen in fairytales, legends, and exemplary stories as illustrative material with which the German Christians' *national-church* basic attitude could be deepened to provide a broader basis for the racially profiled/"species-specific" (*artgemäß*) hermeneutics on an expanded basis.

At this point, the fairytales are to be brought into focus: thus, in grade 1, three fairytales by the Brothers Grimm are planned for teaching. However, in contrast to the preface, these fairytales are placed before the biblical stories. This reveals a lack of coherence between the religious education concept and the didactic implementation. In terms of content, Little Brother and Little Sister, the Wolf and the "Seven Little Goats," and "Little Red Riding Hood"⁸² are suggested. In grade 2, the didactics of fairytales are also applied in a non-biblical way. On the Sunday of the Dead, "The Graves of Our Ancestors" is to be dealt with first, followed by two fairytales.⁸³ In the fourth year of primary school, winter help is the topic, first in general, then with a view to the Good Samaritan and Saint Elizabeth. At the end of this teaching unit, the "Sterntaler" fairytale⁸⁴ is to be worked through. What stringency is supposed to be behind this concept, but above all, how the Good Samaritan parable can be thought of together with the National Socialist winter relief work, which focused exclusively on the "national community (*Völksgemeinschaft*)," is hardly apparent. The morality of the *Völksgemeinschaft* solidarity, which was probably supposed to be at the center of this teaching concept, could only bring this about with a logical and hermeneutic break. Moreover, the "Sterntaler" fairytale could also not overcome this break.

Significant Focal Points of the Curriculum: Exemplary Christology

JESUS IS presented as the "messenger of God"⁸⁵ with a thoroughly religious attitude. He is—according to Grundmann's construction—not a Jew, but a "Galilean"⁸⁶ and thus stands against Judaism. He is the "fighter" and the "savior and guide." This becomes clear in the treatment of the Sermon on the Mount. Even more: the focus is on the "Christian Action in the Third Reich (*Tatchristentum im Dritten Reich*)."⁸⁷ In contrast to the differentiation of "ethics of mind" and "ethics of responsibility," which could refer to Max Weber, the 1942 curriculum concentrates on the contemporary relevance

of the Sermon on the Mount. Nevertheless, the syllabus goes beyond this immanence: “Jesus means more to us than just a teacher and guide for our earthly and eternal life.”⁸⁸ Jesus can also be understood as the Redeemer who “makes us strong in suffering and gives us faith in eternal life, who makes us steadfast in death.”⁸⁹ However, finally, in the final grade of the gymnasium, the curriculum ends with the lesson unit “Christendom and National Socialism.”⁹⁰ Even though no messianic qualities were formally attributed to the Reich’s Chancellor in Berlin, the “Savior of the Germans” (i.e., Jesus Christ) receives (in the seventh-grade curriculum in primary schools) a complementary addition with Messiah-like features: “The faith of our leader Adolf Hitler.”⁹¹

Reactions

CERTAINLY, SOME educators and pastors tried to undermine the intention of the curriculum.⁹² Due to a lack of sources, it is impossible to trace the teaching practice from 1942 to 1944. However, the Landeskirche immediately canceled this curriculum in the autumn of 1944. Even though the extensively elaborated curriculum for religious education in the elementary schools of 1946⁹³ endeavored to once again extensively consider the Old Testament as a subject of instruction, the Christian theology generally used at that time did not free itself from the substitution theory nor from antisemitic clichés.



Notes

1. Ulrich Andreas Wien, “Kampf um die Köpfe und Herzen der Jugend (1933–1938) in der Evangelischen Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien,” in *Zwischen Selbsthilfe und Fremdstreuung*, edited by Enikő Dác and Tobias Weger (forthcoming).
2. Christoph Strohm, *Die Kirchen im Dritten Reich* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2011), 14.
3. Strohm, 15–16.
4. Ulrich A. Wien, “Apologetik gegen den Nationalsozialismus in der ‘Samaritergeist’-Predigt von Viktor Glondys 1931,” *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 56, 1 (2020): 86–103.
5. The translation of the name of this organization into Romanian during the 1940s, “Grupul Etnic German,” undercuts—possibly deliberately—the racist undertone of the German term “Volksgruppe.” This terminology, typical of the time, belongs to the trivializing propaganda language of this organization that collaborated politically with the Third Reich. A terminology that consciously distances itself from this is to be demanded of foreign-language academic texts. Therefore, the English translation “German Folk Group” is used in this article as a reference to the racist semantics in German.
6. Andreas Schmidt, “Leistungs- und Lagebericht der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien vom Beginn des Russland-Feldzuges bis zum, 1. Juli 1942,” 8. (Signatur C III-3e, 17, Siebenbürgische Bibliothek Gundelsheim.)
7. Ulrich A. Wien, “Einleitung II zur Edition,” in *Die Protokolle des Landeskonsistoriums der Evangelischen Kirche A. B. in Rumänien 1919–1944*, 4 vols. (Urkundenbuch der Evange-

- lischen Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien, hereafter cited as UB), vol. 4/1–2 (1919–1932) (Sibiu/Hermannstadt: Honterus, 2020); vol. 4/3–4 (1933–1944) (Sibiu/Hermannstadt: Honterus, 2021), vol. 4/3, VIII–XI and LVIII–LXX.
8. Philippe Henri Blasen, "Die nationalsozialistische Gleichschaltung der evangelischen Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien (1938–1942)," *Forschungen zur Volks- und Landeskunde* 64 (2021): 87–124.
 9. German translation in UB 4/4, fols. 2048–2050.
 10. Hermann Schöpp, *Bericht an die 39. Landeskirchenversammlung in Angelegenheit des Generalabkommens zwischen der evangelischen Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien und der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien* (Hermannstadt: n.p., 1942), 22. See also Ulrich A. Wien, "Einleitung II zur Edition," LXIII–LXX.
 11. Zentralarchiv der Evangelischen Kirche A. B. in Rumänien, Sibiu (ZAEKR, Central Archives of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Romania), Theologica Nr. 662 (Evangelischer Pfarrverein), Bericht (29.10–1.11.1940), fol. 9. See also Wien, "Einleitung II zur Edition," XIII–XVIII.
 12. z.-k. 1321/1942. "Gesamtabkommen zur Regelung des Verhältnisses der evangelischen Landeskirche Augsburgischer Bekenntnisses zur Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien," excerpts in UB 4/4, fols. 2051–2054.
 13. "Protokolle des Landeskonsistoriums," *Tagesordnungspunkt* 69 (1942), in UB 4/4, 1959, also "Protokolle des Landeskonsistoriums, Tagesordnungspunkt" 2 (1943), in UB 4/4, 1983–1984. The general agreement indeed provided for an option for extracurricular church youth work. The Church leadership did not emphatically use this option—despite the pleas from the congregations—but on the contrary, dragged its feet and renounced guidelines for extracurricular youth work. The Church leadership accepted the conditions of the ideologically National Socialist school concept, which was approved in principle. Within this framework, there was, in fact, only one chance for the Church to come into contact with children and young people, and that was religious education.
 14. "Protokolle des Landeskonsistoriums," *Tagesordnungspunkt* 130 (1942) of 29 September, in UB 4/4, fols. 1979–1980.
 15. "Protokolle des Landeskonsistoriums," *Tagesordnungspunkt* 130 (1942), in UB 4/4, 1980.
 16. ZAEKR: 103: z.-k. 102/1942, § 3 of the work program to the pastor's conferences 1942.
 17. "Statement from the Kronstadt Deanery," in *Resonanz und Widerspruch: Von der siebenbürgischen Diaspora-Volkskirche zur Diaspora in Rumänien*, edited by Ulrich A. Wien (Erlangen: Martin Luther Verlag, 2014), 434.
 18. Oliver Arnhold, "Nationalsozialistisches Christentum im Unterricht: Religionspädagogische Konzeptionen von Wilhelm Bauer im Rahmen seiner Tätigkeit für die 'Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen,'" in *Thüringer Gratwanderungen: Beiträge zur fünfundsiebzigjährigen Geschichte der evangelischen Landeskirche Thüringens*, edited by Thomas A. Seidel (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998), 143; Susannah Heschel, "Theologen für Hitler," in *Christlicher Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus: Theologische und kirchliche Programme Deutscher Christen*, edited by Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz (Frankfurt am Main: Haag + Herchen Verlag, 1994), 125–170.
 19. In 1522, at Wartburg Castle above Eisenach, the Wittenberg University Professor Martin Luther had translated the New Testament into the German mother tongue. This action aimed to make the Christian community mature so that all people, especially the

- baptized, could understand the “Good News” of the “Holy Scriptures” and receive it as a guide to life and faith.
20. Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/4166, quotation by *Das mißbrauchte Evangelium: Studien zu Theologie und Praxis der Thüringer Deutschen Christen*, edited by Peter von der Osten-Sacken (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 2002), 325 (footnote 40) and 342 (footnote 76).
 21. Susannah Heschel, “Deutsche Theologen für Hitler: Walter Grundmann und das Eisenacher ‘Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben,’” in *Das mißbrauchte Evangelium*, 70–90; ead., *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008).
 22. Oliver Arnhold, “Entjudung”—*Kirche im Abgrund: Die Thüringer Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen 1928–1939 und das ‘Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben’ 1939–1945* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 2010).
 23. Dirk Schuster, *Die Lehre vom ‘arischen’ Christentum: Das wissenschaftliche Selbstverständnis im Eisenacher ‘Entjudungsinstitut’* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2017).
 24. Arnhold, *Entjudung*, 2: 621–637; Anders Gedmar, “Ein germanischer Jesus auf schwedischem Boden: Schwedisch-deutsche Forschungszusammenarbeit mit rassistischen Vorzeichen 1941–1944,” in *Walter Grundmann: Ein Neutestamentler im Dritten Reich*, edited by Roland Deines, Volker Leppin, and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 319–348; Schuster, 92–95.
 25. Susanne Böhm, *Deutsche Christen in der Thüringer Evangelischen Kirche (1927–1945)* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2008), 74–75; Arnhold, *Entjudung*, 2: 786–788.
 26. Arnhold, *Entjudung*, 2: 801–802. See also *Ein Neutestamentler im Dritten Reich*.
 27. Arnhold, *Entjudung*, 2: 798.
 28. Jörg Thierfelder, “Die Geschichte der Reichsrichtlinien für den evangelischen Religionsunterricht,” in *Religionspädagogik im Kontext kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte*, edited by Jörg Ohlemacher (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 152–173; see also Veit-Jakobus Dieterich, *Religionslehrplan in Deutschland (1870–2000): Gegenstand und Konstruktion des evangelischen Religionsunterrichts im religionspädagogischen Diskurs und in den amtlichen Vorgaben* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 349–381.
 29. Olaf Kühl-Freudenstein, *Evangelische Religionspädagogik und völkische Ideologie: Studien zum ‘Bund für deutsche Kirche’ und der ‘Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen’* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), 95–161.
 30. Thierfelder, 166.
 31. Thierfelder, 166. In a letter to Alfred Rosenberg dated 22 February 1940, Martin Bormann took the following position: “Christianity and National Socialism are phenomena that have arisen from quite different root causes.” Therefore, it was impossible to construct “a Christian doctrine which could be fully affirmed from the level of the National Socialist worldview, just as the Christian denominations could never see themselves as fully recognizing the worldview of National Socialism as correct.” That is why reciprocal recognition is unthinkable. Bundesarchiv Koblenz: NS8/13, quote from Thierfelder, 156.
 32. Wilhelm Bauer and Walter Grundmann, *Der Religionsunterricht in der deutschen Schule: Ausgeführte Lehrpläne für die Volks-, Mittel- und höheren Schulen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Diesterweg, n.d. [1938]).

33. Folkert Rickers, "Religionspädagogik in Thüringen 1933–1945: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum grundsätzlichen Verständnis Deutscher Christen in Thüringen," in *Zwischen Volk und Bekenntnis: Praktische Theologie im Dritten Reich*, edited by Klaus Raschzok (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 251.
34. Rickers, 251.
35. There is an extensive file tradition on this. However, important drafts—such as that of Dr. Göckler and teacher Graef (ZAEKR 104: S4326/1940)—are missing; thus, in 104–4326/1940 (Schulrat Rösler: draft), only the accompanying letter—without a draft—has been preserved. Other holdings: ZAEKR: 104—1701/1939; 104—1805/1939; 104—563/1940; 104—1498/1940.
36. Cf. also the preamble of the curriculum, reprinted in UB 4/4, fols. 2055–2067.
37. Friedrich Müller, "Wie gelangen wir zur Erteilung eines rechten Religionsunterrichts?," *Kirchliche Blätter* 32 (1940): 62–63; id., "Noch einmal Martin Rang's 'Handbuch für den biblischen Unterricht,'" *Kirchliche Blätter* 32 (1940): 275–276. See also Ulrich A. Wien, "Einleitung II," in UB 4/3, XXVI–XXX.
38. E. Kriek, a professor of education at the Pedagogical Academy in Frankfurt/M. since 1928, was a member of the NSDAP after 1932. He was one of the leading representatives in education in the Third Reich. His work *Nationalpolitische Erziehung* (National education), published in several editions after 1932, contained almost no statements on the religious dimension. He takes a pronounced stand on p. 96: "The core of the worldview is man's image and assessment of himself. The axis is given with the relationship to the ultimate, to the supreme, to God: the nature of faith. . . . Values and goals receive their ultimate justification and rationale from faith, [and] world and history [receive] their interpretation," quoted in Kühl-Freudenstein, *Religionspädagogik*, 116. Kühl-Freudenstein correctly states: "It is remarkable that Kriek assigns an important, in his terminology, axis-forming function to faith, but does not further define this faith. It can therefore be the Christian faith that Kriek is talking about here—but nothing more" (ibid., 117). See also Benjamin Ortmeier, "Ernst Kriek," *LEOBW: Landeskunde entdecken online*, accessed 2 April 2022, https://www.leo-bw.de/detail/-/Detail/details/PERSON/kgl_biographien/118566806/Kriek+Ernst.
39. Wilhelm and Julie Wagner: "Unsere Erinnerungen" (typewritten typescript), 320.
40. ZAEKR: 531/35 (Göckler-estate). The content of the small lecture largely repeats to a paper already presented in 1937 on "The Relationship between Christian and National Political Education," which refers to publications by Ernst Kriek and Erwin Wistmann (ZAEKR: 531/31).
41. ZAEKR: 531/35.
42. ZAEKR: 531/35 (quote from 1–25).
43. ZAEKR: 104—277/1939. The teacher Meltzer alone objected that the content of the lessons was "mother tongue not religion" (*Muttersprache nicht Religion*). Furthermore, the assembly decided "that in the third school year the material for religion should be taken from the Old Testament" (*daß im III. Schuljahr der Stoff für Religion aus dem alten Testament genommen werden soll*).
44. Among primary school teachers, the refusal rate under the "Decree on Radicals" 924/1936 had been over 10%.
45. Landeskirchliches Archiv Eisenach (LKAe): Grundmann-estate 42 (1942). Typewritten transcript "Bericht über die gründende Arbeitstagung . . . am 4. und 5. März 1942"

- (Report on the founding workshop . . . on 4 and 5 March 1942) by Ekkehart Lebouton, 2. Cf. *Kirchliche Blätter* 34 (1942): 347–350.
46. Most of the files have been systematically purged. A concise presentation can only be reconstructed based on disparate archive materials.
 47. LKAE: Grundmann-Korrespondenz 1942. Lebouton, Letter to Grundmann (10 July 1942, Grundmann-estate 42: 1942) (see footnote 46).
 48. All quotes from Lebouton's letter of 10 July 1942 (typewritten transcript): LKAE: Grundmann-Korrespondenz 1942.
 49. On the copy of the letter Pich sent to Grundmann, there is a handwritten request that Grundmann—as an expert on the subject—may reply to Lebouton accordingly.
 50. Most likely, Staedel's paper "Grundlegende Voraussetzungen" (Basic requirements) was used as a template, which he had prepared for the meeting of the general consistory on 29 September 1942 also presented there.
 51. ZAEKR: 103–175/1943, containing: Z.K. 2333/1942 from 26 August 1942: "Rundschreiben an alle Bezirksdekanate und Pfarrämter der evang. Landeskirche A.B. in Rumänien betreffend den Religionsunterricht im Schuljahr 1942/43. Im Sinne des Abkommens mit der Volksgruppenführung hat das Landeskonsistorium beim Schulamt um Bekanntgabe derjenigen Lehrer angesucht, die einerseits gewillt sind, den evangelischen Religionsunterricht nach den Lehrplänen unserer Kirche zu erteilen, andererseits auch die dazu erforderliche Autorisation für dieses Jahr vom Schulamt sicher bekommen. Eine Antwort auf diese Anfrage hat das Landeskonsistorium noch nicht erhalten. . . . Falls die endgültige Ernennung der Religionslehrer durch das Landeskonsistorium und ihre Autorisierung durch das Schulamt aus technischen Gründen bis zum Schulbeginn nicht erfolgen sollte, hat trotzdem der Pfarrer in geeigneter Weise dafür Sorge zu tragen, dass im Einvernehmen mit der Schulleitung der Religionsunterricht—wenn auch bloß in Form der Wiederholung des früher Erlernten auf Grund der bisherigen Lehrpläne, jedoch unter vorläufiger Zurückstellung alttestamentlicher Stoffe seinen Anfang nimmt. Der Religionslehrplan ist in Vorbereitung und wird aus der demnächst abzuhaltenden Sitzung des Landeskonsistoriums verlautbart werden." (Circular to all District Deaneries and Parish Offices of the Evangelical Church AC in Romania concerning religious education in the school year 1942/43. Following the agreement with the leadership of the German Folk Group, the General Consistory has asked the Education Office (of the GFG) to inform those teachers who are willing to teach Protestant religious education according to the curricula of our Church and who are sure to receive the necessary authorization for this year from the Education Office. The General Consistory has not yet received an answer to this request. . . . If the final appointment of the religious education teachers by the General Consistory and their authorization by the Education Office should not take place by the start of the school year for technical reasons, the pastor must nevertheless ensure in an appropriate manner that, in agreement with the local school administration, religious education begins—even if only in the form of a repetition of what has been learned previously on the basis of the previous curricula, but with the Old Testament material being put aside for the time being. The religious education curriculum is being prepared and will be announced at the forthcoming meeting of the General Consistory.)
 52. "Minutes of the 16th meeting of the *Landeskonsistorium* 1942 of 29 September, agenda item 130," in UB 4/4, fols. 1979–1980. At the meeting, Wilhelm Staedel, as rapporteur,

read out his "written 'Grundlegende Voraussetzungen' zum neuen Religions-Lehrplan." A. Scheiner and A. Pomarius, who "had to express his satisfaction at what he had heard," which he assessed as a "bold step," expressed their agreement. Dr. Göckler read out the religious education curricula. Only the city pastor of Schäßburg (Sighișoara, Segesvár), Dr. Wilhelm Wagner, objected: Staedel was "fundamentally rejecting the Old Testament. He cannot give his approval to this. . . . The Bible is a whole. . . . In the Old Testament we have to see the supra-ethnic." Nevertheless, he thought he could agree with the curriculum: "As far as the practical implementation of the curriculum is concerned, we are faced with a compromise. Where Christ is proclaimed, one must also resort to the Old Testament. He agrees with the curricula, albeit with a sore heart. They are curricula for a challenging period." Wagner's (middle) position suggests that he was willing to subvert the inherent hermeneutics of the curriculum in practice. ZK 2756/1942 orders the curriculum, *Kirchliche Blätter* 34 (1942): 500. The corresponding file folder on the 1942 curriculum is empty (ZAEKR: 104: 271/1942).

53. Bauer and Grundmann, 2–3.
54. Bauer and Grundmann, 3.
55. See Dieterich, 360–371.
56. z.-k. 2755/1942: *Lehrplan für den Religionsunterricht an deutschen Schulen. Herausgegeben vom Landeskonsistorium der evangelischen Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien* (Hermannstadt: Honterus, 1942) (supplement to no. 41 of *Kirchlichen Blätter*).
57. Hans Lienert, "Das Alte Testament in der Volksschule," *Schul- und Kirchenbote* 50, 17 (1915): 265–272 and 50, 18 (1915): 285–295.
58. Heinz Brandsch, "Das Alte Testament in der Volksschule (2. Korreferat)," *Schul- und Kirchenbote* 51, 6 (1916): 137–142. Brandsch quotes a pupil's answer to why Judaism is relevant in Christian religious education: "because the Jews believe in one God, and because Jesus was a Jew." See Brandsch, "Das Alte Testament," 141.
59. Friedrich Hofstädter, "Das Alte Testament in der Volksschule," *Schul- und Kirchenbote* 51, 5 (1916): 161–167 und 51, 9 (1916): 182–186. Hofstädter recognizes "a great danger" in the contrast between the Jewish and German spirits, which Lienert emphasizes excessively. "In its final consequences, it means a complete turning away even from Jesus, who was not German, neither in descent nor in essence. Despite Lienert's statements, Jesus was a Jew, according to his development, his world view, and also his central religious power. If Lienert denies this, he blindfolds himself." Lienert, 183.
60. *Jugendschulungshefte: Eine Handreichung für die Jugendarbeit in der ev. Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien* (Sibiu/Hermannstadt: Honterus, 1936).
61. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 8–10.
62. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 11–12.
63. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 15.
64. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 15.
65. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 15.
66. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 26–27.
67. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 31–32.
68. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 27.
69. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 30–34.
70. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 33.
71. *Jugendschulungshefte*, 33.

72. I.KAE: III/2a "Institut" 1938–1944, Staedel's letter from 7 April 1941.
73. I.KAE: Grundmann-Korrespondenz 1942: Grundmann's letter to Staedel from 13 October 1942.
74. Z.-K. 2756/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 23.
75. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 44.
76. Parallel to this, emphasis was also placed on racial ideology in the other subjects. This was pointed out by Albert Hermann, "Rassenpolitische Erziehung in der Höheren Schule," *Volk und Schule: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Erzieherchaft in Rumänien* 2, 2 (1942): 40–47.
77. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 39. The curriculum describes this as complementary.
78. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 35.
79. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 35.
80. I.KAE: Grundmann-Korrespondenz 1942: transcription of a letter written by E. Lebouton from 12 June 1942.
81. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 16.
82. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 18.
83. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 20.
84. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 22.
85. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 31.
86. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 30.
87. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 33.
88. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 36.
89. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 37.
90. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fols. 44–45.
91. Z.-K. 2755/1942: Lehrplan 1942, fol. 45.
92. "Minutes of the 16th meeting of the General Consistory 29 September 1942, agenda item 130," in UB 4/4, 1979 (statement by city pastor Wagner). Indications of a distancing from the National Socialists' concept of education can also be found in the teachers' magazine of the 1930s. For example, Heinz Brandsch described the "inseparable unity" of people, Church, and school as a basic existential condition for ethnic identity. Gerhardt Schaser presented a pietistic counter-concept as an alternative to the National Socialist idea of education with the claim: "Every education, every teaching takes its origin from the mission of God. Therefore, the original purpose of all teaching is to impart to man the knowledge of God, i.e. the content of Christian doctrine, and the original purpose of all education is the school of sanctification." See Heinz Brandsch, "Volk-Kirche-Schule" der Siebenbürger Sachsen," *Schule und Leben* 72, 1 (1937): 1–17; Gerhardt Schaser, "Grundsätzliches zum Religionsunterricht oder Die Krisis der Pädagogik," *Schule und Leben* 70, 2 (1935): 115–122.
93. The circular Z.-S. 2395/1946 set the curriculum of religious education for primary schools and the lower grades of secondary schools combined with the printed version of the postwar curriculum: *Religionslehrplan für die evangelischen Schulen A. B. in Rumänien (Volksschulen und Unterstufe der Sekundarschulen)* (Sibiu-Hermannstadt [1946, 1947]), Bun pentru imprimat. Cenzura Presei S. S. P Nr. 1946/1946, 5 Oct. 1946.

Abstract

The Exponents of the "National Church": Together with the German Folk Group in Romania 1940–1944 on the Way to "De-Judaization"

After the *Gleichschaltung* of the leadership of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania (*Landeskirche*), in 1941, this Church of several German-speaking communities in Romania became a member of the Eisenach Institute for the Study and Elimination of Jewish Influence on German Church Life. In Romania, a branch of this institute was established as a "working group" in 1942, which spread and promoted the national church's "de-Jewing" ideology within the *Landeskirche*. With the conclusion of a kind of "treaty" between the National Socialist-led organization called the German Folk Group in Romania (GFG, *Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien*) and the Evangelical Church in the so-called "General Agreement" (*Gesamtabkommen*) in 1942, the GFG leadership achieved its long-sought-after goal. They took the extensive and highly diversified confessional school system from the *Landeskirche*, which the latter had developed and operated for centuries. Thus, the GFG took over the responsibility for schools and thus gained control over the educational system of the German minority in Romania. The only remaining possibility for the Evangelical Church to influence the school was religious education. The leadership of the *Landeskirche* under Bishop Wilhelm Staedel tried to find elements for a suitable curriculum in the so-called "national-church" ideology of Thuringian "German Christians," which it had adopted. A slightly modified copy was used, which almost eliminated the Old Testament and combined an—immanent—idea of the Kingdom of God with a heroic view of Jesus. This curriculum "on probation" was put into effect by the General Consistory on 29 September 1942. Untouched by criticism (some of which was genuinely vehement, none of which could fully isolate itself from anti-Jewish stereotypes), a committee also proposed a plan to distribute the material. However, in a rush to implement the plan, those responsible had overlooked the fact that the teachers' necessary educational materials and handouts did not exist in the form of publications. This had hastily launched a syncretic project, in which National Socialist ideology and Christianity had become interchangeable and built up a synthesis, which did not survive the collapse of the GFG in the late summer of 1944.

Keywords

German Folk Group, religious education, Nazism, Evangelical Church