

failed to respect what it forbids, in particular in Eastern Europe and Latin America. His account is fascinating in itself, but I also suspect that readers may well become self-conscious of ways in which such assumptions have come to define their expectations concerning the gospel and the church.

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Comenius: A Critical Reassessment of his Life and Work

Daniel Murphy

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Angesichts der Tatsache, dass man nicht gerade über eine Schwemme englischer Literatur zu Comenius klagen kann, ist Murphys Studie hochwillkommen. Das Buch setzt sich kritisch mit der Comenius-Rezeption marxistischer sowie pragmatischer Autoren auseinander, die die christliche Grundlage von Comenius' politischer Aktivität, vor allem im Bildungssektor, ausblenden. Murphy hingegen zeichnet ein umfassendes Portrait von Comenius als wichtigem Vertreter eines reformatorischen Traditionsstranges, der später vor allem von Abraham Kuyper und Herman Dooyeweerd aufgegriffen und weiterentwickelt wurde.

RÉSUMÉ

Il existe peu d'ouvrages consacrés à Comenius (Jan Amos Komensky, 1592–1670) et celui-ci est donc le bienvenu. Il fait une critique de la vision marxiste et de la vision pragmatique de Comenius, qui ont toutes deux minimisé le fondement chrétien de l'activité politique de Comenius, en particulier dans le domaine de l'éducation. Murphy nous fait connaître Comenius de manière plus complète, en le présentant comme un représentant important d'un courant de la tradition réformée dans lequel devaient plus tard se situer Abraham Kuyper et Herman Dooyeweerd.

Comenius (Jan Amos Komensky, 1592–1670) was a Czech philosopher and pioneering educationalist, bishop and theologian of

the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Brethren). This church found its roots in the reforming work of John Huss (1372–1415), who was in turn inspired by the writings of John Wyclif (c.1330–1384), many of which have only survived as Czech manuscripts. Wyclif's ideas spread to Bohemia through the closer relations to England that followed the marriage (1382) of Anne, sister of Wenceslaus IV (d.1419) to Richard II. We know that Jerome of Prague (c.1371–1416) returned from Oxford in 1401, where Wyclif had taught, with copies of Wyclif's books. Huss was burnt at the stake in 1415 and Jerome in 1416. The Czech reformation was properly the first reformation, while that associated with Luther was the second. Luther himself recognised this, for he wrote to Spalatin in February 1520, 'Without knowing it I have both taught and held the teaching of Huss: in short, we were all Hussites without knowing it'.

Indeed, the Moravian church benefited from both reformations. Comenius himself, like other Moravians, was educated at the German Calvinist universities of Herborn and Heidelberg. Comenius was driven out of his Bohemian homeland by the violence and persecution of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and subsequently found refuge in various Protestant countries, Holland and Sweden in particular. In his own time he had a pan-European reputation and was respected as an educational genius.

Comenius was invited to England in 1641 by a group representing both Houses of Parliament (including leading bishops) with a view to setting up a Comenian College in London. Tragically, the project was eclipsed by the rebellion in Ireland and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642. He was then offered a similar position in France by Cardinal Richelieu, the Presidency of Harvard College, and a Swedish invitation to reform the education system there. For various reasons Comenius went to Sweden and later settled in Holland.

Here in Britain, interest in Comenius revived in the late nineteenth century and a number of multitudinous writings were translated and published. Many of the subsequent works on education would have a mandatory chapter on Comenius alongside Plato, Rousseau, Dewey, et al. It is perhaps only amongst contemporary language teachers that the name of Comenius is familiar for his role in the introduction of pictures in

children's textbooks. Comenius then practically disappeared from teacher education with the secularising 'revolution' in the philosophy of education led by professors Paul Hirst and Richard Peters. Hirst explicitly maintained that Christian education was a contradiction in terms, while Comenius saw it at the very heart of his vision for the transformation and Christianisation of society. Hirst was only prepared to call 'education' such schooling as was aiming to produce a liberal secular society, so 'Christian education' that did not have this objective was excluded by definition.

At first many Christians felt intimidated, but subsequently have begun to realise that they need to articulate their own definitions of reality, society, education, knowledge, personhood, culture and indeed everything in a manner coherent with the Christian revelation and the best of the Christian tradition. Along with this realisation and a growth of confidence in their own identity Christians have undertaken a renewed commitment to Christian education. Evidence of this is the concern to re-Christianise the county (state) schools and denominational schools as well as set up a network of new Christian schools. Here in Britain, directly and indirectly, the reformational tradition inaugurated by Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) has provided many of the resources for this redefinition and redirection. In my opinion it is about time that Comenius was also recognised, for he too has a richly encyclopaedic Christian vision of the same order as Kuyper from which much can be learnt.

However, so little was available in print in English by or about Comenius. Consequently we are much in debt to Daniel Murphy, Senior Lecturer in Education at Trinity College, Dublin, for this new and substantial work on Comenius, which includes in the text substantial translated passages from Comenius's writing. Murphy acutely recognises that Comenius's ideas have been badly misrepresented by Marxist and pragmatic thinkers alike. Comenius was neither a Czech proto-socialist patriot nor was he a narrowly focused technical expert on child development and learning methods. Educational psychologist Piaget manages to describe Comenius's ideas without mentioning the faith that shaped and structured them, but Murphy is rightly emphatic that

Comenius can only be properly located with the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Something of the real flavour of Comenius's comprehensive Christian vision for education can be found in the typically full seventeenth-century title of one of his many writings, this one finally published in 1657, *The Great Didactic*, setting forth the whole art of teaching all things to all men, or, a certain inducement to found such schools in all parishes, towns and villages of every Christian kingdom, that the entire youth of both sexes, none being excepted, shall quickly, pleasantly and thoroughly, become learned in the sciences, pure in morals, trained to piety, and in this manner instructed in all things necessary for the present and for the future life, in which, with respect to everything which is suggested, its fundamental principles are set forth from the essential nature of the matter, its truth is proved by examples from several mechanical arts, its order is clearly set forth in years, months, days, and hours, and, finally an easy and sure method is shown, by which it can be pleasantly brought into existence.

When this educational programme is compared with that of Plato in the *Republic* or the various Renaissance treatises on the exclusive education of princes or the later works of Rousseau and others, then the fruits of the gospel through the two reformations are evidently visible. Comenius calls for the development of an integral holistic Christian philosophy. Where Descartes was committed to a dualism of Christian faith plus autonomous philosophy and sciences, Comenius vigorously rejected the dualism and the autonomy. For him, philosophy and the sciences were to be part of the Augustinian project of faith seeking understanding. If philosophy and the sciences were not shaped by the Christian faith, then they would be misshaped by another faith, pagan or humanistic. In all this Comenius remarkably anticipates the Kuyperian tradition and Herman Dooyeweerd's work in particular.

The second chapter of Murphy's excellent *Comenius* focuses on his life and times. It served to evoke for me an amazing sense of the interconnectedness of Christian European culture at that time, its tragedies, lost opportunities and imagined possibilities. The rediscovery, or rather re-rediscovery, of Comenius as a pan-European figure, and

more, may well open up for us some exciting perspectives on the future.

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Tod eines Messias : Messiasgestalten und Messiaserwartungen im Judentum

Kai Kjær-Hansen, Editor

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SUMMARY

This book, translated from English, deals in twenty short contributions with the question of Messianic hope in Christianity. The authors are Jewish Christians and Christians who collaborate with Jewish Christians. Emphasised themes in the volume are the seventh Lubavite rabbi, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage, écrit en anglais et traduit en allemand, comporte vingt courtes contributions sur la question de l'espérance messianique dans le christianisme, de la plume de Juifs chrétiens et de chrétiens qui œuvrent aux côtés de Juifs chrétiens. Il y est question, entre autres, du septième rabbin Lubawitch, de Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, et de Jésus-Christ Messie d'Israël.

Die zwanzig recht kurzen Beiträge dieses Taschenbuches kreisen wie um zwei Brennpunkte einer Ellipse um zwei Themen, die man vom Titel nicht gleich erwartet: Einerseits geht es um den 1994 in Brooklyn (New York) verstorbenen sogenannten siebten "Lubawitscher Rebbe", Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (geb. 1902), der von großen Teilen der jüdisch-chassidischen Chabad-Bewegung als Messias verehrt wird bzw. wurde, sich aber nie selbst dazu erklärt hat. Den anderen "Brennpunkt" bildet die Überzeugung von Jeschua (Jesus von Nazareth) als dem Messias Israels; dieser wird öfters dem "Lubawitscher Rebbe" (und anderen jüdischen Messiasgestalten und -erwartungen) gegenübergestellt. Bei den Autoren handelt es sich um messianische Juden und unter (messianischen) Juden tätigen

Christen aus Skandinavien, Israel, den USA und England (vgl. S. 210–213). Schon in der Einleitung wird mutig und geradezu programmatisch hervorgehoben, daß alle Autoren "die Überzeugung und den Glauben [teilen], daß Jesus der Messias Israels war und ist und [...] darin überein[stimmen], daß Juden ebenso wie Nichtjuden Jesus zum Heil nötig haben" (S. 9). Manche Beiträge bleiben leider nicht nur äußerlich etwas knapp, so daß man sich oft etwas mehr und vertieftere Informationen zu einzelnen Themen und insbesondere auch Quellenangaben gewünscht hätte. Zwar werden in der "Ausgewählte[n] Bibliographie" (S. 202–209) einige Bücher genannt und auch einzelnen Beiträgen zugeordnet, doch finden sich darunter kaum deutsche Titel; fast alle Literaturhinweise sind englische Werke (manche Titel wären m.E. in deutscher Übersetzung vorgelegen), z.T. sind sogar rein hebräische Werke dabei. Anhand dieser Literaturhinweise ist es also dem interessierten (deutschen) Laien kaum möglich, sich vertiefend mit der Thematik zu beschäftigen; dafür wäre eine auf deutsche Verhältnisse zugeschnittene Literaturauswahl nötig gewesen. Eine sehr gute Verstehenshilfe für den Laien bietet hingegen das "Glossar" (S. 196–201).

Gerade vom Untertitel her hätte man sich eine etwas ausführlichere geschichtliche Darstellung von "Messiasgestalten und Messiaserwartungen im Judentum" gewünscht: Die meisten Namen und Personen (z.B. Judas der Galiläer, Theudas, Simon bar Kochba, Asher Lämmlein, Sabbatei Zwi) werden nur ganz kurz genannt, manche finden überhaupt keine Erwähnung (z.B. Andreas Lukuas, der um 115 n.Chr. in der Cyrenaika als Messias auftrat), ausführlichere Informationen finden sich lediglich zu Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (v.a. in "Gelobt sei der König Messias" von Kai Kjær-Hansen, S. 11–21) und der Deutung seines Lebens, Leidens und Todes innerhalb des Judentums (v.a. in "Was die Presse über Rabbi Schneerson geschrieben hat" von Susan Perlman, S. 22–34).

Nach den beiden ersten "Kapiteln", die näher auf den Anlaß dieses Buches eingehen, soll in den "Kapiteln" 3–10 ein geschichtlicher Überblick über Messiasvorstellungen gegeben werden: im Tanach (= Altes Testament), in den Qumranschriften, im Neuen Testament, im Judentum des ersten Jahrhunderts, im Judentum und hier insbesondere in der chassidischen Chabad-Bewegung. Die letzten zehn "Kapitel" behandeln verschiedene