

INTRODUCTION

Historiography usually considers the Reformation as something much bigger than just the aspiration to reorganise spiritual life by turning to a transformed and more profound interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. It led to the creation of a new management model within Christianity that was based on the *Summus Episcopus* principle. This model not only advocated autonomy for specific territorial units of the Church, which was linked to the secular authorities in each country, but also prompted the secular authorities to impose their control over the network of churches, and assume direct responsibility for the pastoral care of their members.

Although Biblicism, an evangelical approach to the Bible based on the principle of *sola scriptura*, did not make the Bible the only source of theology (the faith), it referred to it as the ultimate and supreme authority. This approach led to the academic training of theologians, along with the emergence of the basic literacy that was necessary to integrate the postulates of the faith into daily life. These challenges created preconditions for the potential of the academic theologian to emerge, which was concentrated in newly established or reorganised universities, and created new directions for research, focusing on a deeper critical knowledge of the sources of the Holy Scriptures and the tradition of theological thought. Demands emerged to assess the sources critically, as did efforts to understand the peculiarities of the linguistic contexts arising from the source translation.

Even today, the most important achievement of the Reformation is considered to be the systematically implemented provision to develop the faith and communicate its postulates in the vernacular languages. This provision not only stimulated the development of individual national languages, the use of which used to be confined to a domestic milieu. The gradual but active development of primary and secondary education in the mother tongue, which covered an increasing number of different sectors of society, replaced the role Latin had played in the public (and later religious) life of society, typical of the pluri-cultural political entities of Medieval Europe, where its sphere of influence was restricted to rather narrow public elites.

Through the rapid expansion of the press, the Reformation encouraged confessional pluralism, which created preconditions for the establishment of the Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed confessions several years later. At the same time, it provided an opportunity to advocates of radical currents within the Reformation to disseminate their ideas. When these began questioning the fundamental Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the leaders of the Reformation were forced to react strictly: Jean Calvin condemned Michael