

SPLASHING TRADITION

THE USE OF TRADITION AND CHURCH HISTORY
IN RECENT GERMAN BAPTISMAL THEOLOGIES
AS SEEN IN THE VIEWS OF TH. SCHNEIDER,
W. PANNENBERG, AND A. HEINZE

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Abstract

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This thesis analyses the use of tradition and church history in the baptismal views of the recent German theologians Theodor Schneider (Roman Catholic, born 1930), Wolfhart Pannenberg (Lutheran, 1928-2014), and André Heinze (Baptist, 1961-2013).

The differences in the practice and understanding of Baptism among different denominations show that views of Baptism are not only shaped by Scripture but also by external presumptions that can be traced to different understandings of tradition and church history. This thesis, therefore, investigates and evaluates how different views of Baptism in the context of recent German theology use tradition and church history to develop and constitute their position, in order to assess the influence of different views of tradition and church history on baptismal views.

To achieve its goal this thesis presents a detailed examination of the selection and usage of explicit references to tradition and (church) history found in each author's main work on Baptism, as well as an analysis of particular important implicit reflections of the author's denominational tradition. Generally, it is seen that all three authors value and use tradition in a constructive non-polemic way, while also being critical of tradition as far as possible given their denominational constraints. From the authors' use of explicit and implicit references to tradition their views of tradition and church history are deduced, which demonstrates the influence of each author's view of tradition on his baptismal view.

This research concludes that even though each author's understanding of tradition and church history surfaces in their baptismal views, exegetical convergence in method and result, as well as ecumenical progress regarding the understandings of tradition, both alleviate the influence of tradition. This illustrates the importance of the consideration of the understanding of tradition and church history in the ecumenical dialogue about Baptism.

Preface

Most of the Christian churches share in a common tradition, a rite in which water is splashed to signify the recipients belong to Jesus Christ and his church, a water-splashing tradition. But already in the way Baptism is practised we see differences and thus we can say that in Baptism not only pure water is splashed but also the tradition of the respective church is splashed upon the recipient. The differences seen in the external practice of Baptism, however, are not only superficial but are rooted in different meanings connected with Baptism. Baptism, therefore, is visualising underlying doctrine, and thus it is also splashing tradition in the sense of displaying tradition. Furthermore, if we look at how different churches and theologians describe Baptism, we also see that different baptismal views do not depend only on Scripture and reason, but that different theologians are influenced by their respective tradition and often also explicitly use references to tradition in defending their view, and so we can say they are splashing tradition into the rationale of their baptismal views. But no matter how this water-splashing tradition is practised and understood, Baptism is not a dead tradition but a living, a splashing tradition, a tradition with a deep meaning for churches and individual believers.

I want to thank, therefore, my parents who brought me to the baptismal font as a little infant to participate in this splashing tradition, and thus laid the foundation for me to become a child of God and part of the greater tradition of the Christian church. I also want to thank all the people who reminded me about my Baptism, and also who challenged me about my Baptism, both helping me to remember it and encouraging me to deeper understand its meaning and significance for my life, my faith, and the church. This investigation is part of my journey to a deeper appreciation of Baptism, and I want to thank the people who have prepared me, supported me, encouraged me, helped me, and criticised me in this process. I want to especially thank my supervisor Professor Tony Lane, Theodor Schneider, my friends from around the world and from different churches, my families, my wife, and my children. And finally, I want to give thanks to God, who not only called me in my Baptism but also helped me to develop the faith to appropriate it and to follow him, trusting him ‘that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.’

List of Abbreviations

Standard abbreviations follow the guidelines provided by Robert M. Ritter, ed., *New Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors*, Revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

ACK	<i>Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland</i> (Council of Churches in Germany)
AG	<i>Ad Gentes, Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church</i> (Vatican II)
Apol	<i>Apologia Confessionis Augustanae</i> (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, BSELK 236-709)
ASS	Theodor Schneider, <i>Auf seiner Spur: ein Werkstattbuch</i> , ed. Alois Moos (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1990)
BALUBAG	<i>Bayerische Lutherisch-Baptistische Arbeitsgruppe</i>
BEFG	<i>Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in Deutschland</i> (Union of Evangelical Free Church Congregations in Germany, member of the Baptist World Alliance)
BEM	WCC, 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' (World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1982)
BSELK	Irene Dingel et al., eds., <i>Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. Vollständige Neuedition</i> (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014)
BSTh	Wolfgang Pannenberg, <i>Beiträge zur Systematischen Theologie</i> ¹
CA	<i>Confessio Augustana</i> (Augsburg Confession, BSELK 85-225)
CCC	Roman Catholic Church, <i>Catechism Of The Catholic Church</i> (London: Burns & Oates, 2006)
CCL	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i>
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i>
CPCE	Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Formerly Leuenberg Church Fellowship)

¹ Collected in the three volumes Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 1. Philosophie, Religion, Offenbarung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999); Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 2. Natur und Mensch - und die Zukunft der Schöpfung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 3. Kirche und Ökumene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

DNK/LWB	<i>Deutsches Nationalkomitee des Lutherischen Weltbundes</i>
DH	Denzinger-Hünemann edition of the <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i> ²
DTV	Theodor Schneider, <i>Deinen Tod verkünden wir: gesammelte Studien zum erneuerten Eucharistieverständnis</i> (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1980)
DV	<i>Dei Verbum, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation</i> (Vatican II)
DwÜ	Harding Meyer et al., eds., <i>Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung: sämtliche Berichte und Konsentexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene; Bd. 1</i> (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1991)
EKD	<i>Evangelische Kirche Deutschland</i> (Evangelical Church in Germany) ³
EST	André Heinze, <i>Exegese - Spiritualität - Theologie: Beiträge zu einer Theologie im Hier und Jetzt</i> , ed. Christian Wehde and Simon Werner (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016)
EuE	Wolfgang Pannenberg, <i>Ethik und Ekklesiologie</i> (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977)
EvQ	<i>The Evangelical Quarterly</i>
FC	<i>Formula of Concord</i> (BSELK 1184-1607)
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World</i> (Vatican II)
GSTh	Wolfgang Pannenberg, <i>Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie</i> ⁴
HdD	Theodor Schneider, ed., <i>Handbuch der Dogmatik</i> , 5th ed. (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2013)

² Heinrich Denzinger, *Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse und kirchlichen Lehrentscheidungen: Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. Peter Hünemann, 44th ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 2014).

³ The official translation of *evangelisch* as evangelical, however, does not completely resemble the German meaning that refers to the traditional Protestant state churches and not to contemporary free churches that would be labelled with the German term *evangelikal*. The EKD is an association of the independent Lutheran, Reformed and United regional state churches in Germany and ‘carries out joint tasks with which its members have entrusted it.’ <https://www.ekd.de/en/EKD-98.htm>, accessed 21 September 2015.

⁴ Collected in the two volumes Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie: gesammelte Aufsätze / Band 1* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979); Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie: gesammelte Aufsätze / Band 2* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980).

HK	<i>Heidelberger Katechismus</i> (Heidelberg Catechism) ⁵
Inst.	John Calvin, <i>The Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> ⁶
ITQ	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
JETH	<i>Jahrbuch für Evangelikale Theologie</i>
JWG	Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC
KA	<i>Das kirchliche Amt in apostolischer Nachfolge</i> ⁷
KT	Theodor Schneider, <i>Kritische Treue: Grundfragen der Systematischen Theologie</i> , ed. Dorothea Sattler (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2010)
KuD	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
LC	Martin Luther, <i>Large Catechism</i> (BSELK 912-1162)
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church</i> (Vatican II)
LK	<i>Leuenberger Konkordie</i> (Leuenberg Church Fellowship)
LV	<i>Lehrverurteilungen – Kirchentrennend?</i> ⁸
MG	Theodor Schneider, <i>Miteinander glauben: Erinnerung an Weggefährten</i> (Münster: LIT, 2008)
MPL	Jacques Paul Migne, <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina</i>
OaG	Wolfhart Pannenberg, ed., <i>Offenbarung als Geschichte</i> , 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982)

⁵ Referring to the revised edition of 1997. Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche (Synode Evangelisch-Reformierter Kirchen in Bayern und Nordwestdeutschland), Lippische Landeskirche, and Reformierter Bund, eds., *Heidelberger Katechismus*, 3rd ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2006).

⁶ Referring to the German translation of the 1559 edition. Johannes Calvin, Otto Weber, and Matthias Freudenberg, *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion - Institutio Christianae Religionis*, 3rd ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2012).

⁷ Project of the *German Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians* on the ecclesiastical office, whose results are collected in the three volumes Theodor Schneider and Gunther Wenz, *Das kirchliche Amt in apostolischer Nachfolge. I: Grundlagen und Grundfragen* (Freiburg: Herder, 2004); Dorothea Sattler and Gunther Wenz, *Das kirchliche Amt in apostolischer Nachfolge. II: Ursprünge und Wandlungen* (Freiburg: Herder, 2006); Dorothea Sattler and Gunther Wenz, *Das kirchliche Amt in apostolischer Nachfolge. III: Verständigungen und Differenzen* (Freiburg: Herder, 2008).

⁸ Project of the *German Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians* on the mutual condemnations of the 16th century, whose results are collected in the four volumes Karl Lehmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, eds., *Lehrverurteilungen, kirchentrennend? I: Rechtfertigung, Sakramente, und Amt im Zeitalter der Reformation und heute* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); Karl Lehmann, ed., *Lehrverurteilungen, kirchentrennend? II: Materialien zu den Lehrverurteilungen und zur Theologie der Rechtfertigung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989); Wolfhart Pannenberg, ed., *Lehrverurteilungen, kirchentrennend? III: Materialien zur Lehre von den Sakramenten und vom kirchlichen Amt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); Wolfhart Pannenberg, ed., *Lehrverurteilungen, kirchentrennend? IV: Antworten auf kirchliche Stellungnahmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).

OT	<i>Optatam Totius, Decree on Priestly Training</i> (Vatican II)
RCC	<i>Roman Catholic Church</i>
RE MID	<i>Religionswissenschaftlicher Medien- und Informationsdienst e.V.</i>
RvG	<i>Rechenschaft vom Glauben</i> (confessional writing of the German Baptists, BEFG) ⁹
SA	<i>Smalcald Articles</i> (BSELK 718-785)
SC	Martin Luther, <i>Small Catechism</i> (BSELK 852-910)
SCv	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy</i> (Vatican II)
SELK	<i>Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche</i> (Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church)
SHF	Theodor Schneider and Martina Patenge, <i>Sieben heilige Feiern: eine kleine Sakramentenlehre</i> (Mainz: Grünewald, 2004)
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
ST	Wolfgang Pannenberg, <i>Systematische Theologie: Gesamtausgabe</i> , 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015)
ST.E	Wolfgang Pannenberg, <i>Systematic Theology</i> ¹⁰
Sum	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i>
ThLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
ThRv	<i>Theologische Revue</i>
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
Trent	Council of Trent (1545-1563)
TThZ	<i>Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
TuG	André Heinz, <i>Taufe und Gemeinde. Biblische Impulse für ein Verständnis der Taufe</i> (Kassel: Oncken, 2000)
UR	<i>Unitatis Redintegratio, Decree on Ecumenism</i> (Vatican II)
Vatican I	First Vatican Council (1869-1870)
Vatican II	Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

⁹ The actual version is BEFG in Deutschland, ‘Rechenschaft vom Glauben’, 26 May 1995.

¹⁰ English translation of Pannenberg’s *Systematische Theologie* (ST) by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

VELKD	<i>Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands</i> (United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany)
VZ	<i>Verbindliches Zeugnis</i> ¹¹
VZ.E	Theodor Schneider and Wolfhart Pannenberg, eds., <i>Binding Testimony: Holy Scripture and Tradition</i> (New York: Peter Lang, 2014) ¹²
WA	Martin Luther, <i>D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimarer Ausgabe)</i> (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 2000)
WCC	World Council of Churches
WWG	Theodor Schneider, <i>Was wir glauben: eine Auslegung des Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses</i> , 6th ed. (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2014)
WuTh	Wolfhart Pannenberg, <i>Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie</i> (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1973)
ZW	Huldreich Zwingli, <i>Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke</i> , ed. Daniel Bolliger, <i>Huldrych Zwingli Werke: Digitale Texte</i> (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, n.d.), http://www.irg.uzh.ch/static/zwingli-werke
ZdNG	Theodor Schneider, <i>Zeichen der Nähe Gottes: Grundriß der Sakramententheologie</i> , 9th ed. (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2008)
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>
ZThG	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Gemeinde</i>

¹¹ Project of the *German Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians* on Holy Scripture and Tradition, whose results are collected in the three volumes Wolfhart Pannenberg and Theodor Schneider, eds., *Verbindliches Zeugnis I: Kanon - Schrift - Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); Wolfhart Pannenberg and Theodor Schneider, *Verbindliches Zeugnis II: Schriftauslegung, Lehramt, Rezeption* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); Wolfhart Pannenberg and Theodor Schneider, *Verbindliches Zeugnis III: Schriftverständnis und Schriftgebrauch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

¹² English translation of the joint statement of *Verbindliches Zeugnis* (VZ 1:371-397) and the concluding report of *Verbindliches Zeugnis* (VZ 3:288-389).

Contents

Abstract	i
Preface	ii
List of Abbreviations	iii
Contents	viii
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	x
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Baptism, Scripture, and Tradition	5
2.1 Baptism, Foundation of Christian Unity	5
2.2 Baptism, Expression of Christian Disunity	7
2.3 Scripture and Different Views of Baptism.....	10
2.4 Different Views of Tradition and Church History	15
2.5 Tradition, Church History and Different Views of Baptism.....	26
Chapter 3 Investigation of the Use of Tradition and Church History in recent German Baptismal Theology	30
3.1 Recent German Views of Baptism: Theodor Schneider, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and André Heinze	35
3.2 Current State of Research.....	37
3.3 Research Questions and Methods	42
Chapter 4 Theodor Schneider – A Catholic View of Baptism	47
4.1 Baptism in the Thought of Schneider.....	49
4.2 Use of Scripture	58
4.3 Use of Literature	65
4.4 Explicit Use of Tradition and Church History	70
4.5 Implicit Reflections of Tradition and Church History	83
4.6 Evaluation of the Use and Understanding of Tradition and Church History.	94
4.7 Conclusions	107
Chapter 5 Wolfhart Pannenberg – A Protestant View of Baptism 109	
5.1 Baptism in the Thought of Pannenberg.....	111
5.2 Use of Scripture	119
5.3 Use of Literature	125
5.4 Explicit Use of Tradition and Church History	130
5.5 Implicit Reflections of Tradition and Church History	148
5.6 Evaluation of the Use and Understanding of Tradition and Church History	160

5.7	Conclusions	174
Chapter 6	André Heinze – A Baptist View of Baptism.....	176
6.1	Baptism in the Thought of Heinze	178
6.2	Use of Scripture	186
6.3	Use of Literature	193
6.4	Explicit Use of Tradition and Church History	197
6.5	Implicit Reflections of Tradition and Church History	210
6.6	Evaluation of the Use and Understanding of Tradition and Church History.....	221
6.7	Conclusions	231
Chapter 7	Comparison of Schneider’s, Pannenberg’s, and Heinze’s Views of Baptism.....	233
7.1	Scripture, Tradition, and Church History.....	234
7.2	Selection and Usage of Tradition and Church History References.....	241
7.3	Topics with Relevance to Tradition and Church History.....	250
Chapter 8	Conclusions and Prospects	259
8.1	Prospects for Further Research	262
8.2	Final Conclusions.....	266
Bibliography	269
Appendix 1	The Discussion about Baptism in German Church History.....	291
1.1	Reformation and Subsequent Time.....	291
1.2	New Protestant Movements in the 19 th Century	293
1.3	Inner-Church Discussion in the 20 th Century.....	295
1.4	Ecumenical Discussion in the 20 th /21 th Century	297
Appendix 2	Meeting with Theodor Schneider in Armsheim on 20 July 2015	300
2.1	General Topics	300
2.2	Specific Questions.....	302
Appendix 3	Erroneous or Inconsistent References in Pannenberg’s chapter on Baptism (ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	310
3.1	Mistakes in References to Tradition	310
3.2	Inconsistencies in References to Tradition	311
3.3	Other Mistakes	311

List of Tables

Table 4.1 References to Tradition, Church History, and History (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2) ..	73
Table 5.1 References to Tradition, Church History, and History (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	134
Table 6.1 References to Tradition, Church History, and History (Heinze, TuG)	199
Table 7.1 Comparison of metadata about the usage of references to tradition, Scripture, and literature in the main baptismal works of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze.....	244

List of Figures

Figure 4.1 Selection of Scripture references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2).....	58
Figure 4.2 Distribution and category of Scripture references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2).....	61
Figure 4.3 Category, number and origin of literature references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)...	65
Figure 4.4 Publishing time and category of literature references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2) ..	66
Figure 4.5 Distribution and category of literature references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2).....	68
Figure 4.6 Category, number and origin of recommended literature (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)	69
Figure 4.7 Publishing time and category of recommended literature (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)	70
Figure 4.8 Type of tradition and church history references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2).....	71
Figure 4.9 Temporal distribution of tradition and history references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)	72
Figure 4.10 Distribution and time of tradition and history references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)	81
Figure 4.11 Distribution, function, and evaluation of tradition and history references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)	82
Figure 5.1 Selection of Scripture references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	120
Figure 5.2 Distribution and category of Scripture references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	122
Figure 5.3 Category, number and origin of literature references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	126
Figure 5.4 Publishing time and category of literature references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	127
Figure 5.5 Distribution and category of literature references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	129
Figure 5.6 Type of tradition and church history references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	130
Figure 5.7 Temporal distribution of tradition and history references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1).....	131
Figure 5.8 Origin of Quotations and Specific References (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)...	132
Figure 5.9 Origin of Specific References to Luther (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)	133
Figure 5.10 Distribution and time of tradition and history references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1).....	146
Figure 5.11 Distribution, function, and evaluation of tradition and history references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1).....	147

Figure 6.1 Selection of Scripture references (Heinze, TuG).....	187
Figure 6.2 Distribution and category of Scripture references (Heinze, TuG).....	189
Figure 6.3 Distribution and category of literature references (Heinze, TuG).....	195
Figure 6.4 Category, number and origin of recommended literature (Heinze, TuG)	196
Figure 6.5 Type of tradition and church history references (Heinze, TuG).....	197
Figure 6.6 Temporal distribution of tradition and history references (Heinze, TuG).....	199
Figure 6.7 Distribution and time of tradition and history references (Heinze, TuG).....	208
Figure 6.8 Distribution, function, and evaluation of tradition and history references (Heinze, TuG)	209
Figure 7.1 Comparison of temporal selection of tradition references.....	242
Figure 7.2 Comparison of type and function of tradition references	247
Figure 7.3 Comparison of time and position of tradition references	249

‘Yet baptism is the deep root of a fundamental unity that binds Christians despite their differences.’¹³

– Pope John Paul II –

Chapter 1

Introduction

Baptism is a rite that nearly all Christian churches, at all places and at all times have in common¹⁴ and that is widely acknowledged as the foundation of Christian unity.¹⁵ Baptism, however, represents also a heavily debated issue that paradoxically expresses disunity between different Christian churches.¹⁶ Although many Christian churches and theologians claim that their view of Baptism is solely based on Scripture, there are significant differences in the practice and understanding of Baptism. This shows that every view of Baptism is shaped not only by scriptural evidence but also by external assumptions that can be traced back to different understandings of tradition and church history. The goal of this research, therefore, is to investigate and evaluate how different views of Baptism in the context of recent German theology use tradition and church history to develop and constitute their position, in order to assess the influence of different views of tradition and church history on baptismal views. This research concludes that this is true to a certain extent, however, exegetical convergence in method and result, as well as ecumenical progress both alleviate the influence of different views of tradition and church history.

¹³ ‘Pope Says Baptism Is Root of Unity’, *Christian Century* 117, no. 34 (6 December 2000): 1268.

¹⁴ Except for some special groups such as the Salvation Army, the Quakers, or the Church of God that emphasise personal conversion and do not practise Baptism, also due to the controversies about the rite. Cf. Erich Geldbach, *Taufe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 78–82, 88.

¹⁵ The BEM document, for example, states ‘Our common baptism, which unites us to Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity.’ BEM B:6. Also expressed by Vatican II as ‘Baptism, therefore, constitutes a sacramental bond of unity linking all who have been reborn by means of it.’ UR 22. Some Pentecostal churches, however, rather see the foundation of unity in ‘a common faith and experience of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour through the Holy Spirit.’ WCC, ed., *Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches: Eighth Report, 1999-2005* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 2005), 72.

¹⁶ ‘Baptism remained one of the stumbling blocks to Christian unity, due to variety of baptismal practices and understandings among the churches today.’ Thomas F Best, *Baptism Today: Understanding, Practice, Ecumenical Implications* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 195.

Since the time of Reformation there has been much discussion about Baptism in the context of German theology. Especially in the last decades, starting around the 1940s, Baptism has been heavily discussed in Germany, both within churches of the same denomination and also between different churches at an ecumenical level. Although some agreements have been achieved, there is still no general consensus on the practice and understanding of baptism. This investigation, therefore, is first of all important because there is still disunity between different Christian churches about the practice and understanding of Baptism that can only be overcome by further theological and ecumenical work.¹⁷ Only by a deeper understanding of one's own view and of other views of Baptism can mutual understanding grow that hopefully ends in mutual recognition.¹⁸ The importance of mutual recognition of Baptism cannot be underestimated as it 'is in itself an act of recognition of *koinonia*,' which shows true Christian unity.¹⁹ Secondly, by presenting recent views of Baptism, representing important streams of German Christianity, this investigation will give an insight into baptismal understanding in recent German theology. Thirdly, by verifying that every view of Baptism not only depends on Scripture but also includes external presumptions seen in the use or absence of tradition and church history, it will be clear that each view has its validity within its own framework of thinking. Finally, by understanding how different views of Baptism are shaped by their understanding of tradition and church history it will hopefully become manifest that the discussion about Baptism cannot be conducted in isolation but must be carried out in the wider context of these underlying assumptions in order to further unity and mutual recognition.

The focus of this investigation is the analysis of different views of Baptism, and it is, therefore, primarily located in the field of Christian doctrine. Baptismal views are built on New Testament teaching, but as Scripture does not define the practice and the understanding of Baptism in all aspects, historical understandings explicitly or implicitly influence baptismal views. As the purpose of this investigation is to analyse how different views of Baptism are constructed on scriptural evidence and are influenced by historical views, this investigation has also its natural connection points to the fields of New

¹⁷ The JWG study about the Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of a Common Baptism also demands that 'further ecumenical work on baptism is still needed to resolve continuing difficulties if further progress is to be made.' WCC, *JWG between the RCC and the WCC 8th Report*, 47.

¹⁸ According to Kasper, ecumenical progress is made by understanding one's own convictions, not by abandoning them. If individual understandings are analysed at a deep level, they might become compatible with those of other traditions as seen in the agreements on the doctrine of justification. Walter Kasper, 'Ein Herr, ein Glaube, eine Taufe – Ökumenische Perspektiven der Zukunft.' (Katholische und Evangelische Akademie in Berlin, Berlin, 2002), 10, http://www.foerderverein-unita-dei-cristiani.com/seite/pdf/wk_oe-kumene.pdf.

¹⁹ WCC, *JWG between the RCC and the WCC 8th Report*, 64.

Testament theology, historical theology, and church history. As different views of Baptism in the context of recent German theology are under review, one of the main purposes of ecumenical theology in present times, which is to examine and compare different theologies to further mutual understanding and acceptance, falls also into scope of this investigation.²⁰

Methodically, to conduct this investigation, we will choose different baptismal views of recent German theology for closer analysis. Important is here to cover a broad spectrum of baptismal positions present in German Christianity. At the one end of the spectrum there is a sacramental position, found for example in the Roman Catholic Church,²¹ emphasising the immediate effectiveness of Baptism, while the baptismal position found in many free churches is at the other end of the spectrum, often emphasising the character of Baptism as a mere symbol of a believer's personal confession of faith. The position of the Protestant state churches is located in the middle, also acknowledging the effective character of Baptism, however, not apart from the faith of the recipient. Additionally, we also need to ensure that the selected baptismal views originate from denominations representing a comprehensive spectrum of views of tradition and church history. Tradition and church history, for example, are considered to be of great importance and authority in Catholic theology, in Protestant state church theology a more critical approach towards tradition and church history is found, while many free churches unconsciously ignore or intentionally reject tradition and church history from outside of their movement. Finally, the limitation of the scope of this investigation to recent German theology will allow us to consider the impact of reason²² and cultural context²³ as a constant regarding the results of this investigation, so that the influence of different understandings of tradition and church history on baptismal views will be exposed even more sharply.

²⁰ Reinhard Frieling, *Der Weg des ökumenischen Gedankens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 182.

²¹ As most of the Catholics in the West are members of the Roman rite, we will use in this investigation Catholic synonymous to Roman Catholic. We are aware, however, that there are also other churches that are in communion with the pope and thus are Catholic but represent different rites.

²² According to Jones, the term reason in theological discourse 'is often used to refer to one of the following: (a) the processes of reasoning; (b) the results of contemporary learning; or (c) truths about God that claim to be established without recourse to revelation.' By limiting the scope of this investigation to a certain time and cultural context, therefore, we can expect that theologians working in the context of German academia to generally share in their method of reasoning and in the results of contemporary learning. Joe R. Jones, *A Grammar of Christian Faith: Systematic Explorations in Christian Life and Doctrine* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 1:115-118.

²³ Bauckham described the context, by which he refers to the 'broadest sense of every aspect of a society in which the church exists,' as an important additional component of influence on Christian Doctrine in addition to Scripture and tradition. Richard Bauckham, 'Tradition in Relation to Scripture and Reason', in *Scripture, Tradition and Reason - A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine*, by Benjamin Drewery and Richard Bauckham (London: A&C Black, 2004), 140-45.

The investigation of how different views of Baptism are shaped by the understanding of tradition and church history, therefore, will be carried out by analysing the baptismal views of Theodor Schneider, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and André Heinze. The choice of these three theologians is arbitrary regarding their person. We could have selected any other theologian of the same timeframe and of similar academic qualification, as long as he or she would have sufficiently published about his or her baptismal view. The selection of these three recent German theologians with their Catholic, Protestant state church, and Baptist affiliations, however, is not arbitrary insofar as they are respected and accepted in their denominations. These three theologians, therefore, on the one hand cover different streams of German theology with their respective views of Baptism and tradition, while on the other hand all three also have been involved in ecumenical dialogue, showing additionally an interest in bridging denominational boundaries. By analysing these three representative positions we will determine and evaluate the use of tradition and church history in different views of Baptism in recent German theology, in order to draw conclusions that enhance mutual understanding and encourage further dialogue in the Baptism debate. We are aware, however, that the selection of only three representative theologians is a serious limitation, but this intentional limitation gives us the opportunity to analyse their thought in greater depth and detail. It is obvious, therefore, that it would be beneficial to use the methodology and results of this in-depth study to conduct a broader investigation in the future.

In the further progress of this investigation, in chapter 2 we will deal first with introductory matters, showing that although Baptism is seen as the foundation of Christian unity it is often an expression of Christian disunity. Furthermore, we will see that it is not only Scripture that shapes one's baptismal view, but that the understanding of tradition and church history is crucial to the development of different views of Baptism. In chapter 3 we will define the scope of this investigation in greater detail, justify our selection of authors, describe the state of current research, and define research questions and methodology. In chapters 4 to 6 we will analyse and evaluate the baptismal views of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze in respect to their use of tradition and church history and in chapter 7 we will compare the 3 views and bring them into dialogue with each other. Finally, in chapter 8 we will sum up observations, show prospects for further research, and draw conclusions, with the goal of providing feedback to the discussion about Baptism, which will hopefully contribute to mutual understanding on Baptism and further Christian unity.

Chapter 2

Baptism, Scripture, and Tradition

Even though Baptism is a foundational topic in Christian life and theology, there is much disunity about its correct understanding and practice. This is due to the diverse and complex baptismal theology found in the NT, which subjects Baptism to the influence of tradition. We will first consider, therefore, the relationship of Baptism, Scripture, and tradition, which provides the necessary general background for our further investigation.

2.1 Baptism, Foundation of Christian Unity

Baptism is often referred to as the foundation or the sacrament of Christian unity. This is true based on scriptural-theological understanding and is also visible in ecclesiological, ecumenical and practical considerations.

2.1.1 Scriptural-Theological Considerations

According to scriptural and historical witness the Christian church practised a distinct Christian Baptism from its beginning,²⁵ whereas its unique features are found in the mentioning of Christ’s name (either alone or embedded in the Trinitarian formula) and in the gift of the Holy Spirit.²⁶ According to Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus Christ himself instituted Baptism and although the authenticity of these words is often doubted by historical research, they are still the most obvious explanation for the development of a specific

²⁴ Hans Hubert, *Der Streit um die Kindertaufe. Eine Darstellung der von Karl Barth 1943 ausgelösten Diskussion um die Kindertaufe und ihrer Bedeutung für die heutige Tauffrage* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1972), 199.

²⁵ The use of capitalised Baptism in this investigation refers to the distinct rite of Christian water Baptism.

²⁶ Edmund Schlink, *Die Lehre von der Taufe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 29.

Christian Baptism rite,²⁷ and, therefore, are ‘considered by many churches to be both the warrant and the instruction for carrying out Christian baptism.’²⁸

Apart from the command to baptise, Matthew 28 already outlines Baptism as the foundation of Christian unity as it shows that ‘Baptism identifies two new relationships,’²⁹ which are the unity of the baptised person with the triune God and the unity of the baptised person with other believers. The command to baptise in/into the name of the triune God shows that Baptism is understood as being united with God, whereas the integration of Baptism into the process of making disciples shows that Baptism is also understood as uniting with other believers, as being a disciple implies unity with other disciples (John 17:21).

Baptism is also affirmed by other NT passages as foundation of Christian unity. In Romans 6:3, for example, the meaning of Baptism as uniting with Christ in his death and resurrection is emphasised. Or in Acts 2:41, Baptism means to be added to the Christian community, thus being united with other believers. Especially the image of being baptised into the body of Christ, as seen in 1 Corinthians 12:13, expresses the twofold Christian unity of being united with Christ himself and with other believers in the body of Christ.³⁰

2.1.2 *Ecclesiological, Ecumenical, and Practical Considerations*

Through Baptism a person becomes ‘member of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church’ and therefore Baptism ‘has ecclesiological and ecumenical implications.’³¹ Because there is only one God, there can also be only one church, and if the rite of Baptism is the foundation for membership in the universal church, there can only be one Baptism, as Paul states in Ephesians 4:6. Acknowledging that different churches practise the same ritual, therefore, ‘implies not merely the recognition of a particular ritual, but de facto the recognition of ecclesiological reality in the other.’³² Consequently, for Vatican II ‘baptism is the foundation for recognising an ecclesial quality in the non-Catholic churches and church fellowships.’³³

²⁷ Schlink concludes ‘So ergibt sich die paradoxe Situation, daß der historisch nicht greifbare Auftrag des Auferstandenen die naheliegendste historische Erklärung für die Entstehung der christlichen Taufe ist.’ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁸ Best, *Baptism*, 213.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

³⁰ Cf. Dagmar Heller, ‘Baptism into the Body of Christ – An Exploration of Its Ecumenical Implications’ (*La Parole de Dieu appelle à l’unité: Oecuménisme spirituel et responsabilité des Eglises*, Chevetogne, 03.9 2010), 3, https://doc.rero.ch/record/20538/files/Heller_Dagmar_Baptism_into_the_body_of_Christ.pdf.

³¹ Walter Kasper, ‘Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism’, *Ecumenical Review* 52, no. 4 (October 2000): 531.

³² Best, *Baptism*, 203.

³³ Kasper, ‘Implications’, 532.

The ecclesiological dimension also makes Baptism an important starting point and basis for ecumenical dialogue.³⁴ Between some churches there is already an agreement on a common Baptism, which Kasper sees as the ‘starting and reference point of every ecumenism of life.’³⁵ The mutual recognition of Baptism, therefore, is a first step towards the greater ecumenical goal of full communion, which shows that Baptism also on an ecumenical level is the foundation of unity. Finally, on a practical level nearly all churches see Baptism as ‘initiation sacrament into the ecclesiological community,’³⁶ which means that Baptism is the foundation for membership in a specific local church body.³⁷ As this membership normally includes practical benefits and obligations, Baptism becomes a real experience of affiliation and unity, ideally even staying valid if membership is transferred between churches.

2.2 Baptism, Expression of Christian Disunity

Although Baptism is understood and can be experienced as foundation of Christian unity, paradoxically it often becomes an expression of Christian disunity. Nearly all churches practise Baptism with water as an initiation rite but as Sproul observes ‘It seems there are questions over just about every aspect of the sacrament.’³⁸ This shows that although Baptism is a rite that many churches have in common, there is no common teaching about it.³⁹ In fact, the teaching on Baptism in different Christian churches is a controversial topic and often there is little tolerance for other positions, even in the context of ecumenically engaged churches, and, therefore, it might be premature to talk of Baptism as ‘bond of sacramental unity.’⁴⁰ The disunity over Baptism, however, is not only a theological problem but also practically affects every baptised person. As Baptism normally establishes membership in a local church of a specific denomination with its teaching on Baptism, the mere reception of Baptism can become an expression of Christian disunity.⁴¹

To overcome the problem of Baptism as an expression of Christian disunity some theologians distinguish between the practice of Baptism and the understanding of Baptism. By making this distinction and trying to reduce the differences into the area of practice,

³⁴ Ibid., 526.

³⁵ Walter Kasper, ‘Ökumene des Lebens’ (Katholikentag 2004, Ulm, 19 June 2004), 2, http://www.foerderverein-unita-dei-cristiani.com/seite/pdf/wk_oedl.pdf.

³⁶ Hubert, *Streit*, 199.

³⁷ Kirchenamt der EKD, ed., *Die Taufe: eine Orientierungshilfe zu Verständnis und Praxis der Taufe in der Evangelischen Kirche* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 42.

³⁸ R. C. Sproul, *What Is Baptism?* (Orlando: Reformation Trust Pub, 2011), 2.

³⁹ Cf. Hubert, *Streit*, 110.

⁴⁰ Geldbach, *Taufe*, 23.

⁴¹ Cf. Heller, ‘Baptism’, 10; Best, *Baptism*, 218.

the problem seems not that serious anymore. If there is an agreement about meaning and theology, so the assumption, it is easier to accept different practices as expressions of the same understanding.⁴² As compelling as this approach might be, Best observed, ‘the understanding and the practice of baptism are inseparable’ and ‘the rite itself and the meaning for both the believer and the Christian community can be understood only when the two are held together: the theology of baptism does not exist apart from its liturgical expression.’⁴³ Baptism, therefore, ‘remained one of the stumbling blocks to Christian unity, due to variety of baptismal practices and understandings among the churches today.’⁴⁴

2.2.1 *Differences in the practice of Baptism*

Differences in the practice and liturgical expression of Baptism are obvious and easy to recognise,⁴⁵ and therefore, Baptism is often experienced and publicly visible as an expression of Christian disunity. The major areas of disagreement regarding the practice of Baptism are concerning the person who performs Baptism, the way of performing Baptism, and the recipient of Baptism. The question about the person who performs Baptism generally is not an issue in the churches of Western tradition, but of special importance for the Orthodox churches, as it decides whether Baptism was performed inside the apostolic church and thus was a real Baptism.

While there is a general understanding that in Baptism water is used, the name of Jesus is invoked, and a profession of faith is necessary, there are many disagreements about the specifics. There is no common practice regarding the mode of Baptism and some churches practise full immersion, sometimes even three times, such as the Orthodox churches, while others pour or sprinkle water on the head of the person to be baptised, a practice found as early as in the *Didache*. The words spoken during Baptism are also a point of disagreement, as in some traditions the name of the Triune God is invoked while in others the name of Jesus is enough. Finally, there are also different views about who has to

⁴² The position paper of the *Bund Evangelischer Gemeinschaften*, for example, emphasises that the NT and church history widely show a unified understanding of Baptism but do not say much about the practice, and, therefore, the distinction of meaning and practice is essential to allow differences in practice while emphasising unity in meaning. Bund evangelischer Gemeinschaften, ‘Die eine christliche Taufe in der Vielfalt ihrer Formen. Positionspapier des Bundes evangelischer Gemeinschaften durch seinen theologischen Arbeitskreis’ (Marburg, 3 October 2007), 4. Kasper, however, criticises a similar approach of the BEM document as underestimating ‘the deeper differences among the church in the understanding of baptism and the church.’ Kasper, ‘Implications’, 527.

⁴³ Best, *Baptism*, ix. Hubert also concludes that the deep linkage of the practice and meaning of Baptism is often underestimated. Hubert, *Streit*, 135.

⁴⁴ Best, *Baptism*, 195.

⁴⁵ See for example the different liturgies and baptismal traditions collected in Best, *Baptism*; Dale Moody, *Baptism; Foundation for Christian Unity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967); Geldbach, *Taufe*, 26–89.

profess faith and how. Do the recipients of Baptism have to profess faith by themselves, or can other persons, like parents, sponsors, or the congregation, profess their faith in place of them? Should faith be professed by one's own words or by the words of a specific confession or creed? Finally, in some churches additional actions like laying on of hands or Chrismation are part of Baptism, showing different understandings about the scope of Baptism in the whole process of initiation.

The greatest disagreements over the practice of Baptism, however, are about the role and prerequisite of the recipients of Baptism, as seen in the assessment that 'there are fewer disputes about recognition of baptism centred on whether the rite has been performed with water in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, than relate to the place of the rite in this larger pattern of initiation or formation.'⁴⁶ The question is whether a person can receive Baptism at the beginning of the initiation process, for example in the extreme case as an infant, or whether Baptism can only be received after a conscious conversion, or even later after demonstrating a sincere Christian life and being carefully instructed in Christian teaching (catechism).⁴⁷ This discussion is already visible in the third-fourth century extremes of infant Baptism and deathbed Baptism and is also manifest in the long history of disagreement over infant Baptism and believer's Baptism, seen in numerous books and ecumenical dialogues concerned with this problem, rarely finding a true solution.

2.2.2 *Differences in the meaning of Baptism*

The problem, however, goes deeper as the different practices are caused by different underlying understandings of the meaning of Baptism. The most fundamental question about the meaning of Baptism is whether Baptism really accomplishes something in the life of the baptised persons, often worded as sacramental view, or whether Baptism is a merely outward sign of something that already happened, the view of Baptism as an ordinance.⁴⁸ Or expressed from another perspective as Baptism as a work of God or Baptism as confession of faith and thus merely a deed of human obedience.⁴⁹ This distinction,

⁴⁶ WCC, *JWG between the RCC and the WCC 8th Report*, 49.

⁴⁷ Cf. Best, *Baptism*, 213.

⁴⁸ This basic distinction is found, for example, in Erickson's *Systematic Theology*, which sees the basic difference on the meaning of Baptism in 'Baptism as Means of Saving Grace,' which is the sacramental view, and 'Baptism as Token of Salvation,' which is the view of Baptism as an ordinance. Erickson additionally discusses the Reformed view, which, however, can also be regarded as sacramental view as God's action in Baptism is emphasised. Millard J Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), 1099–1106. The use of the terms sacrament and ordinance, however, might be misleading as some churches talk about sacraments but hold to an ordinance view, while others talk about ordinances but acknowledge that Baptism really accomplishes something.

⁴⁹ Schlink, *Taufe*, 140.

however, represents only the two extremes and many understandings affirm both aspects that should ‘be contrasted, rather than compared.’⁵⁰ Churches that traditionally emphasise the sacramental aspect of Baptism are the Catholic Church, the Orthodox churches, and the Protestant state churches, whereas the understanding of Baptism as an ordinance is generally emphasised in Baptist, Evangelical, and Pentecostal churches, even though many of these churches also returned to a sacramental understanding in recent times.⁵¹

Different understandings of the meaning of Baptism naturally influence baptismal practice. If Baptism is seen as an effective means it is important to perform it the proper way, with proper words in a proper setting, to ensure that the practised rite really is Baptism. If Baptism is seen as an ordinance and symbol of present faith and conversion, the tendency is to not baptise infants and baptise relatively late after a period of instruction and probation. Similarly, the mode of Baptism is related to the underlying understanding. If Baptism is mainly understood as partaking in Christ’s death and resurrection, Baptism by immersion is often seen as the preferred method. If the emphasis is on God’s action in Baptism, removing sin or giving the Holy Spirit, modes like sprinkling and pouring water are also acceptable as they symbolise washing, cleansing from sin, and pouring of the Spirit.

2.3 Scripture and Different Views of Baptism

Although all teachings on Baptism are built on the same scriptural material the resulting baptismal views are often quite different.⁵² This plurality is especially surprising as present-day baptismal teachings generally acknowledge Scripture as normative standard.⁵³ The problem is found in the nature of the different scriptural statements about Baptism and the resulting challenge of defining a theology of Baptism.

2.3.1 The Nature of Scriptural Statements about Baptism

Baptism is often mentioned in the NT, but besides the two imperatives in Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 2:38, the statements about Baptism are ‘primarily descriptive or purely theological.’⁵⁴ Baptism is often mentioned descriptively, for example, in Acts but with the focus on the growth of the Early Church and not on instructions about baptismal practice

⁵⁰ George Raymond Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 269. Cf. also Michael Green, *Baptism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987), 20.

⁵¹ Cf. Kasper, ‘Implications’, 537.

⁵² Hubert, *Streit*, 62.

⁵³ Geldbach, *Taufe*, 20.

⁵⁴ Ben Witherington, *Troubled Waters: The Rethinking the Theology of Baptism* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 9, 130.

and understanding.⁵⁵ Besides the descriptive accounts, Baptism is used in theological arguments concerning other issues, which renders it difficult to use such passages as explicit teaching about Baptism, seen for example in the ethical imperative of Romans 6.⁵⁶ The fact that no exclusive statements on Baptism are found in the NT makes Baptism ‘at most a secondary theme’⁵⁷ and the statements are ‘not programmatic’ in such a way as to explain the practice and the meaning of Baptism, equal to statements found about the Lord’s Supper (like 1 Corinthians 11:26).⁵⁸ This leads to several problems about the baptismal statements in the NT: some issues are not addressed; some questions are not answered clearly; some topics are addressed in diverse ways; and for some statements it is not even clear whether and how they relate to Baptism.

Missing Statements

Some issues about Baptism are not addressed in the NT at all. As the NT was written in a missionary situation where the church was spreading and questions of a well-established, maybe even an enculturated church, are naturally not addressed. The most prominent missing statements are concerning infant Baptism. The NT does not tell what the first Christians did with their children and infants and at best there can be assumptions made out of the references to the household baptisms in Acts 10:44-48; 16:15; 16:31-34; 18:8; (cf. also 1 Corinthians 1:16).⁵⁹ Other examples for missing statements in the NT are the explanation as to why Jesus instituted Baptism, whether and how Baptism is related to the baptism practised by John the Baptist, including Jesus’ own baptism, and Jewish ritual washings.

Unclear Statements

Some questions about Baptism are addressed in the NT in an unclear manner, such as how to apply the baptismal water. Even though it is often claimed that the Greek words βαπτίζω and βαπτω refer to immersion, their meaning is not exclusively bound to a special

⁵⁵ Maybe not even Luke had an ‘exact idea about the baptismal practice of the beginning.’ Hubert, *Streit*, 51.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁷ Witherington, *Waters*, 8–9.

⁵⁸ Marxen, cited in Hubert, *Streit*, 109. Cf. Klaus Haacker, ‘Taufe verstehen - im Urchristentum und heute’, in *Kirche: Kontinuität und Wandel: Beiträge zur Ringvorlesung an der Kirchlichen Hochschule im Sommersemester 1993*, ed. Christian Hohmann (Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 1994), 36.

⁵⁹ As there is no explicit command for infant Baptism ‘the case for infant baptism is a cumulative one. That is, no single argument or portion of the case may be seen as sufficient to establish the validity of infant baptism on its own’ but if everything is put together a strong case can be made. Bryan D Holstrom, *Infant Baptism and the Silence of the New Testament* (Greenville: Ambassador International, 2008), 14–15.

mode of Baptism,⁶⁰ and the descriptive passages about Baptism (e.g. Acts 2:41; 8:26-40; 10:47; 16:33) can be understood as immersion but might also refer to other modes. As theological implications are also arbitrary due to the diverse statements about the symbolism of Baptism, the NT allows arguing for different modes.⁶¹ Other important issues are whether the Trinitarian formula should be used in Baptism or whether the name of Jesus is enough;⁶² or whether Baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation, as Mark 16:16 links Baptism with salvation, but only says that faith is essential for salvation.

Diverse Statements

Baptism as an expression of the restored relationship with God is described in the NT in diverse statements, some being used incidentally while others appear at very important places.⁶³ The BEM document sums up the diverse aspects of the meaning as ‘Baptism is participation in Christ’s death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–5; Col. 2:12); a washing away of sin (I Cor. 6:11); a new birth (John 3:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Eph. 5:14); a re-clothing in Christ (Gal. 3:27); a renewal by the Spirit (Titus 3:5); the experience of salvation from the flood (I Peter 3:20–21); an exodus from bondage (I Cor. 10:1–2) and a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division whether of sex or race or social status are transcended (Gal. 3:27-28; I Cor. 12:13).’⁶⁴ While many diverse statements about the meaning of Baptism could be regarded as complementary, some even seem contradictory. The gift of the Spirit, for example, could be a consequence of Baptism (Acts 2:38; 8:16-17; 19:5-6) or a demand for Baptism (Acts 10:47-48). Barrett, therefore, concludes that the different ‘things which elsewhere in the New Testament are brought into connection with baptism’ are ‘left without the focal point which might unite them.’⁶⁵

Ambiguous Statements

Finally, for some statements it is not even clear whether they refer to Baptism at all or whether they are ‘simply using baptismal language to speak of Spirit Baptism or some

⁶⁰ Dale, for example, concluded that ‘There is no form of act inherent in baptizo’ and ‘Whatever is capable of thoroughly changing the character, state, or condition of any object, is capable of baptizing that object.’ James W Dale, *Classic Baptism: An Inquiry into the Meaning of the Word [Baptizo] as Determined by the Usage of Classical Greek Writers*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Wm. Rutter Co, 1868), 351, 354.

⁶¹ For an elaborate analysis of the use of βαπτίζω and βαπτω, the descriptive passages about Baptism, and theological arguments used to argue for one specific mode see Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 6–30; Cf. also John Murray, *Christian Baptism* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1980), 23–24.

⁶² Cf. Hubert, *Streit*, 90–01.

⁶³ Geldbach, *Taufe*, 7–8.

⁶⁴ BEM B:2.

⁶⁵ Charles K. Barrett, *Church, Ministry, and Sacraments in the New Testament*, The Didsbury Lectures 1983 (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1985), 73.

other aspect of Christian conversion or experience.’⁶⁶ Important examples are Jesus’ word of being ‘born of water and the Spirit’ (John 3:5), Jesus’ reference to his death as baptism (the *Todestauflogion* in Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50),⁶⁷ Paul’s references to being ‘baptized into Moses’⁶⁸ and to circumcision (Colossians 2:11), or his declaration that children of believers are holy (1 Corinthians 7:14).⁶⁹ Another important example of an ambiguous statement is the *Kinderevangelium* (e.g. Mark 10:13-16), whereas its connection to Baptism is a theological conclusion not originating from exegesis but from its later use in connection to infant Baptism.⁷⁰

2.3.2 *The Challenge of Developing a Biblical Theology of Baptism*

A biblical theology of Baptism has to include and evaluate the different scriptural statements about Baptism and, therefore, assumptions have to be made for the missing statements, the questions caused by the unclear statements have to be clarified, decisions have to be made on how to bring together the diverse statements, and it has to be evaluated which of the ambiguous statements contribute to the understanding of Baptism. The interpretation of the baptismal statements in the NT, however, proves to be a challenge that is, as Witherington observed, ‘mostly theological and historical, not exegetical.’⁷¹ Therefore often historical-exegetical and exegetical-theological approaches are used to interpret the scriptural statements to develop a biblical theology of Baptism out of the scriptural statements.⁷²

Historical-Exegetical and Exegetical-Theological Interpretation

Historical-exegetical approaches use historical writings and other sources of the Early Church and Judaism to interpret the scriptural statements about Baptism, which, however, creates two problems: first, the historical evidences are not clear and as Stander and Louw recommend ‘one should never think of the Early Church as a unity having a specific codified dogma. The first four centuries is a compendium of various points of view and

⁶⁶ Witherington, *Waters*, 3.

⁶⁷ As stated by Bartsch, cited in Hubert, *Streit*, 102.

⁶⁸ This passage is used by the church fathers and Calvin to define their understanding of Baptism, but Hubert evaluates ‘Die exegetische Ausbeute ist also mager, die dogmengeschichtliche dafür umso reicher.’ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶⁹ Cf. Kurt Aland, *Die Säuglingstaufe im Neuen Testament und in der alten Kirche* (München: Kaiser, 1961), 76–81.

⁷⁰ Hubert, *Streit*, 43. According to Wright it is mainly due to the Reformers that this passage found its place in the practice of infant Baptism, while only two church fathers saw this connection. David F Wright, *Infant Baptism in Historical Perspective: Collected Studies* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 153–65; cf. Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 18:5.

⁷¹ Witherington, *Waters*, 5.

⁷² These two categories are used by Hubert to organise the views of Baptism he examines in Hubert, *Streit*.

various emphases on many issues.⁷³ Second, even if historical evidences would support a specific position it does not mean that later developments of the practice and understanding of Baptism automatically do not fit into the biblical theology of Baptism, seen for example in Aland's argument for the later but legitimate development of infant Baptism.⁷⁴ Historical-exegetical approaches, therefore, do not allow the conclusive interpretation of the scriptural statements on Baptism, and exegetical-theological approaches might be more promising.⁷⁵

Exegetical-theological approaches focus on the big picture of biblical theology in order to resolve the challenge created by the nature of the baptismal statements, or as Murray explains 'to think organically of the Scripture revelation' in contrast 'to think atomically' of the single statements.⁷⁶ The problem with the idea of developing a theology of Baptism that fits into the bigger theological picture, however, is that every theological framework is also influenced by specific emphases originating from the historical and situational background of the respective denomination and, consequently, the biblical statements about Baptism are interpreted from that perspective.

The Complexity of New Testament Teaching on Baptism

The whole quest of developing a biblical theology of Baptism presupposes that the NT evidence on Baptism is conclusive and can be transformed into *the one biblical theology of Baptism*. The results of Hubert's excessive study of various baptismal views, however, is rather disillusioning and he concludes that the NT teaching on Baptism is complex, diverse, contradictory, inconsistent, and not uniform.⁷⁷ Mezger confirms this by comparing the NT teaching with the view of a mountain range where the different aspects of Baptism appear to be very close but in reality are divided by deep valleys, and he concludes that *the teaching* on Baptism strictly speaking does not exist.⁷⁸ Approaches, therefore, that treat the NT teaching as 'course book' that can be plainly systematised, appear

⁷³ Hendrick F. Stander and Johannes P. Louw, *Baptism in the Early Church* (Leeds: Carey, 2004), 181–82. Similarly, Lane uses the variety of baptismal practices seen in the first five centuries to argue for a variety in apostolic times. Anthony N. S. Lane, 'Did the Apostolic Church Baptise Babies? A Seismological Approach', *Tyndale Bulletin* 55, no. 1 (2004): 109–30.

⁷⁴ Cf. Aland, *Säuglingstaufe*, 84–85. Geldbach also warns against using historical data as theological standard and sees the crucial question in whether the NT elements of Baptism are found in the contemporary understandings of Baptism. Geldbach, *Taufe*, 8–9. Similarly Paul F. Bradshaw, 'The Profession of Faith in Early Christian Baptism', *EvQ* 78, no. 2 (2006): 113–14.

⁷⁵ Cf. Hubert, *Streit*, 56.

⁷⁶ Murray, *Baptism*, ii.

⁷⁷ Cf. Hubert, *Streit*, 32, 52, 122–23, 130.

⁷⁸ Manfred Mezger, *Die Amtshandlungen der Kirche als Verkündigung, Ordnung und Seelsorge. Bd. I Die Begründung der Amtshandlungen*, 2nd ed. (München: Kaiser, 1963), 158. Similarly Haacker, 'Taufe', 31, 36.

to not be suitable,⁷⁹ while approaches that accept the different aspects of baptismal teaching and do not try to completely harmonise the different understandings, are reflecting the complex character of NT teaching on Baptism more appropriately.⁸⁰ It is right, therefore, to conclude that there are biblical baselines that cannot be ignored by any view of Baptism, but that many developed views claim more than the biblical statements allow.⁸¹

2.4 Different Views of Tradition and Church History

Given the absence of a clear, consistent baptismal teaching in the NT, no definitive biblical theology of Baptism can be developed by the sole use of NT passages. The conclusions drawn from recent quasi-identical exegetical results by using historical-exegetical or exegetical-theological approaches, therefore, all reflect the preunderstanding of their respective denomination,⁸² and Hubert accordingly concluded ‘Baptism is rather a topic of tradition than of biblical theology.’⁸³ Different views of Baptism, therefore, are closely related to different views of tradition and church history.

When we define different views of tradition and church history, however, we must be aware that these are not sharp and exclusive categories, and might rather reproduce ideal-typical preconceptions that must not hinder the process of examining the differences and acknowledging the similarities.⁸⁴ The value of defining different views of tradition and church history, therefore, is not to judge, but to understand the main distinguishing factors, the origins, and rough directions to encourage self-understanding and mutual understanding. We also need to consider that the tradition problem is often discussed in ecumenical dialogues, which already resulted in common understandings, definitions, and convergences that must not be ignored.

2.4.1 Different Views of Tradition

The word ‘tradition,’ originating from the Latin word *tradere*, taken in its basic meaning of ‘transmission, or delivery,’ includes the whole divine communication.⁸⁵ In this

⁷⁹ E.g. Oscar Cullmann, *Die Tauflehre des Neuen Testaments: Erwachsen- u. Kindertaufe*, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1958).

⁸⁰ E.g. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1948), 133–43; 405–6.

⁸¹ Bund evangelischer Gemeinschaften, ‘Taufe’, 14.

⁸² Cf. Geldbach, *Taufe*, 16; Hubert, *Streit*, 61; Best, *Baptism*, 200.

⁸³ Hubert, *Streit*, 199.

⁸⁴ Cf. Hubert Kirchner, *Wort Gottes, Schrift und Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 12; ACK, ‘“Tradition” im ökumenischen Gespräch - Von konfessionellen Klischees und ihrer Durchbrechung. Dokumentation eines Studentages der ACK in Deutschland’, 2012, 23.

⁸⁵ Yves Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 13.

universal sense, Tradition⁸⁶ refers to the whole Gospel, the deposit of faith received by the apostles from Christ and handed down to the following generations of the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This single divine Tradition is accessible to following generations through its figurative realisations in testimonies of Tradition,⁸⁷ which are ‘the holy Scriptures and, besides these, not only doctrines but things: the sacraments, ecclesiastical institutions, the powers of the ministry, customs and liturgical rites—in fact, all the Christian realities themselves.’⁸⁸

Not every testimony of Tradition, however, bears the same value and authority.⁸⁹ Especially the canon of Scripture holds a special place among them, as the apostolic writings of the NT are the written confirmation of the originally orally transmitted deposit of faith.⁹⁰ As Tradition is ‘embodied in the apostolic writings, it became natural to use those writings as authority for determining where the true Tradition was to be found.’⁹¹ This gives Scripture authority over the other testimonies of Tradition and its ‘value is absolute and unquestionable, at least from a negative point of view, in that whatever contradicts it definitely and without question could not belong to the revealed deposit.’⁹² This special place and authority of Scripture is normally affirmed by the different denominations today⁹³ and even if the authority of Scripture is questioned by modern critical theology, Scripture still holds its special place relative to the other testimonies of Tradition.⁹⁴

Due to the special nature and authority of Scripture, Scripture is often separated from Tradition and regarded as an independent source of revelation. If used in this way, the term tradition refers to all other testimonies of Tradition except the canon of Scripture.⁹⁵ If Scripture and tradition are separated, however, according to Lossky it is more exact to use the plural and speak of ‘traditions’ as projections of Tradition into testimonies that

⁸⁶ We will use Tradition with a capital T for the whole divine revelation as described in P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, eds., ‘Scripture, Tradition and Traditions’, in *Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order* (London, 1964), paras 39, 42. Cf. also Daniel H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 36.

⁸⁷ Barbara Schoppelreich, *Zeichen und Zeugnis: zum sakramentalen Verständnis kirchlicher Tradition* (Münster: LIT, 2001), 33.

⁸⁸ Congar, *Tradition*, 12, 151. For a short description of significant testimonies of tradition see Steven D. Cone, *Theology from the Great Tradition* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 106–10.

⁸⁹ Cf. Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood: St Vladimirs Seminary Press, 1974), 143; Congar, *Tradition*, 124.

⁹⁰ Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie R. Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 1:16.

⁹¹ P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, ‘Traditions’, para. 49; cf. Congar, *Tradition*, 121.

⁹² Congar, *Tradition*, 155.

⁹³ Cf. ACK, ‘Tradition’, 27.

⁹⁴ Anthony N. S. Lane, ‘Scripture, Tradition and Church: An Historical Survey’, *Vox Evangelica*, no. 9 (1975): 49.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 37; Congar, *Tradition*, 22; P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, ‘Traditions’, paras 50–61.

are added to Scripture, ‘accompanying or following it.’⁹⁶ In our investigation the term tradition, therefore, refers to the multitude of traditions that reflect the universal divine Tradition, excluding Scripture.

Historical studies have shown that there is development in tradition,⁹⁷ and also that there is universal tradition, found in the majority of Christianity, and particular or local tradition, only found at special times or places.⁹⁸ The question, therefore, is which contents of tradition are really reflecting the original Tradition, thus are apostolic tradition, and which are ‘brought into being by the Church during her history,’ thus are ecclesiastical tradition.⁹⁹ But even where it is possible to clearly distinguish apostolic and ecclesiastical tradition, the question remains whether ecclesiastical tradition is compatible and equivalent to the one divine Tradition or whether it is irrelevant or wrong human tradition.¹⁰⁰ The distinction of what is apostolic, ecclesiastical, or human tradition is performed differently in various denominations, with their distinct denominational tradition, whereas every denominational tradition claims that it is a, if not the only, valid expression of Tradition.¹⁰¹

The disagreement about different understandings of tradition is often explained as Scripture against tradition. This, however, is not correct as the relative authority of Scripture is generally accepted. According to Obermann, the real difference in the understanding of tradition is found in different ‘concepts of tradition’¹⁰² that define the relationship between tradition, Scripture, and the teaching of the church differently.¹⁰³ The different views of tradition can be described as Coincidence, Supplementary, Unfolding, Ancillary, and Irrelevancy views, whereas their main differences surface in the areas of content and fallibility, which leads to different degrees and locations of sufficiency and authority.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁶ Lossky, *Image*, 143.

⁹⁷ Lane, ‘Scripture’, 50.

⁹⁸ Cf. Congar, *Tradition*, 46.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 44; cf. also P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, ‘Traditions’, para. 49.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, ‘Traditions’, paras 47–48; Congar, *Tradition*, 68.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Congar, *Tradition*, 167; P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, ‘Traditions’, paras 44, 53.

¹⁰² Heiko A. Oberman, ‘Quo Vadis? Tradition From Irenaeus To Humani Generis’, *SJT* 16, no. 03 (1963): 226; cf. Keith A. Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2001), 255.

¹⁰³ The teaching of the church refers to both, the teaching authority of the church (magisterium), and to the content of the actual teaching. The teaching of the church includes the ordinary and universal teaching of the leadership of local churches as well as the extraordinary teaching of the councils (or the pope). Cf. Congar, *Tradition*, 130; Lane, ‘Scripture’, 37.

¹⁰⁴ The different views, except the Irrelevancy view, are developed in Lane, ‘Scripture’. Lane’s four categories are also affirmed and used in Bauckham, ‘Tradition’, 118–26. Oberman also developed a system of categorising different understandings of tradition labelling them as Tradition I–III. Oberman, ‘Vadis’, 225–55 Oberman’s categories are also used and amended by a category Tradition 0 in Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Malden: Blackwell, 2001), 144–45. Cf. also Mathison, *Shape*, 32–33, 38–39, 126–27, 134. McGrath also labels these categories as ‘Single-Source Theory of Tradition,’ ‘Dual-Source Theory of Tradition,’ and ‘Rejection of Tradition as Legitimate Theological

Coincidence View

The Coincidence view is found from the Early Church till the Medieval Ages. In this view Scripture is seen as materially sufficient, whereas the contents of tradition and the teaching of the church are in coincidence with Scripture. Rising controversies in the church, such as the threat of Gnosticism, showed that even though the content of Scripture is materially sufficient, Scripture ‘must be interpreted within the context of the historical continuity of the Christian church.’¹⁰⁵ Scripture, therefore, is regarded as formally insufficient and ‘tradition is needed to get the right understanding and interpretation of Scripture.’¹⁰⁶ As tradition and the teaching of the church basically represent the same content as Scripture, interpreting and proclaiming it, they are also regarded as infallible and thus have the same normative authority.¹⁰⁷

Supplementary View

The Supplementary view gradually developed in Medieval times and the council of Trent can be understood as supporting this view.¹⁰⁸ As many doctrines of the church have been built upon allegorical interpretations of Scripture, especially the new focus on the literal sense due to the rise of renaissance humanism forced the church to regard tradition as an additional source of doctrine contributing material not found in Scripture, thus declaring Scripture as materially insufficient.¹⁰⁹ In this view, however, tradition is not seen as secret mystical knowledge, as the Gnostics claimed, but as providing apostolic material not contained in Scripture but publicly present and preserved in the church since the time of the apostles.¹¹⁰ Similar to the Coincidence view, tradition and the teaching of the church are regarded as infallible and thus have normative authority.

Resource’ in Gerald R. McDermott and Alister E. McGrath, eds., ‘Faith and Tradition’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 84–88. These categories used by Oberman, McGrath, and Mathison, however, fall short on an important point: They focus only on the content of tradition and ignore the role of the teaching of the church, as Lane already pointed out. Lane, ‘Scripture’, 43. The categories of Lane, therefore, are more appropriate, as they express the relationship of tradition to Scripture and the teaching of the church and also suit to describe the location and degree of authority. We must, however, add a fifth category labelled Irrelevancy view to cover the whole spectrum of views.

¹⁰⁵ McGrath, *Reformation*, 135–36; cf. Lane, ‘Scripture’, 40.

¹⁰⁶ Mathison, *Shape*, 31.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Lane, ‘Scripture’, 39.

¹⁰⁸ DH 1501; cf. Gerhard Ludwig Müller, *Katholische Dogmatik: Für Studium und Praxis der Theologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 70–71.

¹⁰⁹ Mathison, *Shape*, 68.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 73–74; cf. Lane, ‘Scripture’, 39, 41–42.

Unfolding View

Beginning in the sixteenth century, also due to the emerging historical criticism questioning Scripture as well as tradition, Catholic theology became more and more aware of doctrinal content that neither is found in Scripture nor in tradition. To fill the gap between Scripture and the contemporary teaching of the church, tradition now was regarded as developing and not anymore as static and unchanging preservation of apostolic teaching.¹¹¹ This has been expressed, for example, in Newman's theory of doctrinal development¹¹² that understands tradition as developing under the guidance of an 'infallible development authority' of the teaching of the church.¹¹³ A major factor contributing to the explicit acceptance of the Unfolding view, therefore, was the doctrine of papal infallibility, declared at Vatican I.¹¹⁴ The practical acceptance of the Unfolding view is also seen in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' Mariological dogmas that are neither found in Scripture nor in early tradition. In the Unfolding view the infallible teaching of the church can define doctrine, which then must have been always part of the faith, even if not explicitly found in Scripture or tradition.¹¹⁵ The teaching of the church, which was seen before as 'preserving and interpreting norm,' therefore, seems to become an additional source of doctrine, thus practically declaring Scripture and tradition both as materially insufficient.¹¹⁶

This extreme is also affirmed by Catholic theologians who admit that the teaching office as 'subjective bearer of the tradition process [...] could virtually be identified with tradition in the extreme case.'¹¹⁷ This extreme characteristic is alleviated in recent Catholic theology by emphasising the normative authority and material sufficiency of Scripture. Vatican II, for example, maintained the binding interpretation of the teaching of the church and the notion of development in tradition, but the teaching of the church was explicitly placed under the normative authority of Scripture.¹¹⁸ The general acceptance of the material sufficiency of Scripture in recent Catholic theology¹¹⁹ shows that the Supplementary view is overcome and ensures that everything that the teaching of the church

¹¹¹ Cf. Bauckham, 'Tradition', 124–25.

¹¹² John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: J. Toovey, 1846).

¹¹³ Bauckham, 'Tradition', 124.

¹¹⁴ Mathison, *Shape*, 216; cf. DH 3074.

¹¹⁵ J. P. Mackey, 'Scripture, Tradition and the Church', *ITQ* 30, no. 1 (3 January 1963): 52; cf. also Oberman, 'Vadis', 254.

¹¹⁶ Lane, 'Scripture', 46; cf. Oberman, 'Vadis', 253.

¹¹⁷ VZ.E 44; cf. Mackey, 'Tradition', 52.

¹¹⁸ DV 8, 10.

¹¹⁹ Cf. VZ.E 35; Robert A. Sungenis, *Not by Scripture Alone: A Catholic Critique of the Protestant Doctrine of Sola Scriptura* (Santa Barbara: Queenship, 1998), 221.

declares at least must have an implicit hint in Scripture, which, however, makes it all the more necessary to maintain the formal insufficiency of Scripture.¹²⁰ Additionally, one has to note that this progressive understanding of Scripture ‘only goes one way. The amount of truth known, and its clarity, keeps getting larger and larger, and never goes astray or shrinks,’ which means that tradition once revealed and received by the teaching of the church never can be criticised.¹²¹

Ancillary View

At the dawn of the Reformation it became increasingly obvious that tradition and the teaching of the church at some instances not only went beyond Scripture but even contradicted it.¹²² The Supplementary and Unfolding views solve this problem through a shift in authority and sufficiency of content away from Scripture towards tradition and the teaching of the church. The Reformers went in the opposite direction and sought to correct the shortcomings by reemphasising the sufficiency and authority of Scripture, later expressed as the *sola scriptura* principle.¹²³ In the resulting Ancillary view the sufficiency of Scripture is affirmed, at least in so far that it contains everything that is necessary for salvation.¹²⁴ The Reformers, however, were never against tradition but their use of the term *traditiones humanae* shows that they believed that there are human thoughts in tradition, and that true (scriptural) tradition has to be distinguished from false tradition.¹²⁵ The rule and norm for this distinction is Scripture, as the ‘only inherently infallible authority.’¹²⁶ Although tradition and the teaching of the church are seen as fallible, their content is understood as contributing to the interpretation of Scripture and to the order of the church, as long as they are not contradicting the Gospel.¹²⁷ Tradition and the teaching of the church, including the Protestant confession writings or the creeds of the Early Church, are still regarded as authority, however, their authority is not found in themselves but derived from and subordinate to the authority of Scripture.¹²⁸

¹²⁰ Bauckham, ‘Tradition’, 125.

¹²¹ Cone, *Theology*, 111.

¹²² Lane, ‘Scripture’, 42.

¹²³ Cf. VZ 1:209; P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, ‘Traditions’, para. 43.

¹²⁴ Cf. Anthony N. S. Lane, ‘Sola Scriptura? Making Sense of a Post-Reformation Slogan’, in *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture*, ed. P. E. Satterthwaite and David F. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 313.

¹²⁵ VZ 1:230; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 9, 43–45.

¹²⁶ Mathison, *Shape*, 318; cf. BSELK 1218.

¹²⁷ Lane, ‘Scripture’, 43; VZ 1:212.

¹²⁸ McGrath, *Reformation*, 142. Expressed in Lutheran theology as *norma normans* (Scripture) and *norma normata* (tradition). Cf. Mathison, *Shape*, 137; VZ 1:199. In contrast, traditional Catholic views

*Irrelevancy View*¹²⁹

In contrast to the Ancillary view, in the Irrelevancy view Scripture is regarded as sole source and authority that must be interpreted by every individual believer, thus rendering tradition and the teaching of the church at best as irrelevant if not even unnecessary and dangerous.¹³⁰ The Irrelevancy view arose in the radical branches of the Reformation and later the Enlightenment with its focus on individualism and reason provided the philosophical framework.¹³¹ Although Scripture is claimed as sole authority, in reality the complete disregard of tradition and the teaching of the church results in a shift of authority to individual reason in interpreting Scripture, thus possibly leading to subjectivism and relativism.¹³² The Irrelevancy view is also problematic as it is just impossible to ‘leapfrog’ nearly two millennia of Christian history, as all attempts to understand Scripture are influenced by Christian tradition implicitly found in definitions or meanings, and it also bears the risk of reinventing heresies that have already been defeated.¹³³ Even though some churches and theologians explicitly express an Irrelevancy view,¹³⁴ more often this view ‘is not a formal position but a pejorative designation of a practical one,’ resulting from ignorance and lack of interest in tradition and the teaching of the church, often found in Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.¹³⁵

2.4.2 *Different Views of Church History*

Different views of tradition are closely related to and influenced by different views of church history. History as the study of the past ‘is the endeavour to provide accountability

affirm that ‘tradition represents a value in its own right, apart from Scripture, a value that becomes a norm.’ Congar, *Tradition*, 168.

¹²⁹ This view is sometimes also labelled as *solo scriptura* or *nuda scriptura*. These labels, however, emphasise the exclusive role of Scripture, which might not only refer to its relationship to tradition but also to other sources of knowledge. To name this view Irrelevancy, therefore, seems to be a better fit as it explicitly, as the other labels, describes the relationship of tradition to Scripture. The label Tradition 0 is an improvement in this regard; however, the term irrelevancy still is better as it also suits to express the often-unintentional neglect of tradition. Cf. C. Michael Patton, ‘In Defense of Sola Scriptura’ (Reclaiming the Mind Ministries, 2009), 6, www.reclaimingthemind.org/content/Parchmentandpen/In-Defense-of-Sola-Scriptura.pdf; Lane, ‘Scriptura’, 327; McGrath, *Reformation*, 144; Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman, 1988), 81. The in a later contribution by Lane introduced additional label ‘Solitary View’ has the same limitation of not directly describing the role of tradition in relation to Scripture. Cf. Anthony N. S. Lane, ‘Tradition’, in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer et al. (London: SPCK, 2005), 811.

¹³⁰ Cf. Alister E. McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Regent College Publishing, 1997), 131.

¹³¹ Mathison, *Shape*, 239.

¹³² Cf. Ibid., 239–40; Alister E. McGrath, *Der Weg der christlichen Theologie: Eine Einführung*, 3rd ed. (Gießen: Brunnen, 2013), 231.

¹³³ Robert McAfee Brown, *The Spirit of Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 215; Lane, ‘Scriptura’, 310–11.

¹³⁴ Especially found in eighteenth-century Evangelicalism in America, see Mathison, *Shape*, 144.

¹³⁵ Patton, ‘Defense’, 6.

to the present in light of the past – to search out people, events, movements, artefacts and so on that have particular significance for the present and the future.¹³⁶ As the different testimonies of Tradition are artefacts of history, naturally the more positive and uncritical the history of the church is seen the more important is tradition and vice versa.¹³⁷ Furthermore the different views of church history also influence the evaluation of which artefacts of history are accepted as testimonies of Tradition, and which artefacts are regarded as heretical and wrong.

Since the Enlightenment there is a generally objective approach to the study of history.¹³⁸ Due to the ‘nature of historic evidence,’ however, which has to be sorted, evaluated, and interpreted in order to reconstruct history, and the necessity of present interpretation to derive the meaning and value of history, subjectivity cannot be avoided completely.¹³⁹ As this is true for profane history, regarding church history the various denominations with their different ecclesiologies represent an additional source of subjectivity and preunderstanding. Especially the definition of what church is and where it can be found affects the selection of materials and the resulting meaning of church history.¹⁴⁰ Here a hermeneutical circle becomes visible in which the present understanding of church is influenced by the past, which then also influences the interpretation and understanding of the past.¹⁴¹ During the Reformation three views of church history became manifest that have been described by Pelikan as Authoritarian Reverence, Critical Reverence, and Supercilious Contempt.¹⁴² The awareness of these views can contribute to achieve a higher degree of objectivity in understanding the past, as they show how each denomination’s ecclesiology influences the understanding of history.¹⁴³ Pelikan’s label Supercilious Contempt, however, is rather pejorative and subjective, as it does not account for the critical interaction that also takes place in theological streams that come to negative conclusions

¹³⁶ Robert F. Rea, *Why Church History Matters: An Invitation to Love and Learn from Our Past* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 24.

¹³⁷ Cf. James E. Bradley, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 61.

¹³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 13, 54.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 34; Cf. John Fea, *Why Study History?: Reflecting on the Importance of the Past* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 3.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, ‘Church and Church History in the Confessions’, *Concordia Theological Monthly* XXII, no. 5 (May 1951): 305; Manfred Heim, *Einführung in die Kirchengeschichte* (München: C.H.Beck, 2008), 9.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Bradley, *History*, 61.

¹⁴² Jaroslav Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels: Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther’s Reformation* (London: SCM Press, 1964), 27–41; cf. Mathison, *Shape*, 101; Bradley, *History*, 11–13.

¹⁴³ Cf. P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, ‘Traditions’, para. 59; Bradley, *History*, 13, 54.

about the value of church history, and we choose, therefore, to speak about Critical Disregard.

Authoritarian Reverence

In Catholic theology church is traditionally understood as divine validated ‘sociological entity,’ and thus the ‘ecclesiastical institution’ of the Catholic Church is often absolutely identified with *the church*. Absolutising the present church, however, also requires an absolute view of the history of this institution, which is achieved by ‘ascribing to it an organizational continuity, ceremonial uniformity, and theological infallibility.’¹⁴⁴ The emphasis in the study of church history, therefore, is on the historical continuity of the Catholic Church, originating from the apostles and succeeding until the present.¹⁴⁵ The selection of materials, naturally, has its focus on artefacts of history describing the development of the Catholic Church and how it defended and maintained the truth over the ages.¹⁴⁶ The meaning of church history, therefore, is absolutely positive as it shows the authority and validity of the present day institution. However, as the claim of the absolute and infallible character hardly can be supported by the facts of history,¹⁴⁷ contemporary Catholic theology increasingly acknowledges the shortcomings of church history.¹⁴⁸

Critical Reverence

In Protestant theology, evolved during the Reformation, the shortcomings of the institutional church and its continuous need of reform are considered (*ecclesia semper reformanda*).¹⁴⁹ Even though it is acknowledged that God works in and through the institutional church, it is not equalled with *the church*.¹⁵⁰ The true church is understood as non-visible entity found within the institutional church where the right doctrine and faithfulness to Scripture are maintained.¹⁵¹ The focus in church history, therefore, is not only on historical continuity but also on doctrinal continuity.¹⁵² This also surfaces in the selection of materials that focus both on the decay of the institutional church and the presence of a faithful remnant in the church.¹⁵³ The time of the Church Fathers is then often seen as

¹⁴⁴ Pelikan, *Rebels*, 32.

¹⁴⁵ Bradley, *History*, 11; cf. Pelikan, *Rebels*, 30.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Linda Woodhead, *An Introduction to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10–11.

¹⁴⁷ Pelikan, *Rebels*, 31–32.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. LG 8. Ludwig Bertsch et al., eds., *Gemeinsame Synode der Bischöfe in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Beschlüsse der Vollversammlung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 102.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Heim, *Kirchengeschichte*, 10.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Pelikan, *Rebels*, 35.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Erwin Ruck, *Kirchenrecht* (Berlin: Springer, 2013), 55; VZ 2:124.

¹⁵² McGrath, *Reformation*, 143; VZ 1:220.

¹⁵³ VZ 1:204; Bradley, *History*, 12.

‘golden age,’ and although not regarded as infallible, they still are honoured as ‘reliable interpreters of scripture.’ As early as after Gregory the Great, however, a decay is observed that comes to a climax during the Late Middle Ages, also referred to as ‘period of corruption.’¹⁵⁴ The meaning of church history, therefore, is positive as it shows how the (invisible) church and the truth never ceased completely, but is also critical, as the errors of the church and its constant need of correction are considered.

Critical Disregard

In the radical branch of the Reformation an understanding of church as a mere abstract, timeless reality like a ‘Platonic republic’ arose.¹⁵⁵ Church is understood as where the Holy Spirit immediately and individually reveals himself, which does not require any connection to the historic church.¹⁵⁶ This allows regarding the entire history of the church in critical disregard, as sequence of apostasies, resulting in many times having no church at all.¹⁵⁷ For some, the existence of the true church ceased with the Constantine union of church and state.¹⁵⁸ Others already regard the time of the Church Fathers as apostasy, which leads to the understanding that there was practically no church since the apostles.¹⁵⁹ The selection of materials in the study of church history, therefore, focuses primarily on the deviations of the institutionalised church from the true faith and how there were some historically unconnected faithful but persecuted movements or persons. The meaning of church history, therefore, is primarily negative as it displays the past perversion of the truth and how far previous generations went astray.¹⁶⁰ Although churches that subscribe to such a negative view of church history also do not ascribe a theological binding meaning to their own history, still they factually are in continuity to their historical roots, which are regarded as rediscovery of the true church.¹⁶¹

2.4.3 Recent Ecumenical Developments

After defining different views of tradition and church history, we will now take a brief look at some fundamental ecumenical developments and their contributing factors. In the discussion about tradition(s) the relationship of Scripture and tradition has been the main

¹⁵⁴ McGrath, *Reformation*, 145; cf. VZ 1:208.

¹⁵⁵ Pelikan, ‘Church’, 311.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. McGrath, *Genesis*, 132.

¹⁵⁷ Pelikan, *Rebels*, 37.

¹⁵⁸ McGrath, *Reformation*, 178.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Bradley, *History*, 12; John Howard Yoder, *Täuferium und Reformation im Gespräch: Dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung der frühen Gespräche zwischen Schweizerischen Täufern und Reformatoren* (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1968), 65–70.

¹⁶⁰ Pelikan, *Rebels*, 37.

¹⁶¹ Cf. ACK, ‘Tradition’, 23.

focus of the ecumenical efforts in the last decades and the remaining differences often hinder ample convergences in other areas.¹⁶² In 1960 Lengsfeld observed that between the Catholic and the Protestant sides still are no common conceptions about many questions, not even a common terminology, and that on both sides still the struggle between the sharp contrast between Scripture and tradition exists.¹⁶³

These two fields of problems have been overcome since: the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order in Montreal in 1963 proposed common understandings, definitions, and a distinguishing terminology, which have been proven to be very useful.¹⁶⁴ The Malta Report of the Joint Lutheran - Roman Catholic Study Commission in 1972 'helped to resolve the contrast between scripture and tradition,' as both sides agreed on and emphasised the common tradition that preceded Scripture.¹⁶⁵ These common understandings have been acknowledged widely and today all major denominations agree that Scripture is the normative foundation for tradition and also that Scripture is the result of a tradition process and, therefore, they cannot be fundamentally contrasted.¹⁶⁶

Although the sharp contrast between Scripture and tradition has been overcome, due to shifts in Catholic theology after Vatican II towards the emphasis of material sufficiency and normative authority of Scripture, and due to the Protestant acknowledgement of the value of tradition, conflict still remains between the positions of 'the binding 'magisterial' interpretation of Scripture' and 'the 'self-interpretation' of Scripture.'¹⁶⁷ The German Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians, for example, has discussed the problem of tradition in its project *Binding Testimony*, and declared in the concluding report that regarding the role of tradition and Scripture 'in spite of different formulations, there is agreement between the churches in the matter itself.'¹⁶⁸ The question of the binding nature of the teaching of the church, however, is still not resolved and is expressed as a subject that needs further discussion.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶² Ibid., 26–27. For a detailed overview over the ecumenical dialogues concerning Scripture and tradition up to 1998 see Kirchner, *Tradition*, 56–147.

¹⁶³ Peter Lengsfeld, *Überlieferung - Tradition und Schrift in der Evangelischen und Katholischen Theologie der Gegenwart* (Paderborn: Bonifacius, 1960), 17, 150.

¹⁶⁴ In the proposed terminology Tradition with a capital 'T' refers to the original revelation, which is testified in Scripture, tradition with a small 't' refers to the process of transmitting the Christian faith, and traditions in the plural refers to 'expressions and manifestations in diverse historical forms' of the one Tradition. P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, 'Traditions', secs 45–47; cf. ACK, 'Tradition', 21.

¹⁶⁵ VZ.E 139–40; DwÜ 253.

¹⁶⁶ ACK, 'Tradition', 27.

¹⁶⁷ VZ.E 56; cf. Bauckham, 'Tradition', 125–26; Lane, 'Scriptura', 325–26.

¹⁶⁸ VZ.E 149–150.

¹⁶⁹ VZ.E 169.

The already achieved agreements, however, have reception problems, even in their own denominations, and are often bilateral and, therefore, limited in scope. Although the differences are not that sharp anymore, they persist, and ecumenical efforts often do not even try to develop a common understanding of the relationship of Scripture and tradition, but are content with declaring common foundations, naming problems, and defining common tasks.¹⁷⁰

2.5 Tradition, Church History and Different Views of Baptism

We already saw that the complex nature of the NT baptismal statements, and the resulting difficulty to define a biblical theology of Baptism, allows different understandings of tradition and church history to influence baptismal views. This becomes especially manifest for elements that are not clearly defined in Scripture and thus belong to tradition, such as infant Baptism or the different modes of Baptism. A decision, therefore, has to be made whether such elements are regarded as apostolic tradition, thus reflecting the same original Tradition as Scripture, or whether they are ecclesiastical tradition. For ecclesiastical tradition, however, the question remains whether it is a later invention and, therefore only human tradition, or whether it is ‘a historical development of something already began by the apostles, but which is now impossible to reconstitute in its apostolic state,’ which is according to Congar especially the case for the sacraments.¹⁷¹

The evaluation regarding which elements of baptismal tradition are apostolic and which are ecclesiastical, however, is additionally complicated through the various different local baptismal traditions found in the first four centuries of the Christian church¹⁷² and the silence of the early creeds concerning the sacraments.¹⁷³ Emperor Constantine’s conversion and his political interest in a united church led to a process of universally defining Christian thought and doctrine over the next two centuries,¹⁷⁴ which finally also resulted in a universal baptismal tradition that was shared by the majority of Christianity for the following millennium.¹⁷⁵ As the emergence of the universal baptismal tradition is closely linked with this turning point of church history, whose evaluation ranges from

¹⁷⁰ Cf. ACK, ‘Tradition’, 12, 20, 92.

¹⁷¹ Congar, *Tradition*, 44–45; cf. also Aland, *Säuglingstaufe*, 82–85.

¹⁷² Cf. Lane, ‘Babies’, 129–30; Stander and Louw, *Baptism*, 181–82.

¹⁷³ Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 171.

¹⁷⁴ Chad Meister and James Stump, *Christian Thought: A Historical Introduction* (Routledge: Taylor & Francis, 2010), 136–37.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 306.

triumph to great betrayal,¹⁷⁶ different views of church history have a profound influence on the evaluation of baptismal tradition. If an understanding tends towards Authoritarian Reverence, the baptismal tradition of the institutionalised church is regarded as handed down apostolic or at least ecclesiastical tradition that reflects apostolic tradition. With an understanding of Critical Reverence, the baptismal tradition of the Early Church, especially the Church Fathers, is assumed to be close to the original Tradition but as the rise of the institutionalised church was driven by political and worldly interests the need to critically distinguish between perverted human tradition and apostolic tradition becomes manifest. The churches of the Reformation, therefore, maintained elements of baptismal tradition like infant Baptism, while rejecting other elements like the *ex opere operato* understanding.¹⁷⁷ If church history is seen in Critical Disregard, finally, the baptismal tradition of the postapostolic church is mainly seen as evidence for the church's aberration, and thus must be ignored. The different views of church history, therefore, directly influence the results of historical-exegetical approaches, by affecting the criteria for the selection of which baptismal tradition must, can, or cannot be used to clarify the scriptural baptismal statements.

The more negative church history is seen the more important become theological-exegetical approaches to define the scriptural understanding of Baptism. Theological-exegetical approaches are especially influenced by different views of tradition as the theological frameworks used for interpretation are shaped to different degrees through thoughts of tradition and contemporary philosophy, forming a particular denominational tradition.¹⁷⁸ If views of tradition are held that understand tradition or the teaching of the church as infallible authority, the theological framework is controlled and shaped by these. If a view of Irrelevancy is underlying, the theological framework can be completely detached from early tradition and thus also might be heavily influenced by contemporary philosophies, like humanism, individualism, or subjectivism,¹⁷⁹ which can lead to the complete rejection of traditional baptismal understanding and practice. If an Ancillary view is held, the theological frameworks can depend on tradition to interpret Scripture,¹⁸⁰ which might lead to the acceptance of certain elements of baptismal tradition, even if they

¹⁷⁶ Paul R. Spickard and Kevin M. Cragg, *A Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 55.

¹⁷⁷ Hubert, *Streit*, 170–73.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 190.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. McGrath, *Reformation*, 144.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. McGrath, *Weg*, 123.

are not clearly stated in Scripture, as long as they do not contradict Scripture and fit into the theological framework.¹⁸¹

Different views of tradition and church history especially surface in the discussion about infant Baptism. As Infant Baptism is not explicitly mentioned in the NT, but locally testified by Early Church sources, and made universal baptismal practice after the rise of the institutionalised church, it is historically interpreted very differently. Often seen as price of survival of the weak and unguided Early Church in a pagan environment¹⁸² or political instrument of the institutional religion to maintain its power,¹⁸³ a critical or negative understanding of history leads either to the devaluation of infant Baptism or its complete abandonment. Additionally, if a theological framework, detached from thoughts of tradition and shaped by modern philosophies is present, believer's Baptism with its importance of personal confession fits much better to a humanistic high view of human ability, responsibility and individual freedom. This double pressure from a negative view of church history combined with an understanding of irrelevancy of tradition puts especially infant Baptism into the centre of tension.

Finally, the influence of different views of tradition and church history on baptismal views can be seen explicitly and implicitly. It is seen explicitly in where what testimonies of tradition are used in a baptismal view and how they are used and interpreted.¹⁸⁴ Views of tradition that affirm the material sufficiency of Scripture normally result in views of Baptism that are primarily built around Scripture and use tradition and church history to different degrees for interpretation and clarification.¹⁸⁵ If the Supplementary view is held, then tradition is used as additional independent source to contribute material to the baptismal view that is not found in Scripture at all and used with the same authority as Scripture. If a view is held that emphasises the infallibility of the teaching of the church, like the early Unfolding view, the teaching of the church is in the centre and Scripture and tradition are both used to support, prove, and explain the claims of the baptismal teaching of the church, which, however, does not necessarily mean that Scripture and tradition lose

¹⁸¹ VZ 1:208. Reymond, for example, accepts infant Baptism on the basis of Reformed covenantal thinking, while critically questioning the Early Father's argument based on sacerdotalism. Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 943–44.

¹⁸² Cf. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 354–59.

¹⁸³ Cf. Johannes Warns, *Die Taufe: Gedanken über die christliche Taufe, ihre Geschichte und ihre Bedeutung für die Gegenwart*, 3rd ed. (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1992), 33–57.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. KA 2:419.

¹⁸⁵ E.g. the Lutheran Pieper's baptismal view reflects a classic Ancillary view as it is centred around Scripture, uses the Church Fathers as support, but skips everything from Augustine to the Reformation. Franz Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik* (St. Louis: Concordia publishing house, 1946), 618–39. Erickson's baptismal view, similarly, has Scripture at the core, but uses tradition only for negative reference and thus reflects an Irrelevancy view. Erickson, *Theology*, 1098–1114.

their authority completely.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, the influence of different views of tradition and church history on baptismal views can also be seen implicitly in theological terms used, such as sacrament and ordinance, or church and congregation; in the used structure and methods; and in the theological frameworks, reflecting a denominational tradition either depending on or independent from tradition. We can conclude, therefore, that Hubert's assertion that 'Baptism is more a topic of tradition than of biblical theology' is justified.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ E.g. the baptismal view of the Catholic Ott is built around dogmatic expressions of the magisterium and uses Scripture and tradition as justification for them. Ludwig Ott, *Grundriss der Katholischen Dogmatik*, 5th ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1961), 419–32.

¹⁸⁷ Hubert, *Streit*, 199.

‘The main point in all the controversies [around Baptism] is the different interpretation of the scriptural sources. ... In general the interpretation is guided on each side by prejudices which have their roots in the different confessional theologies.’¹⁸⁸

– Dagmar Heller –

Chapter 3

Investigation of the Use of Tradition and Church History in recent German Baptismal Theology

The goal of this research is to examine the use of tradition and church history in recent German baptismal theology. The discussion about Baptism in Germany in the second half of the 20th century has an academic, a pastoral-practical, and an ecumenical dimension (cf. Appendix 1.3-4). As this investigation is located in the fields of Christian doctrine and ecumenical theology, we will focus on the academic and ecumenical dimensions of the Baptism debate, but where possible we will also consider the pastoral-practical aspects. For the investigation of the use of tradition and church history, we will first select denominations that represent the main views of Baptism found in German theology, while covering a spectrum of views of tradition and church history (cf. 2.4). The selected denominations must engage in theological education and research on an adequate academic level and must also be actively involved in ecumenical dialogue. Furthermore, to examine the definite use of tradition and church history, we will choose theologians of the selected denominations, who present the baptismal views of their denomination at an academic level, whereas it is desirable that they also have engaged in ecumenical exchange and pastoral work.

The enduring main positions in the discussion about Baptism in Germany are the traditional sacramental views found in the Catholic or Orthodox churches, the Lutheran and

¹⁸⁸ Dagmar Heller, *Baptized into Christ: A Guide to the Ecumenical Discussion on Baptism* (Geneva: World Council Of Churches, 2012), 195.

Reformed views of the Protestant state churches, and the believer's Baptism view found in many free churches (cf. Appendix 1.1-2).¹⁸⁹ Selecting appropriate denominations for a traditional sacramental view is rather simple, as the bodies of the Catholic and Orthodox churches are monolithic in regard to their theology, equally distributed in Germany, and centrally represented by the Catholic or Orthodox German Bishops' Conference. For the Protestant state churches, the selection is complicated by their division by state,¹⁹⁰ whereas some Protestant state churches regarding their theology are Lutheran, some are Reformed, and some are United. For the free churches, the selection is even more difficult because as voluntary churches they are much more diverse, represented by a multitude of different groups and organisations, and even inside an organisation the local congregations often have a much higher degree of autonomy, also regarding theological questions. Because of this complexity that is already found in Germany and because of the unique connection of German political history to the discussion of Baptism (cf. Appendix 1), the scope of this investigation will be limited to the area of the reunified Federal Republic of Germany. We will not consider, therefore, other German speaking theology, as found for example in Austria or Switzerland.

Besides the Catholic Church a traditional sacramental view of Baptism can also be found in the Orthodox churches. Even though the various Orthodox churches today have a significant number of members in Germany (~2 million members)¹⁹¹ and established their own theological faculty in 1995,¹⁹² they have not played a significant role in German history and have only lately grown because of refugees, immigrants or ethnic German repatriates from Eastern Europe.¹⁹³ We will, therefore, chose the Catholic Church (~23.3 million members)¹⁹⁴ to represent the traditional sacramental baptismal view. The Catholic Church also has a high view of tradition, as found in the Supplementary or Unfolding

¹⁸⁹ Some free churches also hold baptismal views close to the Protestant state churches, such as Methodists, the SELK, or churches that have their roots in the inner-church Pietist movement.

¹⁹⁰ Only the *Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche* is scattered over Germany. Cf. <http://www.reformiert.de>.

¹⁹¹ REMID, 'Mitgliederzahlen: Orthodoxe, Orientalische und Unierte Kirchen 2018', accessed 3 September 2018, https://www.remid.de/info_zahlen/orthodoxie/.

¹⁹² Cf. *Institut für Orthodoxe Theologie der Universität München*, <http://www.orththeol.uni-muenchen.de>.

¹⁹³ Heinrich Löwen, *Russlanddeutsche Christen in Deutschland: Das religiöse Erscheinungsbild russlanddeutscher Freikirchen in Deutschland* (Hamburg: Disserta, 2014), 17–18.

¹⁹⁴ REMID, 'Mitgliederzahlen: Katholizismus 2017', accessed 3 September 2018, https://www.remid.de/info_zahlen/katholizismus/.

views, and traditionally leans towards a view of Authoritarian Reverence of church history.¹⁹⁵

Even though some free churches, like the *Selbstständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche* (SELK) (~33,500 members) or the Methodists (~50,000 members), have a similar view and practice of Baptism as the Protestant state churches, the size of the Protestant state churches (~21.5 million members) as well as their significance in German history and in the present day academic discussion on Baptism makes them most suitable as subject for this investigation.¹⁹⁶ The Protestant state churches under the roof of the *Evangelische Kirche Deutschland* (EKD) are basically identical in their practice of Baptism¹⁹⁷ and since the *Leuenberg Agreement* (1973) also have more or less reconciled their theological views of Baptism, whereas the remaining differences can be regarded as different emphases.¹⁹⁸ Additionally, as the general distinction between Lutheran and Reformed began to fade in the 20th century,¹⁹⁹ and as all Protestant state churches share an Ancillary view of tradition and regard church history with Critical Reverence, we will regard them as an entity representing the Protestant state church view of Baptism.

Because of the diversity of the free churches it is impossible to select a denomination that represents all free churches in every aspect. Many free churches, however, share a commitment to believer's Baptism, tend to an Irrelevancy view of tradition, and have a rather negative view of church history. Relatively large free churches falling into this category are, for example, the churches of ethnic German repatriates with a Mennonite or Baptist identity (~100,000 members), the Baptist and Brethren churches of the *Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden* (BEFG, member of the Baptist World Alliance) (~82,000 members), the Pentecostal churches of the *Bund Freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden* (BFP) (~56,000 members), the Mennonite churches (~47,500 members), the *Bund Freier Evangelischer Gemeinden* (FeG) (~41,000 members), the Seventh Day Adventist Church (~35,000 members), and the Brethren churches (~27,000 members).²⁰⁰ Most of these free churches are organisationally too fragmented to be

¹⁹⁵ Although the Catholic Church tried to clarify its view of tradition at Vatican II, *Dei Verbum* is more a consensus document that still leaves room for different views of tradition. Cf. Kirchner, *Tradition*, 32–39.

¹⁹⁶ For the members of the free churches and Protestant state churches see REMID, 'Mitgliederzahlen: Protestantismus 2017', accessed 3 September 2018, https://www.remid.de/info_zahlen/protestantismus/.

¹⁹⁷ Grethlein, for example, does not even distinguish between Lutheran and Reformed in Christian Grethlein, *Taufpraxis in Geschichte, Gegenwart und Zukunft* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014).

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Appendix 1.4.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Lengsfeld, *Überlieferung*, 11.

²⁰⁰ The free churches listed here all practise believer's Baptism, which means that the membership numbers do not include not yet baptised family members, already participating in the churches. The Catholic Church and the Protestant state churches both baptise infants, who do not necessarily later become active

representative and also do not meet the requirements of an adequate academic education and ecumenical involvement: the churches of the ethnic German repatriates have a tendency to isolate themselves,²⁰¹ are fragmented in many smaller groups,²⁰² and in general are suspicious of formal theological education.²⁰³ The Brethren similarly are divided up in many different groups and normally have no pastor, which implies that there is no need for formal academic theological education.²⁰⁴ The Adventists have an accredited theological university,²⁰⁵ but only recently became involved in ecumenical interchange, whereas historically the discussion with other denominations did not focus on Baptism but other extra teachings.²⁰⁶ The main association BFP of the Pentecostal churches is also fragmented into several smaller sub associations, and although the BFP has a theological seminary,²⁰⁷ it has no formal academic accreditation in Germany and the BFP is also only marginally involved in ecumenical exchange. The Mennonite churches have a long history in Germany, especially in connection with the discussion about Baptism, and also have a strong commitment to ecumenical exchange. They are also fragmented, however, in independent sub associations and have no theological college in Germany, which renders them rather insignificant in the German academic discourse.²⁰⁸ The Free Evangelical churches (FeG) have an accredited theological college,²⁰⁹ but although only believer's Baptism is seen as valid, their position in the Baptism debate is softened by tolerating individual believer's acknowledgment of their infant Baptism.²¹⁰ We select, therefore, for this investigation the Baptist churches that have organised themselves in the *Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden* (BEFG). The Baptists are one of the biggest German free churches that advocate believer's Baptism, which is also closely tied to their identity,

participants in the church. This discrepancy between official members and participating members does not allow a direct comparison of the numbers of free churches and Catholic Church / Protestant state churches. The listed free church numbers, however, are comparable among each other. For the detailed numbers see REMID, 'Protestantismus'. For the members of the churches of ethnic German repatriates compare Löwen, *Russlanddeutsche*, 18–19.

²⁰¹ Petra Ferdinand-Storb, *Russlanddeutsche in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Identität und Anpassung im Kontext der Integrations- und Migrationsforschung* (Hamburg: Diplomatica, 2014), 95.

²⁰² Cf. Löwen, *Russlanddeutsche*, 20–27.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 166.

²⁰⁴ Axel Volk, *Getrennte Brüder: ... dabei wollten sie doch die Einheit bewahren* (Lychen: Daniel, 2015), 9-10, 18.

²⁰⁵ See *Theologische Hochschule Friedensau*, <http://www.thh-friedensau.de>.

²⁰⁶ Dirk Czukta, 'Gemeinschaft - Sekte - Freikirche? Konfessionelle Darstellungen der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten in Deutschland seit 1994', in *Geschichte - Gesellschaft - Gerechtigkeit: Festschrift für Baldur Edmund Pfeiffer zum 70. Geburtstag*, by Johannes Hartlapp (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2007), 64.

²⁰⁷ See *Theologisches Seminar Beröa*, <http://www.beroea.info>.

²⁰⁸ The theological education for the Mennonite churches in Germany is provided by *Theologisches Seminar Bienenberg* in Switzerland, <http://www.bienenberg.ch>.

²⁰⁹ See *Theologische Hochschule Ewersbach*, <http://www.th-ewersbach.de>.

²¹⁰ Bund Freier evangelischer Gemeinden in Deutschland, 'Leitsätze zur Taufe in Freien evangelischen Gemeinden', *Christsein Heute* 2, no. 2011 (2011): 12.

and have a long history in Germany while also being part of a significant international movement. Although the Baptist local congregations enjoy a high degree of autonomy, they have an accredited theological seminary,²¹¹ and are clearly committed to ecumenical dialogue, seen for example in the signing of the *Charta Oekumenica*. The Baptist churches tend to an Irrelevancy view of tradition, as every new generation must read Scripture for themselves independently from historical understandings²¹² and their view of church history is also rather negative²¹³ as the whole movement of believer's Baptism churches in Germany historically suffered under the pressure of the Catholic Church and Protestant state churches.

The selection of the baptismal views of the Catholic Church, the Protestant state churches, and the Baptist churches of the BEFG, besides general developments in the Baptism discussion, defines the time period that will be looked at in this investigation. For the Catholic Church Vatican II (1962-65) and its subsequent developments is of major significance. Vatican II is especially important for the Catholic position of tradition as it marked with *Dei Verbum* a paradigm change in the understanding of revelation²¹⁴ and also tried to clarify the role and relation of Scripture, tradition, and the teaching of the church (cf. 2.4.1, Unfolding view).²¹⁵ The subsequent developments of Vatican II, like liturgical reform and participation of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement, and the growing interest in discussing Baptism in the Catholic Church after 1970, caused by the changing German society,²¹⁶ allows us to define 'recent' for the Catholic Church as after 1970. The recent period of the Protestant state churches is defined on the one hand by the *Leuenberg Agreement* (1973), leading to a more reconciled view of Baptism inside the Protestant state churches, and on the other hand by the reunification of Germany in 1990 that led to the reintegration of the Protestant state churches of East Germany into

²¹¹ See *Theologische Hochschule Elstal*, <http://www.th-elstal.de>.

²¹² Cf. Walter Klaiber and Wolfgang Thönissen, eds., *Die Bibel im Leben der Kirche: freikirchliche und römisch-katholische Perspektiven* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2007), 47–83.

²¹³ The German Baptists do not necessarily subscribe to a view of Critical Disregard in regard to church history, but they definitely tend more towards a negative view, seen in self-assessments like 'Was zwischen der Bibel und uns liegt bereitet Unbehagen.' Präsidium des BEFG, ed., *So! Oder auch anders?: Beiträge aus dem BEFG zum Umgang mit der Bibel* (Kassel: Oncken, 2008), 9.

²¹⁴ Cf. Claus-Peter März, 'Die Dogmatische Konstitution über die göttliche Offenbarung "Dei Verbum"', *Theologie der Gegenwart* 58, no. 1 (2015): 56.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60–62. Especially remarkable is DV 10 that places the teaching of the church explicitly under the authority of Scripture and in the sixth chapter for the first time emphasised the central role of Scripture in the life of the church. Cf. Karl Lehmann, 'Schrift - Überlieferung - Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil von nahem betrachtet, am Beispiel der Dogmatischen Konstitution über die göttliche Offenbarung (Art. 10)', *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 34, no. 6 (2005): 564–66. Peter Hünemann et al., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil* (Freiburg: Herder, 2009), 3:811.

²¹⁶ Cf. Walter Kasper, *Christsein ohne Entscheidung oder Soll die Kirche Kinder taufen?* (Matthias-Grünewald-Verl., 1970).

the EKD. Similarly, the reunification of Germany allowed the reunification of the two Baptist associations of East and West Germany, which subsequently led to the merger of their confessional writings *Rechenschaft vom Glauben* and the establishment of the new seminary *Theologische Hochschule Elstal*.²¹⁷

Generally, the ecumenical dimension of Baptism only came to full extent after the participation of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement and is also manifest in the BEM document (1982), whereas the following discussion that caused the different denominations to reflect, defend, and adjust their baptismal views lasted until 1990.²¹⁸ In respect to the developments of the selected denominations and in the ecumenical discussion about Baptism, it is reasonable, therefore, to define ‘recent’ for the scope of this investigation generally as after 1990. This, however, also includes a certain flexibility according to what we have seen as recent for the specific denominations.

3.1 Recent German Views of Baptism: Theodor Schneider, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and André Heinze

For the examination of the use of tradition and church history, we choose theologians whose baptismal views can be regarded as representative of their denomination. Ideally, they have published their main work about Baptism, which will be the main focus of this investigation, between 1990 and 2000. This time period also allows seeing whether their view found approval and use in their denomination or whether after the publication critical voices arose. For the selection it is also important that the theologians worked in the field of systematic or NT theology in the academic environment of their own denomination, which shows the acceptance of their views in their own denomination, while also ensuring an adequate academic level and comparability. As the ecumenical and pastoral dimensions in the Baptism discussion are also important, it is preferable that the selected theologians were involved in ecumenical and pastoral work, and ideally also wrote or preached about Baptism on a practical level. The selected theologians will be briefly introduced in the following paragraphs, whereas a detailed introduction will be given in the respective chapters.

²¹⁷ Cf. Reinhard Assmann, ‘175 Jahre Baptistengemeinden in Deutschland: 1985-1995 Baptisten in weltbewegenden Zeiten’, 2010, <http://www.baptisten.de/wer-wir-sind/geschichte/>; Friedrich Schneider, ‘175 Jahre Baptistengemeinden in Deutschland: „Abbruch und Aufbruch“ - der BEFG in den Jahren 1995 – 2005’, 2010, <http://www.baptisten.de/wer-wir-sind/geschichte/>.

²¹⁸ Cf. WCC / Commission on Faith and Order, *Die Diskussion über Taufe, Eucharistie und Amt: 1982-1990; Stellungnahmen, Auswirkungen, Weiterarbeit* (Frankfurt: Lembeck, 1990).

For the Catholic view of Baptism, we select Theodor Schneider²¹⁹ who taught Dogmatics at the Catholic faculty of the University of Mainz and published *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*,²²⁰ the main work containing his baptismal view, as early as 1979. This, however, is no exclusion criterion, as on the one hand the recent period of Catholic theology can be dated as after 1970 and on the other hand Schneider published an extended and revised version in 1998, which will be the subject of this investigation and is still a standard in the education of Catholic theological students in Germany.²²¹ Schneider was heavily involved in the ecumenical dialogue and as a priest he regularly engaged in preaching. He also published a volume on the sacraments, including his view of Baptism, with a clear pastoral interest, aiming at ‘the many interested believers who did not study theology.’²²²

For the Protestant state church view of Baptism, we select Wolfhart Pannenberg who taught Systematic Theology at the Protestant faculty at the University of Munich. Although Pannenberg is considered a Lutheran theologian, he also was influenced by the Reformed Karl Barth,²²³ and says of himself ‘I could never persuade myself to conceive of the task of theology in what appeared to me somewhat narrow limits of confessional Lutheranism,’²²⁴ which makes him suitable to represent the Protestant state churches as a whole. In 1993, he published the third volume of his *Systematische Theologie* that contains his baptismal view.²²⁵ Pannenberg was heavily involved in the ecumenical dialogue and as an ordained minister he also preached regularly. His pastoral interest in Baptism

²¹⁹ In an email from 10 September 2013 Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Thönissen, director of the Catholic Johann-Adam-Möhler-Institute for ecumenism, recommended as representative recent Catholic theologians who worked on Baptism Theodor Schneider and Walter Kasper. The analysis of the published materials concerning Baptism shows that the focus of Kasper’s works is rather on the ecumenical implications of Baptism, whereas Schneider also explicitly published his view of Baptism in a systematic context, which makes him more suitable in the scope of this investigation.

²²⁰ Theodor Schneider, *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes: Grundriß der Sakramententheologie*, 9th ed. (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2008), 57–94.

²²¹ Introduced by the publisher as ‘bewährtes Standardwerk’ and the ‘maßgebende Lehrwerk für Studierende der Theologie und ein unverzichtbares Handbuch für die SeelsorgerInnen.’ ‘Matthias Grünewald Verlag: Zeichen der Nähe Gottes’, accessed 13 May 2015, <http://www.gruenewaldverlag.de/zeichen-der-naehe-gottes-p-150.html>; cf. Universität Tübingen, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät, ‘Stoffplan für die Diplomprüfung und die Theologische Hauptprüfung 2015’, accessed 13 May 2015, http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/index.php?eID=tx_naw-securedl&u=0&g=0&t=1431620605&hash=eb2b1109e09d3e98c2e96afa5c4969e15bb9cddb&file=fileadmin/Uni_Tuebingen/Fakultaeten/Kath-Theol/Lehrst%C3%BChle/Dogmatik_und_Dogmengeschichte/Dokumente/Pruefungen/StoffplanDiplSoSe15R.pdf.

²²² Theodor Schneider and Martina Patenge, *Sieben heilige Feiern: eine kleine Sakramentenlehre* (Mainz: Grünewald, 2004), 9, 27–54.

²²³ Cf. Gunther Wenz, *Wolfhart Pannenburgs Systematische Theologie: ein einführender Bericht* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 9.

²²⁴ Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton, *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988), 15.

²²⁵ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie: Gesamtausgabe*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 3:268-314.

can be seen in his reflections on Baptism in the little book *Christliche Spiritualität*²²⁶ and in some of his sermons.

For the Baptist view of Baptism, we select André Heinze who taught NT at the *Theologische Hochschule Elstal*. Heinze published his main work on Baptism, *Taufe und Gemeinde*,²²⁷ in 2000, which is mentioned side by side with Beasley-Murray's famous volume on Baptism²²⁸ as a standard to understand the baptismal view of the German Baptists.²²⁹ The acceptance of his view in the German Baptist churches is also seen in a new Baptism instruction class, published in 2016, where only works of Heinze are referenced in the introduction.²³⁰ Heinze was involved in ecumenical symposiums with the Catholic Church, also in regard to Baptism, and served as pastor in Baptist churches. His pastoral interest in Baptism is seen, for example, in his booklet *Taufe und Gemeindemitgliedschaft* published as study-help for local churches,²³¹ as well as in Baptism sermons and instructions he wrote.

3.2 Current State of Research

The influence of tradition on different views of Baptism is not a new topic, and according to Kretschmar, is already visible in the formation of baptismal theology in the 4th century.²³² Hubert also saw this influence when he compared a variety of different 20th century baptismal views in the early 1970s. He states that although different baptismal views all claim to be the biblical teaching of Baptism, all of them are an expression of the author's own preunderstanding and denominational tradition. Hubert also already observed that some theologians explicitly use tradition to support their theological claims whereas others with a negative view of tradition use it mainly as an illustration of wrong developments in other baptismal views.²³³ Similarly, Heller sees the main issue in the controversies about Baptism in 'the different interpretation of scriptural sources' that 'is mainly a difference between *sola scriptura* and 'scripture and tradition',' leading to the outcome

²²⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Christliche Spiritualität. Theologische Aspekte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 48–58.

²²⁷ André Heinze, *Taufe und Gemeinde. Biblische Impulse für ein Verständnis der Taufe* (Kassel: Oncken, 2000).

²²⁸ Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*.

²²⁹ Uwe Swarat, *Wer glaubt und getauft wird ...: Texte zum Taufverständnis im deutschen Baptismus* (Kassel: Oncken, 2010), 6–7.

²³⁰ Cf. Volkmar Hamp, ed., *Taufe - Auf den Punkt gebracht. Ein Taufkurs* (Kassel: Oncken, 2016), 9.

²³¹ André Heinze and H.E. Wilms, *Taufe und Gemeindemitgliedschaft – Ein Gemeindeseminar* (Vereinigung Südwest im BEFG, 1998).

²³² Georg Kretschmar, 'Die Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes in der Alten Kirche', in *Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, Bd. V* (Kassel: Johannes Stauda, 1970), 264.

²³³ Hubert, *Streit*, 199–200.

that ‘the interpretation is guided on each side by prejudices which have their roots in the different confessional theologies.’²³⁴ The focus of this investigation, therefore, is not the proof of the general influence of tradition on baptismal views, but a detailed examination and comparison of the use of tradition and church history in recent German theology as seen in the views of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze.

Theodor Schneider published many works on the sacraments,²³⁵ but most of the appraisals of his theological and ecumenical work only mention his contributions to the understanding of the Eucharist and the sacraments in general.²³⁶ Only Scheele especially mentions Schneider’s continuous engagement with the theology of Baptism and stresses that the social aspect of Baptism is important for Schneider, as it leads to the ecclesiological and ecumenical importance of Baptism.²³⁷

There are several works that present and evaluate Schneider’s sacramental view as an example of a 20th century Catholic view, however, they only focus on the overall structure of his sacramental theology and do not mention his baptismal view.²³⁸ One work that heavily builds upon Schneider’s view of the sacraments is the dissertation of Alois Moos, a student of Schneider. Moos not only regularly refers to Schneider’s general view of the sacraments, but also describes how in Schneider’s discussion of the minor sacraments their constituting function for the church is visible. For Schneider’s view of the Eucharist and Baptism, however, Moos only refers to the respective chapters in Schneider’s works.²³⁹ Similarly, Schneider’s baptismal view is also referred to in other articles and books, but mostly as mere quotation of Schneider’s thoughts without any critical evaluation.²⁴⁰ Only Gäde critically evaluates Schneider’s understanding of Baptism as

²³⁴ Heller, *Baptized*, 195.

²³⁵ Cf. ‘Publikationen von Theodor Schneider’ in Dorothea Sattler and Konrad Raiser, eds., *Ökumene vor neuen Zeiten: Für Theodor Schneider* (Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 557–70.

²³⁶ Cf. ASS 427; Bernd Jochen Hilberath and Dorothea Sattler, eds., *Vorgeschmack. Ökumenische Bemühungen um die Eucharistie. Festschrift für Theodor Schneider* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1995), 12, 17, 22, 134, 164, 308, 368, 416, 593, 600, 601, 606, 607, 610, 612, 627–28; Dorothea Sattler and Gunther Wenz, eds., *Sakramente ökumenisch feiern: Vorüberlegungen für die Erfüllung einer Hoffnung - für Theodor Schneider* (Grünewald, 2005), 9, 15, 18–22.

²³⁷ ‘Grußwort von Bischof Paul-Werner Scheele’ in Hilberath and Sattler, *Vorgeschmack*, 609–10.

²³⁸ Wendelin Knoch, ‘“Gott begegnen” in menschlichen Worten und kirchlichen Riten’, in *Gott erfahren: religiöse Orientierung durch Sakramente*, ed. Reinhard Göllner (Münster: Lit-Verl, 2005), 19–22; Lothar Lies, ‘Trinitätsvergessenheit gegenwärtiger Sakramententheologie?’, *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 105, no. 3 (1983): 295–99; Reinhard Hempelmann, *Sakrament als Ort der Vermittlung des Heils: Sakramententheologie im evangelisch-katholischen Dialog* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 165–67.

²³⁹ Alois Moos, *Das Verhältnis von Wort und Sakrament in der deutschsprachigen katholischen Theologie des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1993), esp. 115, 367–368. Cf. also 15, 104, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125–126, 128, 164–165, 192, 223, 228, 230–231, 276, 311, 346, 369, 372, 393–394.

²⁴⁰ E.g. Sattler and Wenz, *Sakramente*, 108, 112, 118–19, 120–21; Bettina Kaul, *Taufpastoral - zwischen kirchlicher Tradition und menschlicher Erfahrung: pastoraltheologische und*

‘celebration of God’s affection’ and Confirmation as personal acceptance of God’s love. According to Gäde this understanding leads to a distinction of Baptism as God’s word and Confirmation as human answer, and he questions whether in the case of infant Baptism the aspect that a sacrament has a real effect on the recipient can just be transferred to Confirmation.²⁴¹

Several authors also praise the central role of Scripture in Schneider’s theology and his ability to critically evaluate tradition and the teachings of the church in his attempt to relate the message of the Gospel to his generation and to find ecumenical agreement.²⁴² Worthy of mention is especially a short article of Ritschl who describes that Schneider consciously questioned the traditional theological teachings about the Eucharist. According to Ritschl, Schneider explains and dismantles important texts of tradition or even encyclicals of living popes, but never without presenting a stronger and more biblical position. Ritschl also observes that in evaluating the traditional teachings Schneider often finds treasures that are close to the biblical teaching and have been recognised more clearly in the first millennia of the church and are of importance for ecumenical agreement. Ritschl especially acknowledges Schneider’s ‘careful systematic-theological work with constant consideration of recent exegetical results, and in deep respect for the tradition of the church.’²⁴³

We can conclude, although there are investigations of Schneider’s general view of the sacraments and some authors refer to his baptismal view or acknowledge his use of tradition, no meaningful research has been done on Schneider’s baptismal view under consideration of his use of tradition and church history.

Of our three authors Wolfhart Pannenberg’s work has received the most attention in Germany as well as internationally. It is not surprising, therefore, to find several investigations also referring to his baptismal theology. Wenz, for example, in his introduction to Pannenberg’s *Systematische Theologie*, summarises Pannenberg’s baptismal theology under consideration of all his baptismal writings (except for his sermons). Wenz, however, only describes Pannenberg’s view and does not mention any of the references to

liturgiewissenschaftliche Untersuchungen (Münster: LIT, 2011), 46; Ursula Weitkamp, *Selbst bestimmt leben* (Münster: LIT, 2014), 71.

²⁴¹ Gerhard Gäde, ‘Warum ein zweites Initiationssakrament? Dogmatische Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Taufe und Firmung aus pastoraltheologischem Anlaß’, *TThZ* 109 (2000): 220.

²⁴² ASS 423, 427; Hilberath and Sattler, *Vorgeschnack*, 26–32, 588–89; Sattler and Raiser, *Ökumene*, 99, 228–29.

²⁴³ Ritschl, Dietrich, ‘Erfahrene und reflektierte Eucharistie – Zu den impliziten Axiomen in Theodor Schneiders Eucharistielehre,’ in Hilberath and Sattler, *Vorgeschnack*, 573–80.

tradition.²⁴⁴ In a similar introduction work on Pannenberg's thought Grenz describes some of the references to tradition and church history used in Pannenberg's baptismal view. Grenz's description, however, is neither exhaustive nor does he evaluate, and he only uses the content of *Systematische Theologie 3* to describe Pannenberg's thoughts on Baptism.²⁴⁵ Likewise, in Whapham's analysis of Pannenberg's theological contribution we find a brief introduction to his baptismal view, however, with little reference to his use of tradition.²⁴⁶

There are several works on Baptism that include a chapter or section on Pannenberg's baptismal view as an example of a modern Lutheran position, however, only referring to *Systematische Theologie 3*. Dietz Kerner, for example, outlines Pannenberg's baptismal view and also mentions some of the references to Luther, Barth, the *Confessio Augustana*, and the BEM document. But as Kerner's main purpose is to find thoughts contributing to the theological understanding of infant and believer's Baptism, his description of the references to tradition is only peripheral and far from complete.²⁴⁷ The same we see in Fesko's book on Baptism, written with the goal of validating 'the exegetical and theological conclusions of the Westminster Confession of Faith on baptism.' In describing Pannenberg's baptismal view Fesko mentions some of Pannenberg's references to tradition and church history, especially that Pannenberg criticises Augustine, Trent, and Luther, and evaluates that Pannenberg in his baptismal view sets himself apart from Catholic and Lutheran tradition, but his description and evaluation of the use of tradition is only marginal.²⁴⁸ Spinks also outlines the main points of Pannenberg's baptismal view, emphasising 'the close link between faith, baptism and justification' and the objective character Pannenberg attributes to Baptism. Regarding Pannenberg's use and evaluation of tradition, however, Spinks only once remarks that Pannenberg follows Luther in linking Baptism and penitence.²⁴⁹

None of the above works mention Pannenberg's use of Scholastic authors in his baptismal view, an omission we find partially corrected in two works of Catholic authors

²⁴⁴ Wenz, *Wolfgang Pannenberg's Systematische Theologie*, 221–24.

²⁴⁵ Stanley J. Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfgang Pannenberg* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 164–66.

²⁴⁶ Theodore James Whapham, *The Unity of Theology: The Contribution of Wolfgang Pannenberg* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 166, 169–71.

²⁴⁷ Wolfram Dietz Kerner, 'Gläubigentaufe, Säuglingstaufe und gegenseitige Taufanerkennung' (Universität Heidelberg, 2004), 176–89.

²⁴⁸ John Valero Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit: A Reformed Perspective on Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 143–47.

²⁴⁹ Bryan D. Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From Luther to Contemporary Practices* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 145–47.

who examine Pannenberg's view of justification with an ecumenical interest in relation to the *Joint Declaration of Justification*. Malloy presents Pannenberg's view of justification, also including his baptismal view as far as it relates to justification, as an example of a modern Lutheran position. Malloy points out some of Pannenberg's references and evaluations of Luther, Trent, and the Scholastics, but he does not focus on this aspect of Pannenberg's work and mainly uses *Systematische Theologie 3*. Malloy, however, does critique Pannenberg's evaluation of the Reformation era teachings in regard to justification and points out that neither councils or magisterial 'solemn proclamations of faith' nor the Lutheran confessions resemble an authority in Pannenberg's thought, but are rather regarded as 'theological schools' that can be criticised and corrected.²⁵⁰ Another impressive work that 'aims at the link between the doctrine of justification and the sacrament Baptism in the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg' and its implications for ecumenical dialogue is the dissertation of da Costa. As da Costa points out the connection of Baptism and justification in Pannenberg's theology, he also refers a few times to Pannenberg's use and evaluation of Augustine, the Scholastics, and Luther, especially mentioning that Pannenberg criticised Luther for not clearly expressing the relationship of Baptism and justification by faith. In addition to *Systematische Theologie 3* da Costa also uses other works to describe Pannenberg's baptismal view, however, he limits himself by only using Portuguese translations.²⁵¹ We can conclude, therefore, that although some works refer to Pannenberg's baptismal theology, most of them focus only on *Systematische Theologie 3* and do not particularly consider Pannenberg's use of tradition and church history, but only marginally mention and evaluate some of his references if contributing to the purpose of their investigation.²⁵²

André Heinze was rather unknown outside of the Baptist and free church theological environment and many of his writings have been made accessible for research as late as 2016. Some authors, mainly free church theologians, cite Heinze's baptismal works but only descriptively without an evaluation.²⁵³ Only Demandt in his book review of *Taufe*

²⁵⁰ Christopher J. Malloy, *Engrafted into Christ: A Critique of the Joint Declaration* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 169–91; esp. 182–83.

²⁵¹ Antonio José Afonso da Costa, 'Justificação e Batismo na obra de Wolfhart Pannenberg; Perspectivas para o diálogo ecumênico' (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, 2007), vi, 139–80.

²⁵² In an email from 5 May 2014 Gunther Wenz, leader of the Pannenberg research centre in Munich, also confirmed that so far no monographs on Pannenberg's baptismal view are known and that an investigation of his baptismal theology is worthwhile.

²⁵³ See for example Sattler and Wenz, *Sakramente*, 149; Friedrich Emanuel Wieser, '(1) Neutestamentliche Taufe und baptistisches Taufverständnis (2) Warum Offene Mitgliedschaft?', 2010, 4,8-10,15, http://www.baptisten-muenchen.de/uploads/media/themen_01.pdf; Thomas Hafner, ed., *Eine Taufe - viele Meinungen* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2008), 68.

und Gemeinde evaluates Heinze's baptismal view and acknowledges that Heinze achieved his purpose to let the reader (re)discover the gift of biblical Baptism. Regarding the use of church history Demandt praises Heinze for showing the outstanding importance of Baptism in church history, but without explaining further about how Heinze achieves this. Demandt criticises, however, Heinze's description of what happens in Baptism as contradictory, as there are tendencies towards a view of baptismal regeneration in his exegetical understanding of Romans 6.²⁵⁴ Also the Baptist theologian Swarat explicitly criticises Heinze's understanding of faith as initiation into the relationship with God and Baptism as initiation into a new relationship to the world, presented in Heinze's article *Glaube und Taufe als Initiation*. According to Swarat this thesis of Heinze is an attempt to differentiate the effects of faith and Baptism, which does not fit the Reformation's understanding that sacraments and faith give the same in different ways.²⁵⁵ Apart from the brief evaluations of Heinze's baptismal view already mentioned, no other investigations about Heinze's baptismal view are available.²⁵⁶

We can conclude, therefore, that no meaningful research concerning the baptismal theologies of the selected authors has been done that evaluates their use and understanding of tradition and church history, under consideration of all their writings that refer to Baptism.

3.3 Research Questions and Methods

We will examine the baptismal views of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze under several aspects, with the goal to present and evaluate how they use and reflect tradition and church history.

The initial question is to understand the general view of Baptism of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze. To achieve this, we will examine their respectively published material and evaluate it in regard to any change and development. The result will be an overview of their work on Baptism, which will show their main emphases and developments.

The following questions deal in more detail with the author's use of Scripture, literature, tradition and church history. For the detailed examination, we will use their main

²⁵⁴ Johannes Demandt, 'Heinze, A., Taufe und Gemeinde: Biblische Impulse für ein Verständnis der Taufe.', *JETH* 15 (2001): 122.

²⁵⁵ Uwe Swarat, 'Rezension: Klaiber, Walter und Thönissen, Wolfgang: Glaube und Taufe in freikirchlicher und römisch-katholischer Sicht', *ThRv* 3, no. 103 (2007): 229–31.

²⁵⁶ In an email from 8 June 2015 the *Oncken Archiv* confirmed that neither in the archive of the BEFG nor at the Baptist seminary are any works on Heinze available.

work on Baptism as main source, and we will only rely on other publications for reference and for clarification. The result will be a detailed description of how their views of Baptism explicitly use and implicitly reflect tradition and church history (cf. 2.5).

First, we will examine how Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze use Scripture and which key Scripture verses they use (or do not use) to build their baptismal view. Here we will especially consider their exegetical method, which also shows how they handle the questionable or unclear Scriptural statements and whether they address the problem of the complexity of NT baptismal theology (cf. 2.3). We will also include a brief examination of additional literature they use as an aid to interpret Scripture and to establish their view.

Secondly, we will examine the use of explicit references to tradition and church history in the main baptismal works of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze. This examination will be carried out by collecting and cataloguing all references to tradition and (church) history in the text according to the criteria defined in chapter 3.3.1. This includes the examination of where and how in the text references are used, for what purpose, and how the author evaluates them. The result of the cataloguing will also be presented graphically with the aim of visually comparing the different baptismal views in respect to their explicit use of tradition and church history. This will also provide a method for the examination of other theological views in the future.

Thirdly, we will examine how tradition and church history are implicitly reflected in the baptismal views of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze. Here we will especially look at the theological terms the authors use to define their view, at structure and methods, and at theological frameworks, which all reflect tradition.

The final question we will address is an evaluation and comparison of Schneider's, Pannenberg's, and Heinze's views regarding their use of tradition and church history. For the individual evaluation of every view we will examine the results of the previous questions and deduce from them the author's view of tradition and church history, which we will also confirm and clarify by other works of the author. In the final comparison we will use the results of the examined baptismal views and their evaluation and bring them into dialogue with each other. The result of the evaluation and comparison will be a presentation of how different baptismal views in recent German theology use tradition and church history, and how they are influenced by their different views of tradition and church history.

3.3.1 Criteria for the Examination of Explicit References to Tradition and Church History

For the examination of the explicit references to tradition and church history we will collect all references to events and developments of (church) history and references to testimonies of Tradition like writings, art, and liturgy (cf. 2.4). We need to delimit, however, what time of origin qualifies a reference as explicit reference to tradition and (church) history. For references such as to the Church Fathers or to events in Early Church history this is obvious, but for more recent events the distinction is not that clear. For the determination of what an explicit reference to tradition is, therefore, we will use the following criteria:

- References to events or to developments that are in the recent past will also be included if the author regards them as historically significant.
- References to specific persons or writings will be included if they have lasting influence in the tradition or teaching of a denomination, or shaped the flow of church history, or at least are perceived by the author to be historically significant.
- References to official documents, council declarations, and creeds that are part of the official teaching of a specific denomination will be included, as they are not only a product of a single point in time but also the summation and manifestation of an earlier process in the history of a denomination and thus represent tradition.
- References to literature that represent the current state of research or the present situation will not be included if they are not part of the teaching of the church or if they are not explicitly described by the author as historically significant. They will be separately examined under the aspect of used literature.

After collecting all references to tradition and (church) history and their position in the text, we will attempt to classify the references according to the three categories of type, function, and evaluation, with the purpose to gain a deeper understanding of how the author understands tradition.

Types of Reference

For the type of a reference we examine how the author references tradition and (church) history. We distinguish between a) references to profane history,²⁵⁷ b) general references to events or developments of church history, and c) specific references to Christian

²⁵⁷ The term profane history is used here in opposite to church history, which means that references to Jewish history or religion without a direct relation to the Christian church are also considered profane in the sense of not being church history.

tradition. Specific references are referring to tradition, represented by Christian authors or writings, or an author's view, even if no specific source is given. Special cases of specific references are d) concrete quotations or e) objects of tradition, such as art or architecture. The analysis of the type of the references provides a measure of how thoroughly the author interacts with tradition, showing whether he only generally refers to developments or whether he actively interacts with writers and documents of tradition.

Function of a Reference

For the function of a reference to tradition and (church) history we examine for what purpose the author uses the reference in his baptismal thought. We distinguish whether a reference is used as a) an actual source of a thought without direct connection to Scripture (Src); b) a help to interpret Scripture (Itp); c) an affirmation of Scripture or a theological thought (Aff); d) an illustration or example (Ill); or e) a general information (Inf). In these categories we see a decrease of importance in the author's thought: at the one end of the spectrum, a source is essential for the author's baptismal theology as it defines content and direction, and at the other end, a general information reference might only be given for the sake of completeness without a special function in the author's baptismal view.

Evaluation of a Reference

For the evaluation of a reference we examine how the author evaluates the reference in its immediate context. We distinguish between a) positive, b) neutral, and c) negative. Positive is everything that the author explicitly labels as positive or uses to support his own position, neutral is everything that has no clear evaluation in its immediate context, and negative is what is explicitly or implicitly labelled as negative by the author or by the usage in the argument. The analysis of the author's evaluation of the references allows us to see whether the author's interaction with tradition is rather objective, indicated by many neutral references, or tends to be polemic, indicated by many negative and positive references, especially if the negative ones refer to other denominations and the positive ones to the author's own denomination.

Finally, the classification of the explicit references to tradition and (church) history into the three categories of type, function, and evaluation allows us to draw cautious conclusions about the weight or the authority tradition has in an author's thought. For the categories of evaluation and function this is more obvious, as explicitly positive marked references inherently provide supporting authority for the authors argument. The same is

true for references that function as affirmation, decide about interpretation, or appear to be sources, whereas especially the latter two functions represent external authority and are not just subsequent confirmation of an author's thought. Regarding the type of the references we need to be more cautious, however, also here we might find tendencies that allow one to draw conclusions about the authority an author attributes to tradition, at least if they are at the same time also evaluated as positive or neutral. If we use, for example, Max Weber's classification of legitimate authority, which defines traditional, charismatic, and legal-traditional authority, we see some correspondence in the type of references defined above.²⁵⁸ A reference to profane history, for example, does not carry a special Christian authority in the scope of theological argument, as it is not directly related to the Christian community. A general reference to an event or a development in church history, in contrast, represents a certain common heritage for every part of the Christian community, and as such it might project traditional authority in a theological argument. If a specific reference is given to a Christian author, this might project charismatic authority and if a specific writing, maybe even a teaching document, is given, there might also be rational-legal authority present. As in the case of specific references in addition to traditional authority also charismatic and rational-legal authority are present, we might carefully conclude that they represent a higher degree of authority in a rational theological argument.²⁵⁹ This higher degree of authority is especially found in documents representing the actual teaching of the church and in Christian authors who profoundly influenced the development of the teaching of the church and thus are also closely connected to a church's identity. Finally, if a reference is even given as a quote, this might indicate an amplification of the authority the author attributes to the reference. We might, therefore, cautiously use the type of reference as a supporting factor to see how much authority an author attributes to tradition, especially if there is additional charismatic or rational-legal authority involved as in the case of specific references (or quotes) to Christian authors or writings.

²⁵⁸ The sociologist Weber defined these categories of authority in relation to leadership in society. We can apply them, however, to the church as society of believers, who want to obey God and thus are willing to accept authority represented by the church in different ways such as its mere traditional presence, its important leaders, or its legal constitutions. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 215–18, 226–28, 241.

²⁵⁹ Weber also observed that his categories of authority seldom appear in pure form and often are a composition. *Ibid.*, 263.

‘[In Baptism] The work of God embraces the work of man. God's salvation is given, his activity leads the way. Us being possessed by God is his work in the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, this is not automatic: the confession of faith is part of baptism, faith and the sign of baptism indispensably belong to each other.’²⁶⁰

– Theodor Schneider –

Chapter 4

Theodor Schneider – A Catholic View of Baptism

Theodor Schneider was born in 1930 in Essen into a Catholic family.²⁶¹ He therefore was baptised within a week after his birth, served as an acolyte in his childhood, and later also participated in youth groups of the church.²⁶² From 1950 to 1956 Schneider studied theology and philosophy in Bonn and Freiburg im Breisgau. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1956 Schneider worked as assistant and subsidiary priest, while continuing his studies in Münster. During this time he also had his first teaching assignment at a small seminary and finished in 1964 his doctoral thesis about the theological understanding of Herman Schell.²⁶³ From 1964 to 1970 Schneider worked as research assistant at the university of Bochum where he obtained his habilitation in 1970, addressing the question of the unity of body and soul in Medieval theology.²⁶⁴ In 1971 Schneider became professor for Dogmatics in Mainz, where he taught until his retirement. From 1985 on Schneider

²⁶⁰ ‘Das Tun Gottes umgreift das Tun des Menschen. Gottes Heil wird geschenkt, seine Aktivität geht voran. Unsere Inbesitznahme durch Gott ist sein Handeln im Heiligen Geist. Dennoch gibt es hier keine Automatik: Das Bekenntnis des Glaubens ist Bestandteil der Taufe, der Glaube und das Zeichen der Taufe gehören unabdingbar zusammen.’ ZdNG 75.

²⁶¹ If not referenced otherwise all data on Schneider's life is obtained from Dorothea Sattler's essay 'Theodor Schneider - Leben und Werk, Annäherungen aus biographischer Perspektive' in KT 461–86. Additional information and a list of Schneider's publications till 2000 are found in Sattler and Raiser, *Ökumene*, 555–56, 557–72.

²⁶² Cf. Appendix 2.2.5:a; MG 25.

²⁶³ Theodor Schneider, *Teleologie als theologische Kategorie bei Herman Schell* (Essen: Ludgerus, 1966).

²⁶⁴ Theodor Schneider, *Die Einheit des Menschen. Die anthropologische Formel 'anima forma corporis' im sogenannten Korrektoienstreit und bei Petrus Johannes Olivi. Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte des Konzils von Vienne*. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1973).

additionally served as chairman of the Catholic *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschsprachigen Dogmatiker und Fundamentaltheologen* and also participated in the *Würzburger Synode* (Joint Synod of the German Dioceses, 1971-1975).

Schneider is highly recognised in and outside the academic community, seen for example in the several *Festschriften* published to honour him in his later years.²⁶⁵ He is rather unknown in the English-speaking world as none of his books have been translated into English, however, some of his important works have been translated in other European languages.²⁶⁶ Besides his academic career Schneider has a strong pastoral interest, seen in his regular assistance in lay education, in church services, and in pastoral care, even after his retirement.²⁶⁷ Schneider never sees theology as an end in itself but emphasises the role of theology as means in the process of preaching and transmitting the Gospel, also claiming that he is rather not an academic but actually a preacher.²⁶⁸ This claim is underlined by many small books and meditations he published addressing ordinary Christians,²⁶⁹ also demonstrating his ability to introduce deep theological truths in a comprehensible and lively language.

Theodor Schneider was profoundly involved in ecumenical dialogue, especially with the Protestant state churches. He was a member and later also academic leader of the Catholic side of the Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians, he was member in the *Deutschen Ökumenischen Studienausschuss (DÖSTA) der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen (ACK)*, and he was also co-editor of the *Ökumenische Rundschau*, the leading German-language journal for ecumenism.²⁷⁰ The importance Schneider placed on ecumenism is also seen in the name change of his chair at the University of Mainz into chair for Dogmatics and Ecumenical Theology as concession to keep him in Mainz.²⁷¹ Schneider always encourages others to overcome the disunity in the Christian church and even publicly stated he wishes to be an ‘Orthodox, Protestant member of the Catholic Church.’²⁷²

²⁶⁵ Hilberath and Sattler, *Vorgeschmack*; Sattler and Raiser, *Ökumene*; Sattler and Wenz, *Sakramente*.

²⁶⁶ Cf. Appendix 2.2.6:b.

²⁶⁷ Sattler and Wenz, *Sakramente*, 15.

²⁶⁸ KT 462.

²⁶⁹ E.g. Theodor Schneider, *Zehn gute Gründe, heute Christ zu sein* (Münster: LIT, 2002); Theodor Schneider, *Plädoyer für eine wirkliche Kirche ‘Gemeinsam glauben’* (Stuttgart: KBW, 1972); Theodor Schneider, *Wir sind sein Leib: Meditationen zur Eucharistie*, 2nd ed., 65 (Mainz: Grünewald, 1979).

²⁷⁰ ASS 422. Cf. <http://www.oekumenische-rundschau.de>.

²⁷¹ ASS 456.

²⁷² ‘Prof. Dr. Theodor Schneider über die römisch-katholische Sicht auf die Ökumene in der Alsfelder Walpurgiskirche’, *Oberhessische Zeitung*, 1 November 2013, http://www.oberhessische-zeitung.de/lokales/alsfeld/prof-dr-theodor-schneider-ueber-die-roemisch-katholische-sicht-auf-die-oekumene-in-der-alsfelder-walpurgiskirche_13578112.htm.

Theodor Schneider characterises his relationship to his own church with the words ‘critical faithfulness,’ as he is devotedly connected to the Catholic Church but also does not hesitate to criticise wrong developments in Catholic history or present day problems.²⁷³ In this perspective Schneider is also continuously referring to Vatican II and promotes the, from his viewpoint neglected, decisions of the council and encourages their implementation in the Catholic Church.²⁷⁴ Schneider, therefore, often refers in his works to the situation before and after Vatican II, seen for example in his thoughts about the sacraments, the new dogmatic method, and ecumenism. Schneider is especially known for his book on the sacraments, *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*, which caused his nickname *Sakramenten-Schneider*, and he also published several other works on the sacraments, especially focusing on the Eucharist.²⁷⁵ In his attempt to promote the new Scripture-centred dogmatic method of Vatican II he also acted as editor of the two volume *Handbuch der Dogmatik*,²⁷⁶ establishing a new systematic standard work that centres around Scripture and not as many previous works around dogmatic statements. Schneider’s book on the sacraments and the systematic theology he published became a standard in Catholic education in Germany and have been translated into several other languages.²⁷⁷

4.1 Baptism in the Thought of Schneider

The sacraments are an important part in Schneider’s theological teaching and writing and he published two introduction books on the sacraments: *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* and *Sieben heilige Feiern*, both describing the sacramental view of the Catholic Church with a chapter on each of the seven Catholic sacraments. Schneider’s view of Baptism is best described in these two books, whereas the former is more academic and comprehensive, and the latter a more practical and abridged version. The chapter on Baptism in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*, therefore, will be the main focus of this investigation.²⁷⁸

Baptism as a foundational theme of the Christian life is also mentioned in several other works of Schneider, however, not with an exclusive focus, and we will consider these works if necessary. For further clarification of some issues I also met with Theodor

²⁷³ KT 284, 485.

²⁷⁴ Especially seen in Theodor Schneider, *Die aufgegebenen Reform: vergessene Impulse und bleibender Auftrag des Zweiten Vatikanums*, 2nd ed. (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2013); cf. also MG 33; ASS 427.

²⁷⁵ Collected in ASS.

²⁷⁶ Theodor Schneider, ed., *Handbuch der Dogmatik*, 5th ed. (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2013).

²⁷⁷ ZdNG has been translated into Italian, Polish, and Spanish; *Handbuch der Dogmatik* has been translated into Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Hungarian. Cf. Appendix 2.2.6:b.

²⁷⁸ In this chapter page references in brackets are referring to 9th edition (2008) of ZdNG. From the 7th edition (1998) onwards Dorothea Sattler, a former student of Schneider, functioned as editor, however, from my personal interactions with Schneider it is obvious that he still retains full ownership of the content.

Schneider personally. Appendix 2 gives account of the interview and the content has been reviewed, corrected, and signed by Schneider. One curious fact is that Schneider in the systematic theology *Handbuch der Dogmatik*, which he edited, neither writes on Baptism, nor on the sacraments in general. The reason is rather mundane and found in copyright issues: Schneider's books *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* and the first edition of *Handbuch der Dogmatik*²⁷⁹ have been published by different companies.

4.1.1 Main Focus: Baptism in 'Zeichen der Nähe Gottes'

Schneider's 'book *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* is a comprehensive' introduction into the sacramental theology of the Catholic Church and, therefore, Schneider begins his book with a general chapter on the sacraments, describing them from an anthropological, christological, and ecclesiological perspective. Schneider first builds an anthropological basis using the human experience of symbolic actions that convey messages, and the connection of visible and invisible realities in human existence, to establish a theological understanding of symbol, called sacrament, of inseparable human, immanent reality and divine reality (8). This formal aspect of sacramental reality as outward expressions that point to inward realities, and inward realities that realise themselves in outward expressions, comes together with the substantial aspect, that God encounters man in its specific nature of human existence in bodiliness, historicity, and mutuality (12). This encounter of man and God, according to Schneider, happens most clearly in Jesus Christ, as the person of Christ and its human destiny is the ultimate sign of God's presence in history (17), and Christ, therefore, can be called the primordial sacrament (*Ursakrament*). The church as the body of Christ and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit unfolds and substantiates the primordial sacrament Christ and, therefore, also has sacramental structure (28) and can be called fundamental or root sacrament (*Grund-/Wurzelsakrament*). The sacramental structure of the church, the unity of divine revelation and its symbolic, historical presence, according to Schneider, is not only found in its static being but also in its actions (31), which are the individual sacraments: the major sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, and the minor sacraments of Confirmation, Penance,²⁸⁰ Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. The special significance of the major sacraments Baptism and Eucharist is emphasised by Schneider as constituting and regenerating the church, and as sacramental consummation of faith and love (34). After generally defining his sacramental

²⁷⁹ Cf. Theodor Schneider, ed., *Handbuch der Dogmatik* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1992). Today Patmos and Grünewald belong to the same publishing group and Schneider's works have been taken over by Grünewald.

²⁸⁰ Penance with capital P is used in this investigation to refer to the Catholic sacrament of Penance.

theology, Schneider describes the individual sacraments in seven chapters, beginning with Baptism.

The Chapter on Baptism

Schneider begins his Baptism chapter by defining Baptism as celebration of repentance and orientation towards the Christian faith, celebration of redemption from sin and death, and celebration of the acceptance of the believer into the community of the church (57). The chapter then is divided into three subchapters, whereas the first subchapter is a biblical-systematic overview of the meaning of Baptism, in the second subchapter the development of Baptism is examined exegetically and historically, and the final subchapter is a systematic reflection on special topics relevant to the present situation.

In the first subchapter, 'I. Initiation,' Schneider unfolds the three main aspects of his definition biblically-systematically. First, he describes Baptism as the experience of repentance and confession of faith to the triune God (anthropological aspect), then he describes Baptism as rebirth and incorporation into the community of believers, which is the church (ecclesiological aspect), and finally he describes Baptism as participation in Christ and his atoning work (christological-soteriological aspect). In describing the anthropological aspect Schneider especially emphasises that the human acceptance of God's prevenient action is essential for Baptism and the sacraments in general. Adult Baptism, therefore, is the normal way of Baptism (*normaler Vollzug*) and must be used to understand Baptism (59), whereas the discussion about the 'phenomenon of infant Baptism' is postponed to the systematic subchapter. Repentance is, according to Schneider, the fundamental and free answer to the Gospel, and thus constitutive for the beginning of faith in Christ and also the foundation of Baptism (60). Baptism also shows the personal and dialogical structure of faith, as it is the offer of God's salvation that must be answered by repentance and the confession of faith, which is seen in the baptismal creed (61). Schneider's description of the ecclesiological aspect begins with the constitutional role of the church, as through it the message of the Gospel is transmitted and experienced, which is the foundation for a person's own faith. Baptism is regeneration and new life in the Spirit (63), and thus also incorporation into a new *Lebensraum*, into the people of God (65). The christological-soteriological aspect is especially seen, according to Schneider, in the formula of Baptism in the name of Jesus, which denotes the conveyance of the believer from the sphere of sin and death into the kingdom of God (66). This inclusion in the kingdom of God happens through the participation in the salvific events of Christ's death and resurrection that become present in a sacramental way, as described in Romans 6 (67).

In the second subchapter, 'II. Geschichtliche Basis,' Schneider outlines the origins and the development of Baptism in Scripture and history. Beginning with the surprising fact that Jesus did not himself baptise while the Early Church took Baptism for granted, Schneider arrives at the conclusion that John's baptism and Jesus' own baptism provided the rationale for the church to adopt this sign (73). Schneider then sums up the biblical theology of the Early Church stating four theses (75) which are 1) being a Christian and being baptised belong together, 2) Baptism in the name of Jesus connects with his person and his work, with his death and new life, 3) Baptism initiates an existence in the Holy Spirit, which means that Baptism is the beginning of a life in God's presence and according to his standards, and 4) in Baptism the action of man is embedded in God's action, which means that Baptism is primarily God's action, which, however, does not exclude faith, as faith and Baptism belong together. After the biblical résumé Schneider looks at the practice of Baptism, which he expounds with references to the tradition of the Early Church (75-76), which provides details about baptismal practice not found in the NT, such as the formation of a sequence or possible ways to apply the water. Then Schneider outlines some disputes about Baptism that arose in the early centuries, how these were answered by the Early Church, how the developed answers have been theologically reflected by the Scholastics, and finally were accepted as official teaching, especially by the council of Trent (77-78). Schneider concludes the exegetical-historical subchapter with seven theses from Scripture *and* tradition (78-79), which are 1) Baptism is the salvific action of God, 2) Baptism must be acknowledged by faith, 3) Baptism is necessary for salvation in the way that it stands for the incorporation in Christ and his church, 4) Baptism is the beginning of a new life in the Holy Spirit, 5) Baptism does not need to be repeated (it leaves an inalienable character), 6) Baptism is the beginning of a journey, and 7) Baptism is indispensable as it is the centre of Christian existence, the place where God's action and human faith come together.

In the last subchapter, 'III. Sakrament des Glaubens,' Schneider systematically discusses special topics, like the relation of faith and Baptism, the necessity of Baptism for salvation, infant Baptism, and the ecumenical significance of Baptism. The first three topics already appeared in Schneider's summation of Trent's key points and the summary theses of Scripture and tradition in the previous subchapter. Now Schneider takes them up for systematic-theological reflection, affirming them as important topics given by tradition while also being important for the present-day situation.

First Schneider examines the biblical statements of Baptism and faith and concludes that faith and Baptism seem to be exchangeable and that they resemble a multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and dynamic relational structure (81). Then he describes the absolute necessity of Christ for salvation and states that Baptism is necessary for salvation as it represents the acceptance of Christ as only way to God. But Baptism is only necessary for salvation in so far as a man has the opportunity to be baptised, while there is also God's universal will for salvation, which relativises the talk of the necessity of Baptism. Schneider concludes, therefore, that the necessity of Baptism for salvation needs to be described in ways that retain the freedom of man as well as the sovereignty of God (83). Schneider then describes the scriptural relationship of faith and Baptism in three models (83-84): first, faith leads to Baptism. Second, Baptism is the foundation for a new beginning in faith. And third, the biblical talk of Baptism as illumination, which means Baptism is giving or conveying faith. All these models, however, imply that neither faith nor Baptism are ever completed actions in the past.

With this understanding of the relation of Baptism and faith Schneider now approaches the problem of infant Baptism and states that the content of the NT neither proves nor disproves that infant baptism was practised in biblical times (85). Schneider concludes, therefore, that infant Baptism is only possible in light of the second model of the faith Baptism relationship, in which faith follows the received Baptism. Due to the close connection of Baptism and original sin, however, in history infant Baptism developed into the norm for Baptism, which according to Schneider led to several imbalances, for example the understanding of Baptism as completed event also in the case of infant Baptism, which caused the continuous dispute about the practice since the Reformation. Infant Baptism, according to Schneider, is a special form of Baptism, and its legitimacy must come from a theological argument (86). He observes that the close relationship of Baptism and faith is acknowledged by the different denominational views of Baptism, however, views that reject infant Baptism normally have a constricted understanding of faith as an individual act of confession and acknowledgement, depending on a preceding proclamation and acceptance of the Gospel, and a high degree of self-commitment. This constricted understanding of faith, according to Schneider, is problematic as Christian faith is never only an individual affair but always embedded in the community of believers, faith and hearing the Gospel is never completed, and finally, self-commitment is not enough, as faith as a lifelong process can only be achieved by God's grace (87). Schneider then concludes with three aspects that support infant Baptism (88), which are 1) salvation

is grace, 2) faith is embedded in the community of believers, and 3) faith is a process and not an isolated event. On basis of these theological aspects the historical developed practice of infant Baptism can be theologically justified and thus retained (89).

In the final section Schneider introduces the ecumenical aspects of Baptism. He first describes the baptismal practice and theology of the different Christian churches and the Catholic stance on them (89), then he introduces the view of Vatican II of Baptism as sacramental bond of unity (91), and, finally, states Baptism as challenge for more unity, as it connects to Christ, who is the shared centre of all denominations (92).

Baptism and the Other Sacraments

In the following chapters Schneider similarly introduces the other sacraments, whereas Baptism as the foundation of Christian existence is mentioned regularly. Especially Confirmation is in Schneider's thought closely connected to Baptism, as he sees these rites representing the two-step initiation process of Baptism and laying on of hands found in the NT, whereas filling with the Spirit happens in both (98-99). Only later because of practical and pastoral reasons two separate rites developed in the Western churches (99-100). The subsequent theological reflection then, Schneider explains, described Baptism as beginning of grace and being filled with the Spirit, whereas Confirmation means growth, multiplication, and fullness of what began with Baptism (100). Schneider, therefore, continuously relates Baptism and Confirmation in complementary terms, such as Confirmation unfolds and affirms the initiation that happened in Baptism (99), Confirmation is strengthening, unfolding, and realisation of the basic inclusion in salvation that happened in Baptism (104), and Confirmation completes Baptism and obliges for service (106). Especially regarding infant Baptism, Schneider sees this complementary description as appropriate, and in this context he states that Baptism can be seen as celebration of the affection of God and Confirmation as the personal acceptance of God's love in Christ, confession of faith (108), acceptance of the church, and acceptance of the obligation to service in church and society through the power of the Spirit (105).

In the chapter on the Eucharist Schneider describes with Vatican II the participation in the liturgy as 'right and duty' for the baptised (120).²⁸¹ In the Eucharist a baptised person must give an answer towards God and towards the fellowship of brothers and sisters (116), and in the celebration of the Eucharist the fellowship of all baptised persons with Christ is seen by the world (133). Especially the understanding of the Eucharist as 'sacrifice of

²⁸¹ SC 14.

the church,' is seen by Schneider in relation to Baptism, because as Christians participate through Baptism in Christ's death and become part of his body, they also become a sacrificial offering (159).

Regarding Penance and Anointing of the Sick Schneider states that they belong with Baptism to the sacraments that confer forgiveness of sins. But even though there is a close relationship between Baptism and Penance, according to Trent, they must be distinguished (202), and Schneider especially emphasises that the fundamental sacrament of the forgiveness of sins still is Baptism (204). But their close relationship is visible as in a sense Penance is a repetition of Baptism (198) and the effectiveness of Penance is similar to Baptism found in sacramental forgiveness and readmission into the church (206). Interestingly an introduction to original sin is not given by Schneider in the chapter on Baptism but only appears in the discussion of Penance, however, without any mention of Baptism (189). Schneider briefly introduces original sin as sinful situation that is experienced by every man (*Erbsünde*), which has its origin in a free, historical action of man (*Ursünde*). Schneider sees original sin as an important concept that has been developed by Christian tradition, but also affirms that a theological reinterpretation is important. Surprisingly, how Schneider actually understands the connection between Baptism and original sin is not described in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* at all. As this connection is rather important in traditional Catholic theology, we need to especially consider other works for more detail (cf. 4.1.2).

In his discussion of the Holy Orders Schneider also emphasises the priestly office of all baptised and describes Baptism as consecration (236, 237, 242), which, however, does not mean that the church does not need the ordained ministry. Furthermore, Schneider explains that the teaching of an indelible spiritual character, conferred not only in Holy Orders, but also in Baptism and Confirmation, emphasises in regard to Baptism its unrepeatability (261). Finally, Schneider sees Baptism as constitutive for the sacramentality of Matrimony (275, 293, 294), which is an expression of the calling of all baptised, individually and collectively, to be an effective symbol of God's love to his creation (301). Additionally, Schneider sees an important parallel between Matrimony and Baptism in both being a beginning of a life-long journey of faith (283).

We see, therefore, that Baptism is central to Schneider's sacramental theology, and as foundation of Christian existence Baptism is constitutive for the other sacraments. Schneider is also aware, however, of the practical problems in the Western churches, as many baptised persons do not attend Eucharist anymore, resulting in a Baptism-

certificate-Christianity (*Taufscheinchristentum*; 115, 130, 294). For Schneider, therefore, the identification of Baptism and faith is essential, and he urges not to give up the connection between being baptised and the actual will to be a Christian. Schneider's reflection on the changing situation of the traditional churches also accounts for most of the changes in the Baptism chapter in the new edition of *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* in comparison to the original edition of 1979.²⁸² Whereas the outline and the core of baptismal thought is identical, most of the changes and developments are manifest in the addition of more practical considerations about the changing situation in the Western churches, and in a significant enhancement of the last section on the ecumenical aspects, accompanied by a more careful wording in referring to his own and other denominations' baptismal views.

4.1.2 *Baptism in other Works*

Schneider's interest in practical aspects of Baptism can also be seen in the book *Sieben heilige Feiern*, published together with Martina Patenge in 2004. Mrs. Patenge's main contribution seems to be the descriptions of concrete situations in practical church life, originating from her own experience as *Pastoralreferent*,²⁸³ whereas Schneider provided the theoretical theological content. The general outline of the book is identical with *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* and the core of the Baptism chapter consists of mostly abbreviated and rearranged thoughts from *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*, often even seen in identical sentences. The biggest difference, however, is the focus on infant Baptism as currently normal practice. The beginning of the Baptism chapter, therefore, addresses the motivation of parents who bring their children for Baptism, and the closing subchapters focus on the practical aspects of how to prepare the parents for the Baptism celebration, also addressing the role of the church community, the concrete baptismal liturgy, and describing pouring as normal practice.

Apart from the two books on the sacraments Baptism is also an important topic in Schneider's book on the *Apostles' Creed*. Schneider continuously emphasises the nature of the creed as baptismal creed and not just as confession of faith,²⁸⁴ whereas the original

²⁸² Theodor Schneider, *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes: Grundriß der Sakramententheologie* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1979).

²⁸³ A *Pastoralreferent* is a specific profession of the Catholic Church in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. Although requiring a theological degree, this profession counts as non-ordained lay ministry, working in pastoral care or direct assistance of a priest in the local church. Cf. Sabine Demel, *Vergessene Amtsträger/-innen?: Die Zukunft der Pastoralreferentinnen und Pastoralreferenten* (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 128.

²⁸⁴ Cf. WWG III, 44, 45, 55, 56, 57, 114, 117.

place of the creed in baptismal ceremony indicates that the recipient of Baptism also pledges to live a life of faith in the community of all Christians who confess the same faith.²⁸⁵ With the creed as response to God's address in Baptism (*Gottes Zuwendung*), according to Schneider, the dialogical character of faith becomes manifest, which is especially true for adult Baptism, but in combination with baptismal remembrance and Confirmation it is also possible to see the same in infant Baptism.²⁸⁶ In addition to the creed's place and function in Baptism, Schneider extensively discusses Baptism in the subchapter on the third article's sentence 'I believe in ... forgiveness of sins,' under the title 'Baptism for the forgiveness of sin.'²⁸⁷ The thoughts appearing in this section are essentially a summation of the biblical-systematic and systematic subchapters of the Baptism chapter in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*, with the exception of a new short paragraph on Baptism and church membership. Here Schneider concludes that one who belongs to the church is not as clearly defined as canon law might imply, which underlines the ecumenical relevance of Baptism.²⁸⁸ Another significant mention of Baptism is found in the subchapter on the creedal statement on God the creator, where Schneider discusses evil and original sin and introduces a social-theological model to explain original sin as foundationally disturbed relationship between man and God. Here, finally, we find the missing connection between Baptism and original sin, as Schneider explicitly defines Baptism as entering into a new relational reality in the church, which means overcoming original sin.²⁸⁹

Apart from these elaborate references Baptism is regularly mentioned in Schneider's writings, which is not surprising given the foundational role he attributes to Baptism. Schneider's basic conviction that Baptism has a real effect often results in him expressing that Baptism means becoming a Christian.²⁹⁰ If Schneider says so, however, it is not without being troubled by the situation that many baptised persons do not participate in the life of the church and he, therefore, encourages to live out Baptism and to live with the conscious awareness of being baptised.²⁹¹ Whereas these thoughts basically resemble the christological-soteriological and anthropological aspects of Baptism, and thus the meaning of Baptism for the individual believer, the ecclesiological aspect of Baptism is also

²⁸⁵ Cf. WWG 43, 55, 59.

²⁸⁶ WWG 58.

²⁸⁷ WWG 420–37.

²⁸⁸ WWG 432–34.

²⁸⁹ WWG 176–77. Similarly expressed by Schneider and Sattler in the chapter on the doctrine of creation in HdD 1:226–30.

²⁹⁰ Cf. SHF 32; WWG 46, 358; MG 24; HdD 1:146, 148; Schneider, *Plädoyer*, 12, 62.

²⁹¹ Cf. ZdNG 115; MG 41–42; Schneider, *Gründe*, 10.

found in numerous other references describing Baptism as being incorporated in the community of believers,²⁹² and Baptism as consecration into ministry.²⁹³

4.2 Use of Scripture

We have seen that Schneider's view of Baptism is best and most extensively described in the chapter on Baptism in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*, which, therefore, will be the basis for the detailed examination in the following sections. First, we will now examine how Schneider uses Scripture and literature, and then we will examine and evaluate his use of tradition and church history.

4.2.1 Selection, Distribution and Function of Scripture References

Schneider's selection of Scripture references (cf. Figure 4.1) reflects his general focus on Pauline baptismal theology as references to Pauline writings represent about one third. References to the OT, the general Epistles, and Acts are relatively small in number, with each represented only by about 5-7%. Surprising is Schneider's sparse use of Acts, which contains several descriptive passages about Baptism, and the heavy use of the Gospels that count for half of all Scripture references.

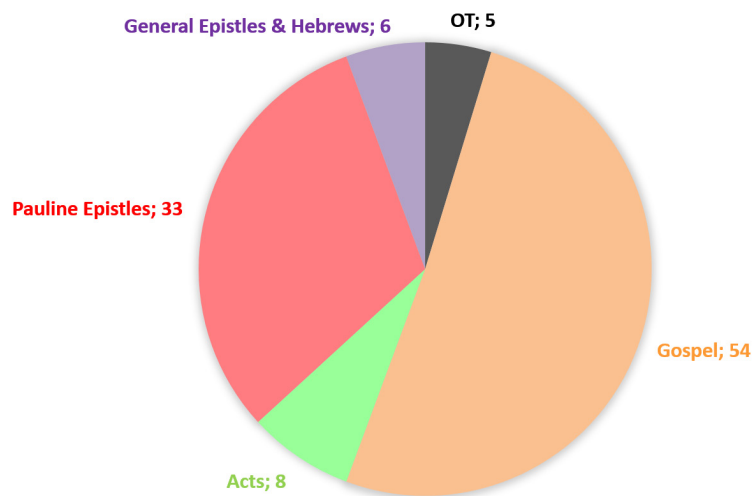


Figure 4.1 Selection of Scripture references (Schneider, *ZdNG*, chap. 2)

The reason for the many Gospel references becomes clearer in the distribution of the Scripture references (cf. Figure 4.2), where most of them appear in the exegetical section of the historical subchapter, showing Schneider's attempt to trace the roots of Baptism to John the Baptist and Jesus' own baptism. In the systematic section Schneider also uses Gospel references to explain Christian exclusivism, which provides the rationale for the

²⁹² Cf. KT 242; WWG 135; MG 41-42; Schneider, *Plädoyer*, 53.

²⁹³ Cf. KT 257, 265, 273-74, 298; DTV 242; SHF 188-89; MG 38.

necessity of Baptism for salvation, however, balanced with Paul's notion of God's will for universal salvation (81-83).

The rare references to Acts are used by Schneider in the biblical-systematic foundation to explain that the practice of Baptism in the name of Christ shows its difference from John's baptism in expressing repentance and change of authorities (66). The explanation for the effect of Baptism in the name of Christ, Schneider sees in the mystical connection with Christ and his salvation history described in Romans 6 (67). In the systematic section statements from Acts are also used to discuss the relationship of Baptism and faith (83), supplemented by references to Pauline writings (80-81) and the general epistles (84), essentially showing that Baptism and faith are exchangeable. Finally, an important concentration of Pauline passages is found after Schneider's discussion of the historical roots of Baptism, where he in the following biblical-theological résumé describes Galatians 3:26-28, 1 Corinthians 6:11, and 1 Corinthians 12:13 as representative summation of the baptismal theology of the Early Church (74-75).

In the description of the ecclesiological aspect of Baptism Schneider uses Pauline letters, John's Gospel and the general epistles to show that Baptism is also equated with regeneration (*Wiedergeburt*) as it constitutes the new life in the fellowship of believers. Here also the references to the OT appear, partially embedded in quotes from Vatican II, to explain the fellowship of believers as the new people of God. Schneider speaks here about God's covenant with his people, but he neither talks about circumcision as sign of the covenant, nor does he ever use Colossians 2:11-12 that connects circumcision and Baptism. In this Schneider, at least partially, omits an important part of OT theology, which is a 'major mistake' of many studies of Baptism²⁹⁴ and often seen in Catholic baptismal theologies.²⁹⁵

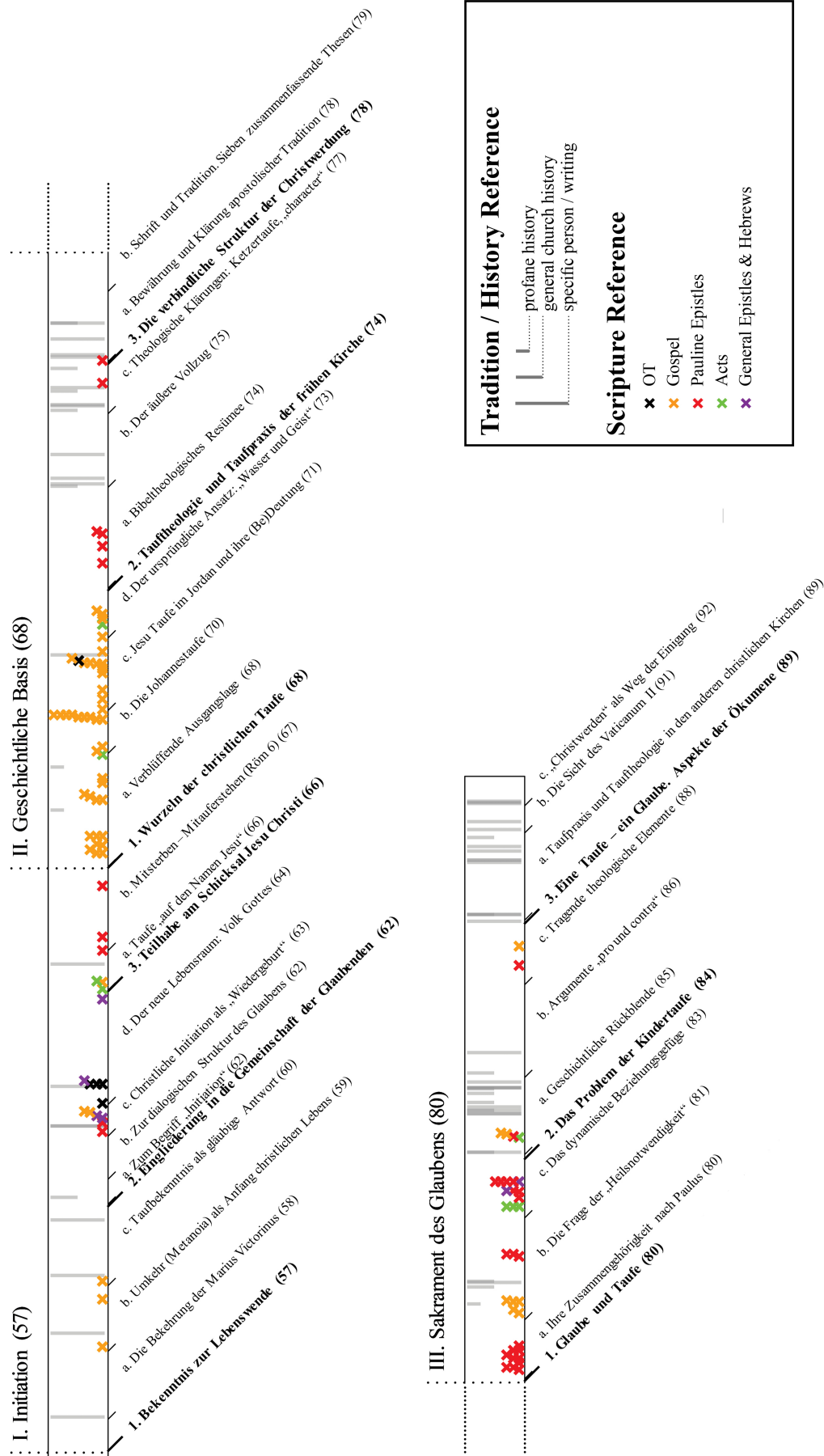
The examination of where Schneider uses few Scripture references gives additional insight. In the biblical-systematic foundation's description of the anthropological aspect and in the first half of the ecclesiological aspect, Schneider uses only a few references to the Gospels regarding repentance. The purpose of these sections, however, still is the explication of the scriptural meaning of Baptism, but presented as a synthesis of scriptural motifs, testimonies of tradition (cf. 4.4), and insights from secular sciences (cf. 4.3). Also, in the second half of the historical subchapter, beginning with the subsection about the external practice of Baptism practically no Scripture references are found, which is

²⁹⁴ Witherington, *Waters*, 5.

²⁹⁵ Fesko, *Baptism*, 10.

understandable considering Schneider's explanation that the NT does not provide details about the external practice of Baptism (76), but for the following theological developments in history we would expect more scriptural foundations. Also, in his discussion of infant Baptism Schneider only uses a few Scripture references at the very beginning and end, which do not contribute to his rationale of infant Baptism. The whole discussion about infant Baptism is solely built on systematic arguments drawn from Scripture and tradition in previous sections, which supports Schneider's assessment that infant Baptism is a special form of Christian Baptism and its legitimacy must be established by theological arguments (86). In the last subsection about the ecumenical aspects of Baptism Schneider does not refer to Scripture at all, but instead uses references to Vatican II to explain the ecumenical significance of Baptism. In his biblical-systematic foundation, however, Schneider used 1 Corinthians 12:13 to describe Baptism as foundation of unity for all Christians (75), so his thought still is based on Scripture, but he could have done it more clearly, for example, by also using Ephesians 4:3-6, an important passage also used in Vatican II's argument but not seen in Schneider's whole chapter.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Cf. UR 2, 7.



Explanation: The long horizontal box symbolises the text body of Schneider's baptismal chapter, to be read from the left (lowest page number) to the right (highest page number). The labels on top and below the box indicate the subchapters (top), sections, and sub-sections (both below) with their range indicated and the beginning page number given in brackets. Inside the box the positions of tradition, Scripture, and literature references in the text body are marked. The vertical dimension in the box has no meaning and is only used to straighten out the markers for better readability.

Figure 4.2 Distribution and category of Scripture references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)

4.2.2 *The Special Nature of Scriptural Statements on Baptism*

Schneider observes that the statements on Baptism are numerous, full of nuances, and found in nearly all books of the NT intertwined with ecclesiological and ethical motifs (74). The resulting diversity regarding the meaning of Baptism, like washing, sanctification, rebirth, illumination, unification or participation is considered by Schneider in the biblical-systematic subchapter, however, the different statements are addressed in different sections and are not directly evaluated against each other. The diverse statements about the relationship of the gift of the Spirit and Baptism are resolved by Schneider into the plain statement that Baptism mediates the Spirit (75, 79, 80), whereas the diversity is addressed in the later chapter about Confirmation (98-100). There Schneider confirms the basic connection of Baptism and the Spirit, while describing the other emphases as referring to the additional gift of charismata.

Schneider also freely acknowledges there are missing statements about Baptism, for example, that infant Baptism is not addressed at all as the household Baptisms in Acts do not allow certain conclusions. Schneider also acknowledges that the ambiguous passages that are often used to argue for infant Baptism, like the holiness of children of Christian parents (1 Corinthians 7:14) or the *Kinderevangelium* (Mark 10:15) in combination with John 3:5, are not suitable to defend or refute infant Baptism. As Schneider questions the historicity of Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:16, he also concludes that a concrete historical date for the beginning of Baptism is missing in the NT, and only impulses are found that led to the development of Baptism after Jesus' resurrection (73).

Schneider also affirms that there are unclear passages in the NT, for example regarding the external practice of Baptism (76). The concrete conferral of Baptism, therefore, belongs for Schneider to the apostolic heritage that must be transmitted to following generations (60) and he consequently only uses tradition to further describe baptismal practice and formula (cf. 4.4).

4.2.3 *The Complexity of NT Baptismal Theology*

Schneider generally urges to acknowledge the whole spectrum of biblical theology and warns against constrictions and misinterpretations that result from focusing on single aspects.²⁹⁷ Consequently, he observes a wide theology of Baptism in the NT (74) and distinguishes different streams and developments in NT theology, for example, the early

²⁹⁷ KT 302; DTV 46.

baptismal understanding of the post-Easter disciples, the baptismal theology of Paul, and the baptismal theology of late layers of NT tradition.

The early baptismal understanding is described by Schneider as an appropriation of the external sign of John's baptism, connected with the name of Jesus and filled with the new reality of the risen Jesus and the work of the Spirit (73). An expression of late baptismal theology in the NT is seen by Schneider in the equation of Baptism and regeneration, emphasising that regeneration and new life is God's work (63). The main focus of Schneider's thought, however, is Paul's baptismal theology, especially seen in his synopsis of the common biblical baselines that mainly refers to Pauline theology, described by Schneider as reflection of the original baptismal instruction of the early Christians (74). In Paul's theology Schneider especially emphasises the soteriological or mystic-christological aspect of Romans 6, which provides the necessary corrective to the ecclesiological aspects of Baptism (67), and also the constitutive meaning of faith and the parallelism of faith and Baptism (80-81).

4.2.4 *Scriptural Authority and Historical Criticism*

Schneider acknowledges and uses the results of historical-critical²⁹⁸ exegesis throughout the chapter and he explicitly distinguishes himself from earlier times stating that they did not yet consider the historicity of NT statements (69).²⁹⁹ He does not, however, blindly adopt all critical results, seen, for example, in his rejection of the claim of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* that Baptism is derived from the consecration rites of Hellenistic mystery cults (69). His general acceptance of historical-critical results, however, is obvious, and he speaks of several layers of tradition and different streams of transmission in the NT (63), resulting in the understanding of Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:16 as insertions of later tradition (70). Schneider sees John's Gospel as most advanced in its theological reflexion, expressed in the writer's claim that Jesus himself baptised to show Jesus' superiority over John the Baptist, even though in John 4:2 the original knowledge is retained (69). Schneider also acknowledges the two-source hypothesis of the development of the synoptic Gospels and accepts a late composition date of second Peter and

²⁹⁸ In this investigation we refer with the term historical-critical method to higher criticism. We are aware, however, that there is not a monolithic historical-critical method, but that the term must be seen in connection to key principles of biblical interpretation, such as the understanding that Scripture is a historical document that can be criticised by human reason. Cf. William J Larkin, *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics: Interpreting and Applying the Authoritative Word in a Relativistic Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 30–32; Gerhard Maier, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, 5th ed. (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 2005), 213–70; Donald A. Carson, *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures* (London: IVP, 2016), 373–74.

²⁹⁹ In other works, Schneider explicitly describes the historical-critical method as essential, however, also freely admitting its limitations. Cf. WWG 107, 188–89, 191, 240.

James, even introducing the *Didache* as written before these epistles (75-76). With his use and acknowledgement of historical-critical exegesis Schneider follows Vatican II's explicit recommendation of using such methods,³⁰⁰ and its typical effects like 'the acceptance of critical conclusions concerning authorship, dating, and unity of the books and concerning the historicity of biblical narratives' are seen in his thoughts on Baptism.³⁰¹

Despite Schneider's acknowledgment of historical-critical exegesis, Scripture still is for him the abiding norm of our faith (83) and of all further historical development of baptismal practice and theology (74, 78). Schneider's solution of the resulting hermeneutical conflict between historical-critical exegesis and the assertion of the absolute authority of Scripture is also seen in the Baptism chapter: although Schneider acknowledges that the historical-critical results do not allow to define a historical date for the post-Easter introduction of Baptism, the fact that the Early Church practised it and the wide baptismal theology in the NT outweighs the critical results of the single passages. Schneider, therefore, does not see the authority Scripture in the inerrancy of every sentence but in its entire message.³⁰² The same thought is also expressed in the German Catholic adult catechism and it additionally explains that to understand the bigger picture of Scripture the contemporary faith of the church must be taken as starting point for the interpretation of Scripture but then Scripture also must interpret the teaching and the practice of the church.³⁰³ If the historical-critical exegesis is placed in this bigger process of interpretation in the church, it can contribute to deeper knowledge without becoming the absolute authority, a methodical approach also visible in Schneider's work. For Schneider, therefore, the use of the historical-critical method does not diminish the authority of Scripture but gives Scripture the authority to critically question and guide the teaching office of the church, instead of letting magisterial teachings limit the understanding of Scripture. Consequently, Schneider continuously demands that the teaching office, including the Pope, bishops, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, must consider recent academic exegetical results.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ DV 12; cf. Schneider, *Reform*, 42–43.

³⁰¹ Anthony N. S. Lane, 'Roman Catholic Views of Biblical Authority from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present', in *Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*, by Donald A. Carson (London: IVP, 2016), 317.

³⁰² MG 39. Cf. also 'Nur im Ganzen des biblischen Zeugnisses, des Kanons der heiligen Schriften sind die Einzelaussagen vor Entzerrungen zu bewahren.' KT 302.

³⁰³ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, *Katholischer Erwachsenenkatechismus: Das Glaubensbekenntnis der Kirche* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985), 50.

³⁰⁴ Theodor Schneider, ed., *Mann und Frau: Grundproblem theologischer Anthropologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1989), 16–17; SHF 216; KT 301–2; Gustave Thils and Theodor Schneider, *Glaubensbekenntnis und Treueid: Klarstellungen zu den 'neuen' römischen Formeln für kirchliche Amtsträger* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1990), 110–11, 117–18, 121–23.

4.3 Use of Literature

Now we will examine Schneider’s use of literature. Works that are considered by Schneider as testimonies of tradition and history are not included here and will be examined as references to tradition in the following subchapter.

4.3.1 Selection of Literature References

To develop and support his view of Baptism Schneider uses literature from the theological fields of exegesis, historical, systematic, practical, and ecumenical theology. His heavy use of systematic references shows his systematic background but also indicates that Baptism is a subject that must be approached systematically to arrive at conclusions that might not be reached by the mere use of exegetical reflection.³⁰⁵ The relative small number of historical references shows that Schneider does not support his references to tradition with additional literature, and the significant presence of practical and ecumenical works displays his interest in the practical and ecumenical implications of Baptism. Schneider also uses literature from the secular fields of anthropology, psychology, and philosophy,³⁰⁶ thus also following a recommendation of Vatican II that calls for interaction with other sciences and their findings.³⁰⁷

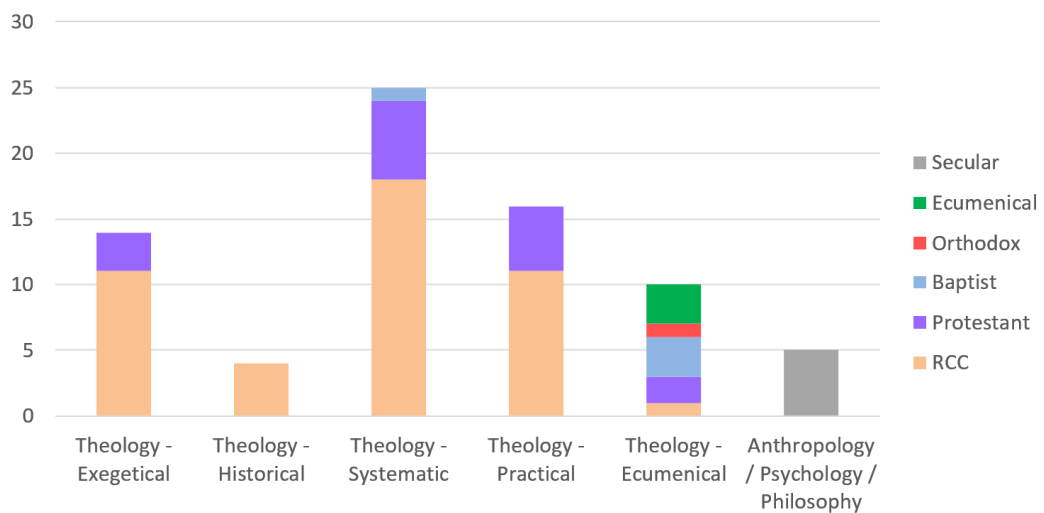


Figure 4.3 Category, number and origin of literature references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)

³⁰⁵ Cf. Witherington, *Waters*, 5.

³⁰⁶ Without a dedicated reference to literature Schneider also applies thoughts of pedagogics (87-88) and quotes thoughts of sociology originating from a theological work (62).

³⁰⁷ GS 62; cf. Job Kozhamthadam, ‘Vatican II on Science & Technology’, *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 63, no. 1–3 (2007): 619–28.

The origin of the used works is mainly Catholic, but in the core theological fields Protestant state church authors are also represented by about a quarter (cf. Figure 4.3). This shows Schneider's ecumenical interest, but also indicates the decreasing difference in exegetical results and the similar practical challenges faced by the mainstream churches. From the free church side only Baptist works are included, which shows the decent academic level the Baptists have achieved as well as their role as major discussion partner on the side of believer's Baptism in the ecumenical discussion. This also confirms the selection of a Baptist theologian for this investigation. The presence of one Orthodox work again shows Schneider's ecumenical interest, while also indicating that Orthodox theology does not play an important role in German theology.

The publishing time of the used literature is mainly after Vatican II, indicating that Schneider uses material already reflecting post conciliar thinking (cf. Figure 4.4). Schneider also thoroughly revised the literature for the newer editions of *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*, however, with one exception no exegetical work is added, which might reflect the fact that there is not much change in the exegetical results regarding Baptism anymore. Most of the later added literature is of systematic, practical, and ecumenical nature, all being an expression of a growing interest in practical and ecumenical topics as the added systematic works are either in relation to other denominations' baptismal views or address the universal claim of Christianity in an multireligious environment.

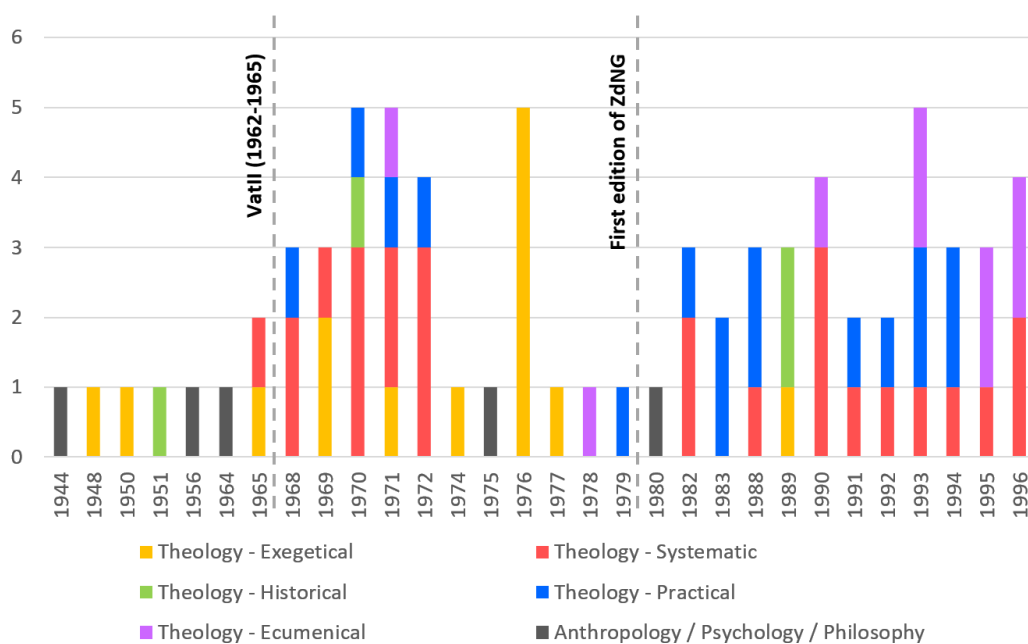
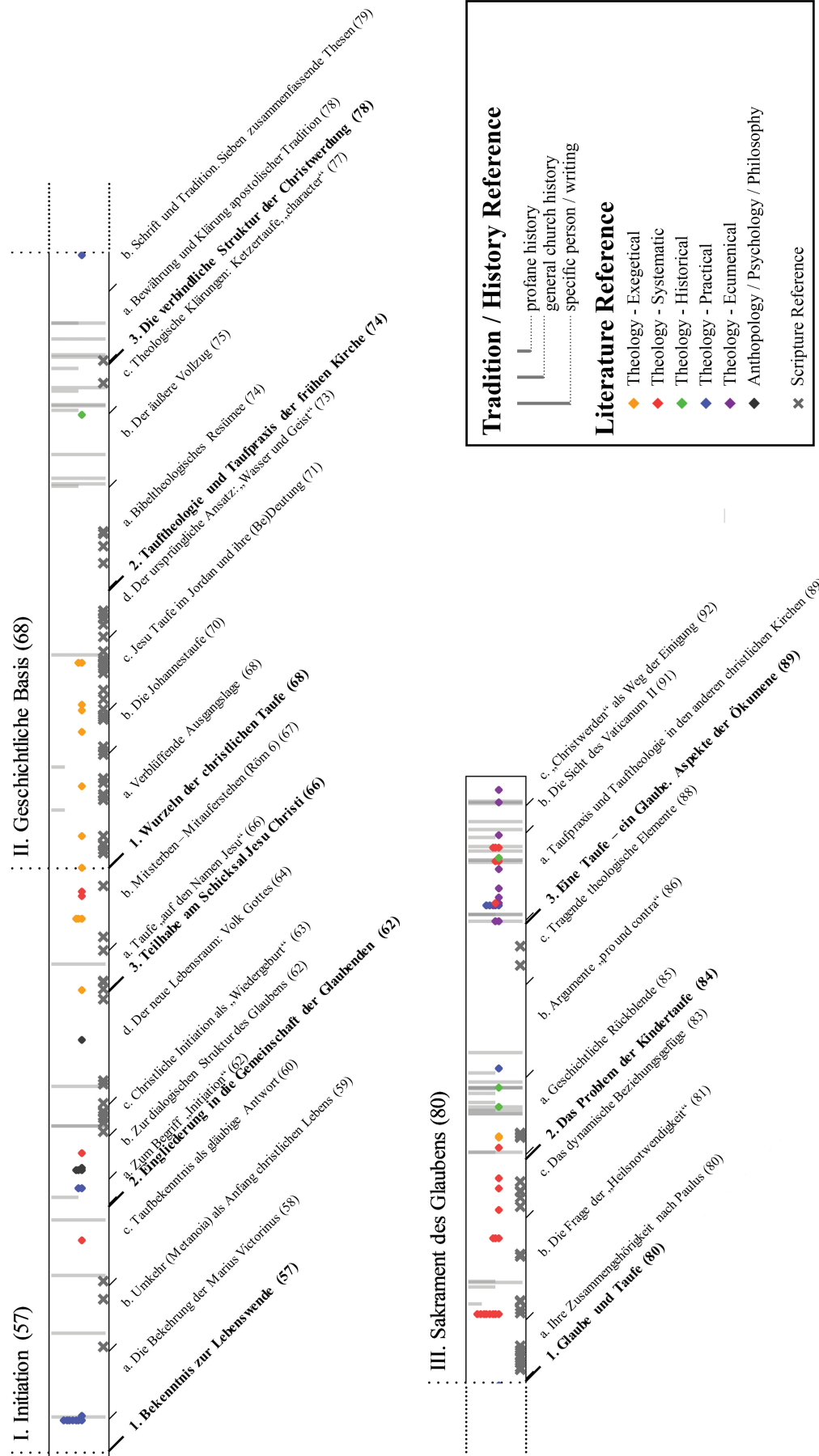


Figure 4.4 Publishing time and category of literature references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)

4.3.2 Distribution and Function of Literature References

The position of specific categories of literature references matches the overall structure of Schneider's Baptism chapter (cf. Figure 4.5). The practical references correspond with the introduction of the chapter and with its ecumenical ending, where also all ecumenical works are found. Similarly, nearly all systematic works are found in the systematic subchapter, whereas the exegetical works accompany the Scripture references in the exegetical section of the historical subchapter. Only in the biblical-theological subchapter we see a more mixed picture of systematic, exegetical, and secular references, whereas the secular references are used by Schneider regarding the ecclesiological aspect to emphasise that faith as well as human life is not lived in isolation but is always embedded in a human community.

In general Schneider uses the literature references to support his claims, in some places with lengthy quotations mostly from Catholic works, and to supply information for further study. Schneider uses literature nearly exclusively positively, only referencing works that support or explain his views. There is only one exception where Schneider in a footnote negatively evaluates a Protestant author who proposes to substitute Baptism with other contemporary forms. While Schneider still acknowledges the sincerity of the author's thought, he rejects his position clearly (80).



Explanation: The long horizontal box symbolises the text body of Schneider's baptismal chapter, to be read from the left (lowest page number) to the right (highest page number). The labels on top and below the box indicate the subchapters (top), sections, and sub-sections (both below) with their range indicated and the beginning page number given in brackets. Inside the box the positions of tradition, Scripture, and literature references in the text body are marked. The vertical dimension in the box has no meaning and is only used to straighten out the markers for better readability.

Figure 4.5 Distribution and category of literature references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)

4.3.3 Selection of Literature Recommendations

After the main body of the Baptism chapter Schneider provides a list of recommended literature. About one third of the references overlaps with the literature in the chapter body, however, the distribution of the categories looks slightly different, as the systematic works are decreased, and the practical works are clearly dominating (cf. Figure 4.6). In the practical and systematic categories that are closely connected to actual denominational practice and theology, most works are still Catholic, but surprisingly in the areas of exegetical and historical theology we see a much greater presence of Protestant literature. This shows not only the acknowledgement of the contributions of Protestant theology to exegetical and historical research, but again might indicate the disappearing distinction between Catholic and Protestant exegesis since Vatican II's acceptance of the historical-critical method.³⁰⁸ Finally, as inside the chapter body, the sole representative of other German denominations and free churches are the Baptists. In regard to the publishing time of the recommended literature (cf. Figure 4.7), we see again Schneider's post Vatican II emphasis, and the addition of many practical and ecumenical works confirms the importance of these fields in the baptismal discussion in the twentieth century (cf. Appendix 1).

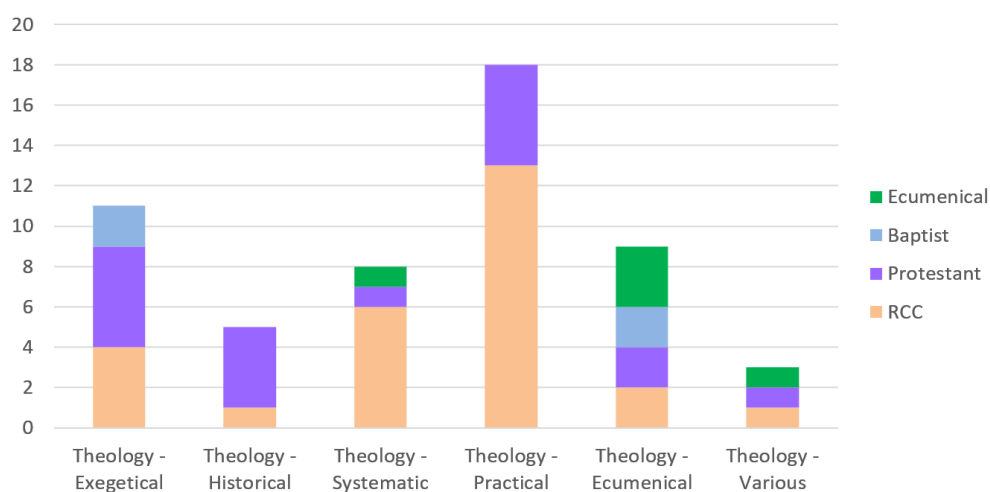


Figure 4.6 Category, number and origin of recommended literature (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)

³⁰⁸ Cf. Cilliers Breytenbach, 'Das II. Vatikanische Konzil und „evangelische“ Exegese des Neuen Testaments', *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift* 31, no. 2 (2014): 344, 357–58.

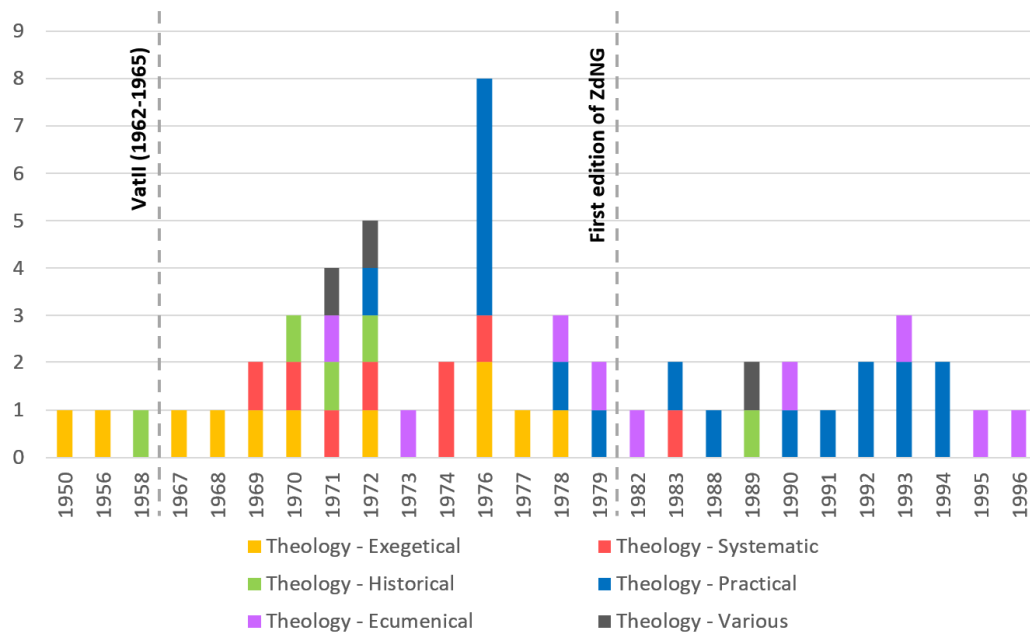


Figure 4.7 Publishing time and category of recommended literature (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)

4.4 Explicit Use of Tradition and Church History

To see how Schneider uses tradition and church history to develop his view of Baptism we first collect all explicit references to tradition, church history, and profane history and we examine the general features of selection and usage. Secondly, we examine the distribution of the references in the text, and how they are used and evaluated (cf. 3.3.1).

4.4.1 Selection of References to Tradition and Church History

Schneider uses references to tradition and church history mainly in the main text body, whereas only about 5% of the references are given in footnotes. This shows the high value that Schneider attributes to tradition and church history, as the references are actively used in the main line of argument. About two thirds of Schneider's references to tradition and church history are specific references, with one third of the specific references being actual quotations (cf. Figure 4.8). This again shows the value Schneider places in tradition, as it is not presented as unspecified historic information, but connected to specific persons or writings, often even quoted directly in the text. There are only two actual objects of tradition referenced, which are the architectural element of beautiful Baptisteries and a painting on a famous altar in Germany. Although these are insignificant in number, their mere presence still shows that Schneider does not confine tradition to writings alone. The general references to events or developments in church history are represented by about one third and partly are used to provide historical background information for the specific

references. The references to profane history are rather insignificant, in number as well as in content. The clear focus in Schneider's use of references, therefore, is seen in the specific references and their accompanying references to developments in church history.

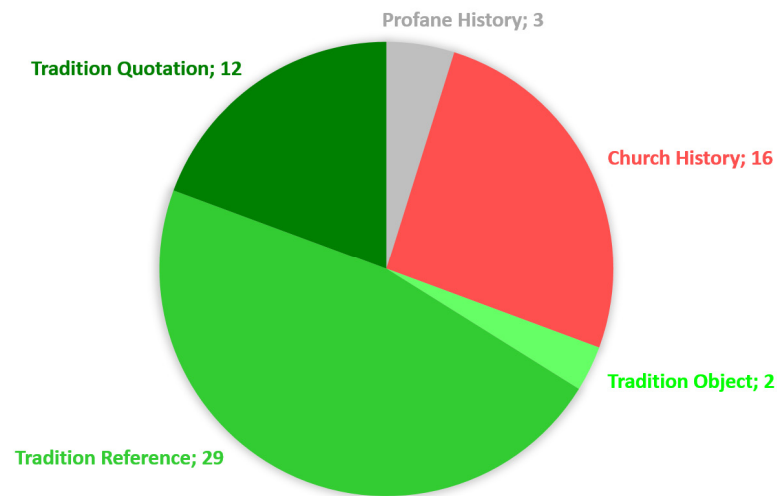


Figure 4.8 Type of tradition and church history references (Schneider, *ZdNG*, chap. 2)

The temporal distribution of the references to tradition and church history indicates which periods are most important for Schneider (cf. Figure 4.9). The references to the Early Church are most numerous, and among them Augustine is represented by about one quarter and also several references to early baptismal creeds are included. The Apostolic³⁰⁹ and Early Medieval periods with only two references each are practically not present. The references to the High and Late Medieval periods are also few, including only one reference to Aquinas as specific theologian. The references to the Reformation are more numerous, with specific mention of the main reformers Luther, Zwingli and Calvin and Trent. Then again, there is a gap with practically no reference from Trent till WWII. The most references besides the Early Church, therefore, are originating from the second half of the twentieth century, with specific references to the infant Baptism discussion, especially Karl Barth, and to documents of Vatican II, which all are quotations. The liturgical and ecumenical developments following Vatican II are also represented by several references to practical teaching documents of the church, and to ecumenical documents, such as BEM. Most of the quotations are from the Early Church, from Vatican II, and from the infant Baptism discussion, which underlines the importance of these areas in the

³⁰⁹ References to the Apostolic period, defined here as AD 0-100, naturally are only few as per definition the most important Christian source, the NT, is not counted among the references to tradition. The number of references to Apostolic times, therefore, mainly indicates the author's interaction with non-Christian sources from this period.

thought of Schneider. In *Sieben heilige Feiern* Schneider uses a reduced sub-selection of the same references, basically showing the same features more clearly: a strong presence of the Early Church and Vatican II, whereas the Medievales and other references to councils, popes, or official teaching of the Catholic Church are completely missing.

One curious fact, however, is that Schneider neither in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* (1998), nor in *Sieben heilige Feiern* (2004), refers to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), declared by pope John Paul II as ‘a sure norm for teaching the faith’³¹⁰ or to the German Catholic catechism (1985).³¹¹ The reason for this might be a general mistrust towards catechisms on Schneider’s part, as he rather negatively evaluates that until the mid-20th century the German catechisms all reflected a structure and theology misguided by Enlightenment thought (37).

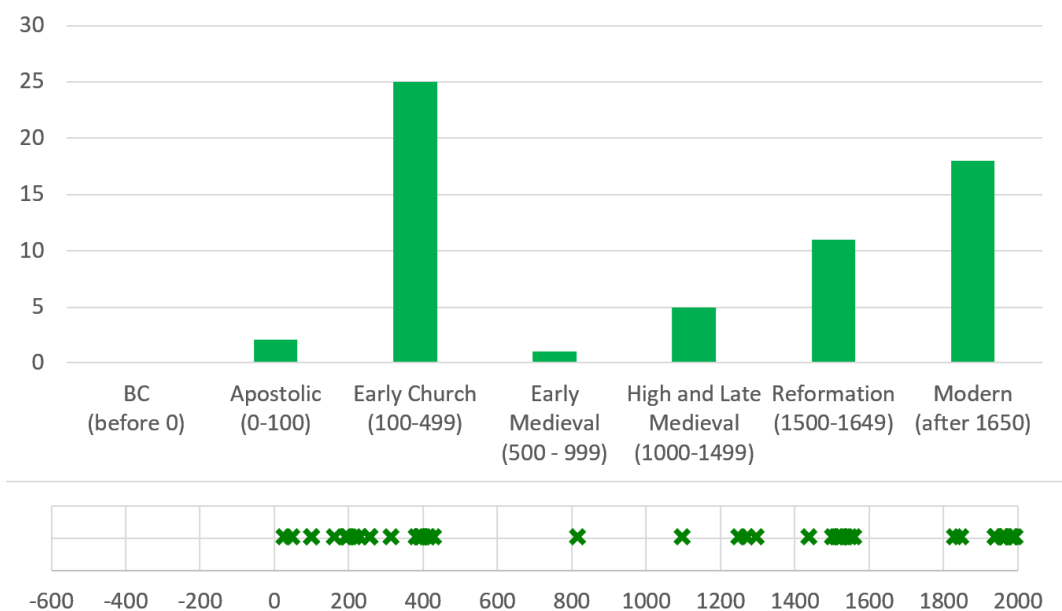


Figure 4.9 Temporal distribution of tradition and history references (Schneider, *ZdNG*, chap. 2)

The following table (Table 4.1) presents a detailed collection of all references to tradition, church history, and profane history, used by Schneider in the Baptism chapter of *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*, including the date,³¹² the page number, and the function of the

³¹⁰ CCC 5.

³¹¹ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, *Katholischer Erwachsenenkatechismus*.

³¹² For the date, the earliest probable date is used. If a specific work is given, the date of the work is used. If a view of an author is generally stated, the date of the earliest work containing this view is used. If referred to an event or development, the beginning date is used. If possible, an exact date is determined, however, the argument of this thesis does not depend on exact dates but rather on the period of a reference. Therefore, if no exact date is available or a date is disputed an estimate is made.

reference.³¹³ The first part of the table consists of the specific references to Christian authors or writings, and if the author's view is given without a specific source, it is stated in square brackets.³¹⁴ If the reference is a quotation it is marked with a leading black square (■) in the function column. The second part of the table are specific references to documents, declarations, and objects of tradition, and the third part presents the general references to church history and profane history. All three parts of the table are organised according to date.

Table 4.1 References to Tradition, Church History, and History (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)

NON-CANONICAL CHRISTIAN AUTHORS & WRITINGS	<i>Date</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Func.</i>
Didache	~100	75	■Src+
Justin Martyr [Regeneration as designation for Baptism and its effect] ³¹⁵	165	63	Aff+
Tertullian [Early testimony of the fact of infant Baptism] ³¹⁶	193	85	Inf
Irenaeus [Regeneration as designation for Baptism and its effect] ³¹⁷	200	63	Aff+
Origen [Early testimony of the fact of infant Baptism] ³¹⁸	231	85	Inf
Stephen of Rome [Position in rebaptism controversy: heretics use baptismal practice of the church and thus their Baptism is valid] ³¹⁹	255	77	Src+
Hippolytus <i>Traditio apostolica</i>	215	60	■Src+
Cyprian [Position in rebaptism controversy: heretical baptism is invalid] ³²⁰	255	77	Ill
Ambrose [Subjective justification is possible through the desire to get baptised (<i>votum sacramenti</i>)] ³²¹	392	82	Aff+

³¹³ For the explanation of the functions and used abbreviations see 3.3.1.

³¹⁴ If no specific source of a view is provided, we will check the claim and provide a possible source in the footnote.

³¹⁵ Cf. *Apologia 1:61, 66*.

³¹⁶ Cf. *De baptismo*.

³¹⁷ Cf. *Against Heresies; Demonstration*.

³¹⁸ Cf. *Homilies on Luke; Homilies on Leviticus; Commentary on Romans*.

³¹⁹ Stephen's position can only be reconstructed by the writings of others, e.g. Cyprian. Cf. Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 383–85.

³²⁰ Cf. *Letters 69-74*.

³²¹ Cf. *On the death of Valentinian*.

Augustine			
<i>Confessiones</i>	397	58,	■III+
		59	■III+
[Baptismal practice in Augustine's church] ³²²	391	76	Src+
[Baptism leaves an indelible character] ³²³	400	77	Src+
[Infant Baptism is affirmation of the doctrine of original sin] ³²⁴	412	85	Inf
Pelagius (and his followers)			
[Infant Baptism as argument against doctrine of original sin] ³²⁵	412	85	Inf
Rhabanus Maurus			
<i>De institutione clericorum</i>	819	66	■III+
Scholastic Theology			
[Distinction between God as first cause of a sacrament (<i>principalis causa</i>) and human minister as instrument (<i>instrumentalis causa</i>)] ³²⁶	~1300	78	Src+
Thomas Aquinas			
<i>Summa Theologiae</i>	1273		
On Baptism (3:66-71)		78	Src+
Martin Luther			
[Advocacy of infant Baptism] ³²⁷	1523	86	Inf
[Baptismal theology of Luther and Lutheran churches corresponds in all important points with the common tradition] ³²⁸	1529	89	Inf+
Huldreich Zwingli			
[Advocacy of infant Baptism, but emphasis of personal faith for the validity of sacraments] ³²⁹	1525	86	Inf
[Baptism as a confirming symbol of preceded inner conversion] ³³⁰	1525	90	Inf-
John Calvin			
[Advocacy of infant Baptism, but emphasise of personal faith for the validity of sacraments] ³³¹	1539	86	Inf
[Baptism as a confirming symbol of preceded inner conversion] ³³²	1539	90	Inf-

³²² Reconstructed from Augustine's letters and sermons, and from archaeological excavations.

³²³ Cf. *De baptismo; Contra litteras Petilianas*.

³²⁴ Cf. *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvularum* (1:16:21-39:70).

³²⁵ The Pelagians argued against original sin, saying if a sinner begets a sinner, then a righteous man would beget a righteous man (*De pecc. mer.* 2:9:11), which would render Baptism unnecessary for the children of the righteous man (*De pecc. mer.* 2:25:41). The existing practice of infant Baptism, therefore, is used as argument against the doctrine of original sin, as it shows that the entrance into the kingdom of God (cf. John 3:5) must not be denied to the 'eternal and certain life' of the infant (*De grat. Christi* 2:20:22). Cf. Otto Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius: die theologische Position der römischen Bischöfe im pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411-432* (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1975), 21–22.

³²⁶ Cf. Sum 3:62:1; Scotus, *ordinatio* 4:1:1, 4:1:3.

³²⁷ Cf. *Das Tauffbüchlin* (BSELK 847).

³²⁸ The LC represents Luther's baptismal theology as well as the Lutheran churches'.

³²⁹ Cf. ZW 4:206-337.

³³⁰ Cf. ZW 3:757-759, 763-773; 4:224-225.

³³¹ Cf. Inst. 4:16.

³³² Cf. Inst. 4:15:15.

Dietrich, Bonhoeffer <i>Gutachten zur Tauffrage</i> ³³³	1942	87	■Aff+
Karl Barth <i>Die kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe</i>	1943	85	■Inf
[Argument against infant Baptism] ³³⁴	1943	86	Inf
[Distinction of water baptism and baptism by the Holy Spirit] ³³⁵	1967	91	Ill-
Schlink, Edmund <i>Die Lehre von der Taufe</i> ³³⁶	1969	89	Inf+

CREEDS, COUNCILS & OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Early baptismal creeds with trinitarian structure ³³⁷	~200	92	Aff+
<i>Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed</i> (DH 150)	381	92	Ill+
<i>Credo of Hippo Regius</i> (DH 21) ³³⁸	391	61	■Ill+
Council of Florence Decree for the Armenians (DH 1310-1328)	1439	78	■Src+
Council of Trent Canons on Baptism (DH 1614-1627)	1547	78	Src+
Second Vatican Council <i>Lumen Gentium</i> (LG 9, 15)	1964	64, 91	■Aff+ ■Src+
<i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> (UR 22)	1964	91	■Src+
Codex Iuris Canonici 1983, Can. 849-878	1983	89	Ill+
Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism, No. 92-101	1993	89	Ill+

ECUMENICAL DOCUMENTS

<i>Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry</i>	1982	91	Inf
<i>Confessing the One Faith: An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith as it is Confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)</i>	1991	92	Ill+

³³³ Bonhoeffer's fear was the shift from the extreme of a magical understanding of Baptism towards the other extreme of faith as human work, seen in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'Zur Tauffrage (1942)', in *Gesammelte Schriften. Dritter Band*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (München: Kaiser, 1960), 431–54.

³³⁴ Cf. Karl Barth, *Die kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe. Von Karl Barth. (Theologische Studien. Herausgegeben von Karl Barth. Heft 14)*. (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1943), 37–40.

³³⁵ Cf. the two-part structure of Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik. Das Christliche Leben (Fragment). Die Taufe als Begründung des christlichen Lebens, 4. Band 4. Teil. (IV/4), die Lehre von der Versöhnung*. (Evangelischer Verlag, 1967).

³³⁶ According to Schneider, Schlink's work led the way for the recognition of the ecumenical dimension of Baptism.

³³⁷ Cf. *Traditio Apostolica* (DH 10); DH 11-64.

³³⁸ Cf. Augustine, Sermon 215.

OBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Baptisteries of the Early Church ³³⁹	~300	75	III+
Crucifixion board of the Isenheim Altar	1512	72	III+

EVENTS & DEVELOPMENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

Baptismal practice of the Early Church ³⁴⁰	~100	75	Aff+
Martyrdom of a catechist equals Baptism (blood baptism) ³⁴¹	~200	82	Aff+
Heretical baptism / rebaptism controversy	255	77	Inf
Donatist controversy: Baptism leaves a ‘character’	~400	77	Inf
Pelagian controversy: infant Baptism is fact, questioned is only its meaning ³⁴²	412	85	Inf
The close connection of Baptism and the doctrine of original sin led to imbalances (e.g. infant Baptism as model for Baptism or Baptism as completed event, also in case of infant Baptism) ³⁴³	~430	86	Inf-
Infant Baptism is stumbling block in medieval reform attempts ³⁴⁴	~1100	86	Inf
Attribution of sacramental ‘character’ to Confirmation and Ordination ³⁴⁵	~1250	77	Inf+
Discussion about ‘Baptism of desire’ (<i>Begierdetaufe</i>) in modern era ³⁴⁶	~1500	82	III+
Objections and questions of the Reformation about baptismal theology	~1520	78	Inf
Rejection of infant Baptism by the Anabaptist movement ³⁴⁷	1524	86	Inf
Use of technical term ‘initiation’ for Christian Baptism in modern Catholic and Protestant theology ³⁴⁸	1846	62	Inf
Different positions in the infant Baptism discussion depend on understanding of church and sacrament	1943	85	Inf

³³⁹ Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 769.

³⁴⁰ Cf. *Didache*; Ignatius’ letters. Cf. *Ibid.*, 201–20.

³⁴¹ Cf. Tertullian, *De Baptismo* 16.

³⁴² Wright, therefore, calls infant Baptism ‘a practice in search of a theology.’ Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 28–29.

³⁴³ These developments might have needed some time to unfold, but ‘Augustine’s baptismal revolution prescribed them.’ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁴⁴ E.g. Petrobrusians, Arnoldists, Waldensians, and Bohemian brethren.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Alexander of Hales, Bonaventura, and Albertus Magnus.

³⁴⁶ Especially discussed in the Catholic Church from the 15th century on, as in the era of discovery and colonisation, the question about the salvation of many unbaptised people arose. Cf. ‘*Begierdetaufe*’ in Herbert Vorgrimler, *Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch* (Freiburg: Herder, 2012).

³⁴⁷ The term Anabaptist is not used as theological evaluation in this investigation but out of practical considerations to distinguish between the groups of the radical Reformation and the later Baptists. Schneider himself phrases neutrally ‘(Wieder-) Täuferbewegung,’ thus combining their self-understanding and their judgement from other groups.

³⁴⁸ Used in Catholic theology since Vatican II, in Protestant theology it already appears in the *Erlanger Schule*, e.g. in Johann Wilhelm Friedrich Höfling, *Das Sakrament der Taufe, nebst den anderen damit zusammenhängen den Akten der Initiation* (Erlangen: Palm, 1846), 60.

Restructured baptismal liturgy after Vatican II acknowledged particularity of infant Baptism through new separate rite ³⁴⁹	1969	86	III+
Reception progress of the BEM document: different denominations are able to acknowledge wide parts of the baptismal statements ³⁵⁰	1982	91	Inf
Former practice of conditional Baptism at conversion of Protestants to the Catholic Church obsolete ³⁵¹	1983	89	Inf+

PROFANE HISTORY

Jewish ritual washings and proselyte baptism	~30	70	Inf
Consecration rites of Hellenistic mystery cults	~50	69	Inf
Use of term <i>Absoluthheitsanspruch des Christentums</i> (Christian exclusivism) since German idealism ³⁵²	~1830	81	Inf

4.4.2 Distribution, Function and Evaluation of References to Tradition and Church History

As we have examined the general features of the selection and usage of the references to tradition and church history, we examine now their concrete distribution in the text, their function and evaluation, according to the criteria defined in chapter 3.3.1. The general picture of the distribution shows that Schneider uses in the initial biblical-systematic subchapter a mix of Scripture, tradition references, and literature to establish his basic thoughts about the meaning of Baptism, whereas the extent of the tradition references in the text is rather long. The second subchapter is divided into an exegetical section with hardly any tradition reference and a historical section with hardly any Scripture reference, but many references to tradition and history. The systematic subchapter again shows a mixed picture, where Schneider uses tradition to briefly provide the historical background for his theological discussion and to describe the ecumenical situation.

The temporal distribution of the references in the text (cf. Figure 4.10), shows that the biblical-systematic subchapter initially contains many references to the Early Church,

³⁴⁹ Cf. new rite for infant Baptism, published 1969.

³⁵⁰ Cf. WCC / Commission on Faith and Order, *Diskussion*.

³⁵¹ Official recognition of Protestant Baptism since the 1983 CIC.

³⁵² Hegel's speech of the 'absolute religion' is the origin of this term. Cf. Reinhold Bernhardt, *Der Absolutheitsanspruch des Christentums: von der Aufklärung bis zur pluralistischen Religionstheologie*, 2nd ed. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1993), 9.

whereas the temporal selection in the following sections, with one exception,³⁵³ seems rather random and the same points could have been made with references from different times. In the historical section of the second subchapter we see a temporal sequence from the Early Church to the council of Trent, where Schneider outlines the development of baptismal practice and theology. In the systematic subchapter we see again a temporal sequence in the overview over infant Baptism, which goes from the Early Church to the infant Baptism discussion in the 20th century. Apart from that sequence there are Early Church and Medieval references in the section about the necessity of baptism for salvation, indicating the historical reason to refine this view, and finally in the ecumenical section references to the Reformation appear, indicating the time when differences in baptismal views became more obvious, and Schneider then directly jumps to ecumenical developments in recent history.

The function of the tradition and church history references in the text shows, with one exception, a consistent picture (cf. Figure 4.11). In the biblical-systematic overview of the meaning of Baptism there are mostly specific references to tradition, which are affirmations and illustrations of the theological thoughts drawn from Scripture. In this subchapter, however, there is one exception, where Schneider uses a quotation from Hippolytus' *Traditio Apostolica*, and explicitly labels it as a source for the concrete manner of baptismal practice that must be transmitted as part of the apostolic heritage (60). In the historical section of the second subchapter most of the references are also specific and used as sources. First the *Didache* and the baptismal practice in Augustine's church are used by Schneider as sources for the specific sequence and form of Baptism, explicitly stating that they provide more detail than the NT (76). Then pope Stephen's position in the rebaptism controversy and Augustine's response to the donatist controversy are used as sources for the answers to the actual questions whether Baptism outside of the Catholic Church is valid and what happens in such a Baptism (77). After that Schneider uses Aquinas as a source for the view of differentiation of God as the minister of Baptism and administering human as mere tool (78). Finally, the decree for the Armenians and the Council of Trent are used as source for the official accepted baptismal theology of the Catholic Church, including infant Baptism. The use of these references as source, and not just as affirmation or illustration, is confirmed by the final part of the section where Schneider uses them to define theses from Scripture *and* tradition, thus labelling both,

³⁵³ On p.63 Schneider uses the wording of Justin and Irenaeus to affirm a development in the late layers of NT.

Scripture and tradition as sources (79). Furthermore, the necessity of Baptism for salvation and infant Baptism, which both have been presented as officially confirmed by Trent, are taken up again by Schneider as special topics for discussion in the systematic subchapter. This shows that he accepts the declarations of authoritative tradition, however, he does not use the teaching authority as reason, but seeks to explain them based on Scripture with systematic argument. The title ‘sacrament of faith’ of the systematic subchapter might also be seen as an acknowledgement of Trent’s importance,³⁵⁴ especially as the title is also found in Trent’s decrees and Schneider stated that Trent emphasised the close relatedness of faith and Baptism.

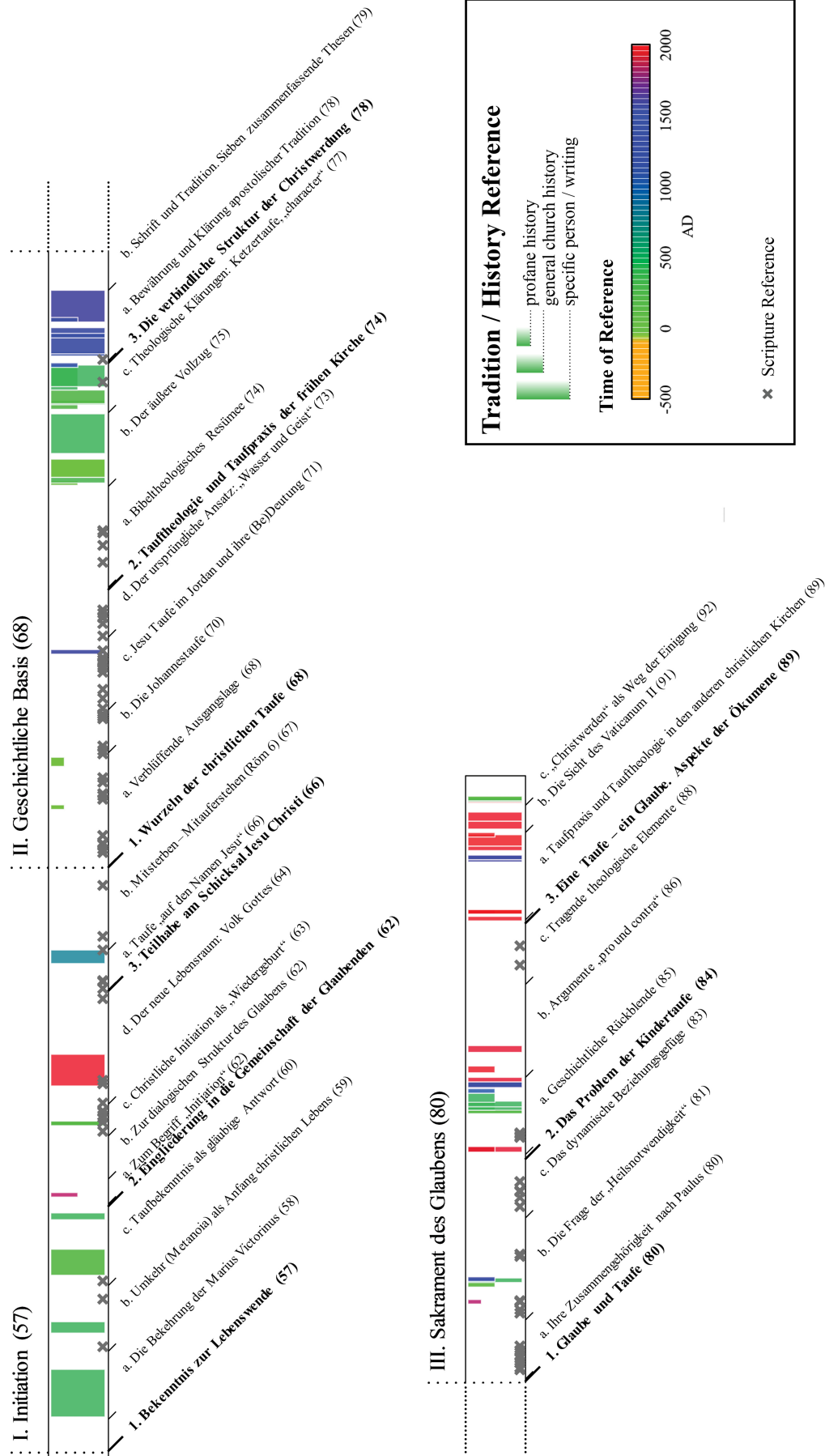
In the systematic subchapter, finally, the references mainly function as information and illustrations that provide background for the systematic discussion and ecumenical development. Only the two references to Vatican II that describe the ecumenical importance of Baptism appear to be sources in their immediate context, however, earlier in the chapter Schneider also provided a scriptural foundation for the unifying meaning of Baptism. Especially in the infant Baptism discussion the references to tradition and church history are mere information and do not contribute anything to Schneider’s defence of infant Baptism, which fits to his explicit explanation that the legitimacy of infant Baptism must come from theological argument (86). Interesting is, however, that Schneider never uses tradition or church history as an exegetical tool to interpret Scripture but relies completely on recent exegetical literature.

Regarding the evaluation of the references to tradition and church history, there are mainly positive references in the first two subchapters, understandable from the fact that in these two subchapters Schneider constructively establishes his view of Baptism. In the systematic subchapter there are many neutral references, which mainly are general information, and Schneider’s only negative references also appear there. Especially significant is here Schneider’s negative evaluation of the development of infant Baptism as model for Baptism as consequence of Augustine’s close connection of Baptism and the doctrine of original sin (86), a development inside the Catholic Church. Worth mentioning is also the neutral evaluation of the Medieval reform movements, most likely referring to groups like the Waldensians, that are not labelled by Schneider as heretical and he even hints to moral corruptness in the Catholic Church as cause of these movements (86).³⁵⁵ The other

³⁵⁴ Cf. DH 1529. The term itself was already used by Augustine (epistle 98:9).

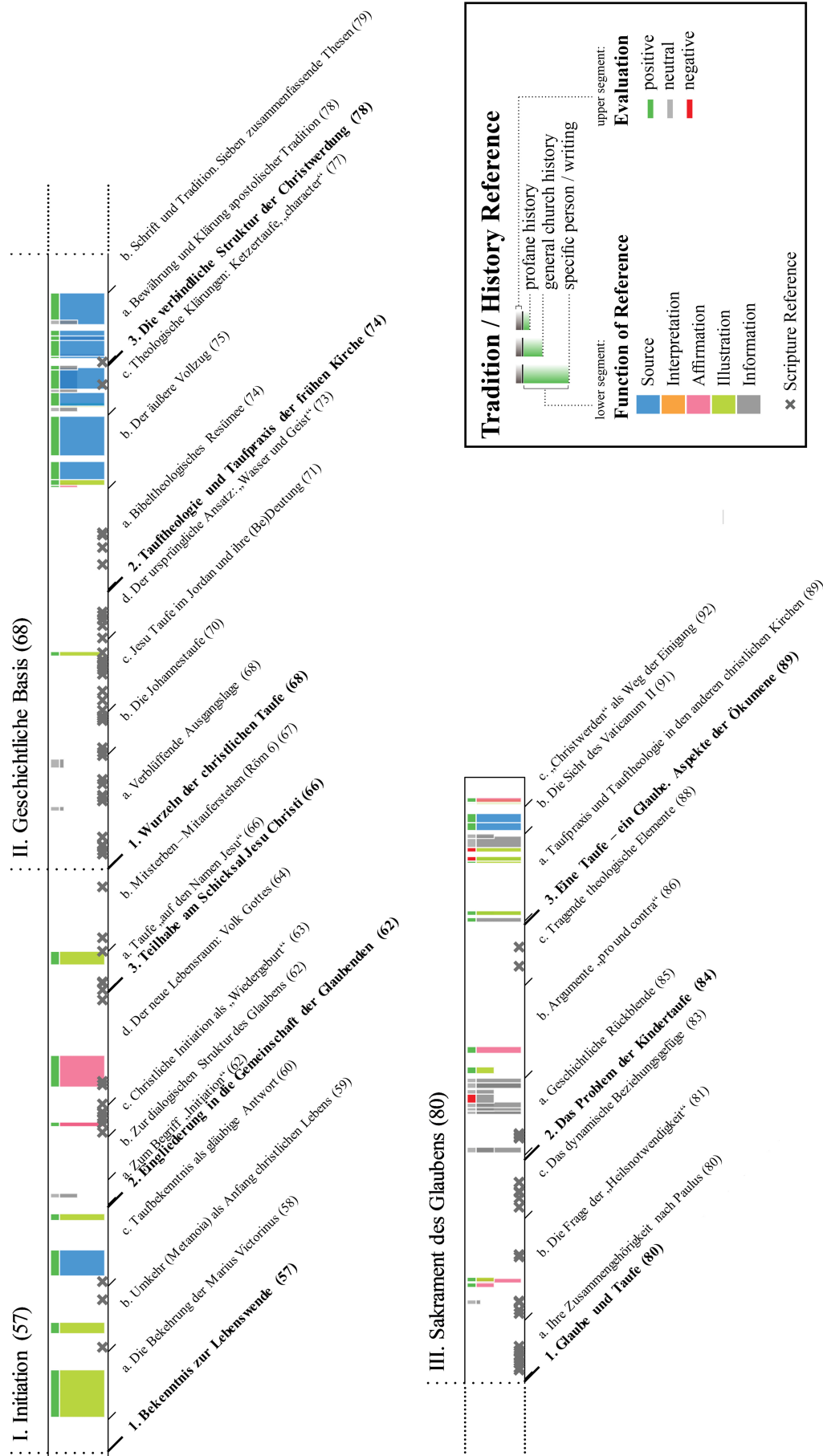
³⁵⁵ Catholic theologians and historians often label these movements as medieval heresies, fanatical sects, or heretical groups. E.g. Isnard Wilhelm Frank, *Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 2008), 156–60.

negative evaluations appear in the ecumenical section and are the baptismal theologies of Zwingli, Calvin, and Barth. According to Schneider, Zwingli's and Calvin's tendency towards an understanding of water Baptism as a confirming symbol of an independent inner reality can result in a view that separates God's saving action from the external act of Baptism, which means to give up the Early Church's understanding of sacrament. As negative illustration for the actual happening of this danger, Schneider then mentions the late Barth's distinction between baptism of the Spirit as divine action and water baptism as mere human act of confession (90-91). The evaluation of the tradition statements, therefore, shows that Schneider generally is not polemical in his use of tradition and church history, but mainly constructive and informative. Especially when he mentions developments of other churches, he is very neutral and does not judge, with the exception of the negative evaluation of Reformed baptismal theology that represents for Schneider an unacceptable deviation from the baptismal understanding of the Early Church.



Explanation: The long horizontal box symbolises the text body of Schneider's baptismal chapter, to be read from the left (lowest page number) to the right (highest page number). The labels on top and below the box indicate the subchapters (top), sections, and sub-sections (both below) with their range indicated and the beginning page number given in brackets. Inside the box the positions of tradition, Scripture, and literature references in the text body are marked. In this plot the tradition reference markers additionally have a horizontal dimension that shows the extent of the tradition reference in the text.

Figure 4.10 Distribution and time of tradition and history references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)



Explanation: In this plot the tradition reference markers again have a horizontal dimension that shows the extent of the tradition reference in the text. In addition, the tradition reference markers are split into two segments, whereas the color coding of the upper segment indicates the evaluation of the reference and the color coding of the lower segment indicates the function of the reference.

Figure 4.11 Distribution, function, and evaluation of tradition and history references (Schneider, ZdNG, chap. 2)

4.5 Implicit Reflections of Tradition and Church History

The implicit reflections of tradition and church history in Schneider's baptismal view are seen in his use of theological terms, in structure and methods, and in theological frameworks. Implicit reflections of tradition that are not especially contributing to the baptismal view, such as Schneider's use of the Catholic *Einheitsübersetzung* Bible³⁵⁶ for Scripture quotations, are not considered.

4.5.1 Theological Terms

We find a great number of special terms in Schneider's Baptism chapter that reflect Catholic tradition or even go back to the Early Church, such as liturgical terms like *Osternachtsfeier* (57), *Taufpastoral* (89), or *Taufwasserweihe* (57). For a closer examination, however, we select key terms that represent significant base lines in Schneider's view of Baptism. Schneider himself, for example, states that essential topics that decide about the concrete understanding of Baptism, are the view of church and sacrament (85). We look, therefore, especially at these and related terms.

Church and Congregation

Schneider uses the term church (*Kirche*) many times and in various combinations (over 30 times) and he also frequently uses synonymously the term community of believers (*Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen*) and its variations (about 15 times).³⁵⁷ The term local congregation (*Gemeinde*), in contrast, is used by Schneider very little (only about 5 times). The few occurrences of congregation are used in the context of pastoral responsibility (89) and personal experience (57), and to refer to specific local churches and their practices (69, 75).³⁵⁸ The concrete congregation, therefore, is for Schneider only important on a practical and pastoral level, while regarding baptismal theology the term church is much more significant. This is also seen in the fact that in most of the cases where Schneider emphasises the personal relationship among believers, he rather uses the term community of believers and not congregation. The use of the term community of believers, which for Schneider is synonymous to church, also shows his emphasis of the spiritual reality of the church in contrast to its institutional character (65). Also the term local congregation in Schneider's thought does not just refer to an administrative unit or independent entity, but it is always referring to the bigger reality of the universal church.³⁵⁹ This bigger reality

³⁵⁶ Translated after Vatican II's recommendation to provide 'suitable and correct translations.' DV 22.

³⁵⁷ Seen in phrases such as 'die Kirche, die Gemeinschaft der Glaubenden' (75).

³⁵⁸ Cf. SHF 27, 30, 51–53.

³⁵⁹ Cf. DTV 160.

is especially seen in the Eucharist, where the universal church becomes a concrete visible reality, which Schneider expresses as ‘in the local congregation the church exists.’³⁶⁰ This reflects Vatican II’s understanding of the church of Christ being ‘truly present in all legitimate local congregations,’ also explicitly quoted by Schneider (117).³⁶¹

But the church of Christ for Schneider refers not just to the institution of the Catholic Church, but to God’s presence through the Holy Spirit among believers,³⁶² which is also implied by the understanding of the church as a sacrament (63, 65, 67). The understanding of the church as a sacrament also is used by Vatican II,³⁶³ but according to Schneider the thought is a return to the Early Church’s spiritual view of church, also expressed in the connection of Spirit and church in the *Apostles’ Creed* (28).³⁶⁴ When Schneider talks about Baptism as incorporation into the church, therefore, his focus is neither on the membership in a local congregation,³⁶⁵ nor on the membership in a global institution, but on the reception into the spiritual community of the church (57), which is the body of Christ.

Church and Churches

Another important field of terms is found in Schneider’s references to other Christian churches as actual churches. When he talks about the Early Church, he speaks of the *Großkirche* (here with the meaning of mainline church) and the heretical Christian communities (77). But when Schneider refers to the modern time, he talks about the *Römische (Katholische) Kirche*, the *Evangelische Kirchen*, the *Freikirchen*, and adds them together as *christliche Kirchen*. He refers to them as divided churches and also declares his vision of the many churches becoming the one church of Christ (92), which is interesting as he does not identify the Catholic Church with the one church of Christ. Schneider does not call the other Christian churches ecclesiastical communities, as other Catholic theologians do,³⁶⁶ but he follows the position of Vatican II, where the term church was ecumenically opened towards the non-Catholic churches and also the exclusive identity of the Catholic

³⁶⁰ WWG 399, 403; ASS 181, 385.

³⁶¹ LG 26.

³⁶² Explicitly stated as ‘Kirche als Sakrament meint keine vorhandene Einrichtung und keine fixe Größe,’ KT 310. Church is sacrament of the work of the Holy Spirit, but ‘die Grenzen der verfaßten Kirchlichkeit sind nicht die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Gottesgeistes.’ WWG 388.

³⁶³ LG 1.

³⁶⁴ Cf. ASS 385; MG 63.

³⁶⁵ If Schneider talks about membership, he talks about ‘Taufe und Kirchenmitgliedschaft,’ thus does not focus on membership in a local congregation. WWG 432.

³⁶⁶ Ratzinger, for example, prefers the term *communiones ecclesiales*, ecclesiastical communities, to respect their self-understanding and not to force Catholic implications of the term church on them. Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger - kirchliche Existenz und existentielle Theologie: ekklesiologische Grundlinien unter dem Anspruch von Lumen gentium* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2005), 288.

Church with the church was loosened.³⁶⁷ This widening, according to Schneider, also was possible through the sacramental understanding of church, which does not identify church with a fixed institution but with the reality of God's presence.³⁶⁸ Again, this understanding of church reflects a spiritual view of church that is considered by Schneider as recovery of the more comprehensive tradition of the Early Church.³⁶⁹

Sacrament

Another key term essential for Schneider's baptismal view is sacrament. Schneider refers continuously to Baptism as a sacrament, as one of the two major sacraments (*sacramentum maius*), as the first and fundamental sacramental action, and as the sacrament of faith. The reference to Baptism as a sacrament is fundamental for Schneider, as on the one hand the important act in every sacrament is carried out 'by God in the Spirit of Christ,' but on the other hand the human acceptance of this preceding action of God is essential (59). Sacrament, therefore, expresses both God's action, God's gift of grace, and the necessity of human acceptance, which is, according to Schneider, an essential understanding that must apply to all forms of Baptism (88). The special importance of this theological truth that is represented by the term sacrament is also seen in Schneider's negative evaluation of the Reformed tradition. Here, he judges that if the salvific action of God is separated from Baptism, then the early Christian notion of sacrament (*altchristlicher Sakramentsbegriff*) is given up (91). For Schneider, therefore, the term sacrament is essential as it represents the Early Church's understanding of God's action in Baptism, and the subordinate human responsibility to respond.

The term 'sacrament of faith' for Baptism, coming from Early Church tradition and canonised by Trent, also emphasises this understanding and Schneider describes Baptism as the celebration of the centre of Christian existence, in which God's action falls together with the human acceptance in faith (80). Faith and Baptism, according to Schneider, are interchangeable expressions and not two different ways of salvation, but represent two aspects of the whole, which, however, do not necessarily fall together in one point of time (81).

³⁶⁷ LG 8, 15. Cf. Jan-Heiner Tüek, *Erinnerung an die Zukunft: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil* (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 94; Mariano Delgado and Michael Sievernich, *Die großen Metaphern des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils: Ihre Bedeutung für heute* (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 156.

³⁶⁸ KT 310.

³⁶⁹ ASS 385; MG 62-63.

Initiation

With the term initiation, or sacrament of initiation, that is used in Catholic theology since Vatican II,³⁷⁰ Schneider expresses the idea that the incorporation into the church actually is a process of socialisation, a process of growing into the community of believers (62). Schneider emphasises, however, that this social and ecclesiological aspect of initiation must be balanced with the aspect of incorporation into Christ (67). Baptism is the foundational initiation rite (65), but Confirmation and Eucharist are also rites of initiation, whereas in each of these sacraments the one incorporation into Christ happens in a different way (35). The term initiation, therefore, emphasises that the incorporation into the church and into Christ is a process with different steps and that Baptism is only one part of it. This also implies for Schneider that neither Baptism nor the decision of faith are ever fully complete (84). He, therefore, describes that Baptism, its reception, and its realisation in a person's life cannot necessarily be reduced to one single point in time (81), and that Baptism is only the beginning of a journey and a lasting obligation to live in the community of the believers (79).

The thought behind the term initiation, however, is not only a reflection of Vatican II, but also represents the baptismal theology of the Early Church where Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist were part of one initiation process.³⁷¹ Additionally, the term initiation is also ecumenically significant, seen in Schneider's affirmation that the shared identity of Baptism and Confirmation as sacraments of initiation is recently affirmed by both the Catholic and Protestant Churches (112). According to Kerner the concept initiation also provides a model that can help churches that exclusively practise believer's Baptism to accept infant Baptism as valid Baptism, and thus might contribute to more unity and mutual recognition.³⁷² In the use of the concept of initiation, therefore, we can see Schneider's backward-looking recovery of Early Church tradition and also his forward-looking ecumenical orientation.

4.5.2 Structure and Methods

Some methods that reflect the denominational tradition of Vatican II, like the use of the historical-critical method, or the dialogue with secular sciences we have already seen in the examination of the use of Scripture and literature. It is enough, therefore, to add that

³⁷⁰ AG 14; SCv 65;

³⁷¹ Cf. 'Initiation' in Vorgrimler, *Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch*; Herbert Frohnhofen, 'Vorlesung Sakramentenlehre § 4: Die Taufe als Grundsakrament', 2015, 10, www.theologie-skripten.de/sakramentenlehre/4taufe.pdf.

³⁷² Dietz Kerner, 'Taufanerkennung', 258.

the concept behind these methodical approaches is not only found in Vatican II but also recalls the Early Church fathers and the Scholastics, who similarly engaged with philosophy and tried to contextualise the Christian message using thought and method of their time. The use of these methods, therefore, on the one hand reflects Vatican II thinking, but on the other hand can also be seen as correction of the withdrawnness of the Catholic Church in the 19th century and a return to earlier ways of thinking.

If we look at the main structure of the presentation of Schneider's view of Baptism, we additionally see two distinct methodical approaches, which are the new dogmatic method and the treatment of infant Baptism as a special phenomenon, both reflecting specific thoughts of Vatican II and Early Church tradition.

New Dogmatic Method

In the main structure and line of argument of Schneider's baptismal view, we recognise what Schneider calls the new dogmatic method. The new dogmatic method was recommended by Vatican II³⁷³ and is one of the methodical foundations of Schneider's work, which can be seen throughout his writings. Constantly Schneider reminds and explains the new dogmatic method as: first, presenting the topics of Scripture, second, understanding the historical developments, third, determining the whole picture and its inner connections, also called speculative penetration, and, fourth, every step needs to be done with consideration of the contemporary situation.³⁷⁴ In contrast the old, new scholastic method, which was generally used since the 18th century, begins with the official declarations of the teaching of the church that are then confirmed by Scripture and tradition. According to Schneider the main disadvantage of the old method is the precedence of the teaching of the church, which already sees the scriptural statements under a certain presumption and thus takes away the normative and foundational role of Scripture.³⁷⁵ For Schneider, therefore, the use of the new dogmatic method first of all is the acknowledgement and restoration of the special role of Scripture.

The structure of Schneider's Baptism chapter shows the characteristics of the new dogmatic method. In the first subchapter Schneider lines out the biblical topics, in the second subchapter he describes the historical developments, and in the third subchapter he

³⁷³ OT 16.

³⁷⁴ DTV 211–13; Cf. DTV 19–20, 70, 81; ASS 22–23, 156–57, 286–87; KT 66–68, 102–3, 287; Appendix 2.2.3:a-b.

³⁷⁵ DTV 212; KT 291. Kasper similarly describes the restoration of the foundational role of Scripture as return to the tradition of the Church Fathers and the Medieval times. Walter Kasper, *Die Methoden der Dogmatik: Einheit und Vielheit* (München: Kösel, 1967), 40–41.

systematically presents important topics that are also relevant to the present situation, which are the necessity of Baptism for salvation, infant Baptism and ecumenical considerations. Especially in lining out the biblical topics and in the systematic section he also follows the recommendation to consider the present situation, which can be seen in his practical introduction (59), and his incorporation of psychological, sociological, pedagogical, economical, and mathematical examples and explanations (62, 65, 87, 88, 92).

The use of the new dogmatic method, however, can be seen not only in the main line of argument but also on a smaller scale. Schneider often begins with a biblical statement before he uses tradition, historical facts, or teachings of the church as illustration or affirmation, however, we have also seen some inconsequence here in the tradition references that appear to be sources. In general, however, Schneider only resorts to the actual teaching of the church a few times and mentions a pope only once in the whole chapter.³⁷⁶

Infant Baptism as Special Phenomenon

Another implicit reflection of tradition that is seen in the structure of Schneider's argument is the treatment of infant Baptism as special phenomenon. Even though he acknowledges that infant Baptism in the present situation in Europe is still most common (57), he still regards infant Baptism as a phenomenon that needs to be examined separately. For the presentation of the basic understanding of Baptism in Scripture and history Schneider then uses the Baptism of adults who are in full control of their mental power as normal form (59), and only briefly mentions that Trent retained infant Baptism but did not give theological reasons (79). In the systematic subchapter, finally, Schneider addresses infant Baptism in a separate section with the title 'the problem of infant Baptism' (84-89), which again begins with a scriptural basis, a description of the historical developments, and with a systematic explanation why infant Baptism can be retained. Schneider concludes that infant Baptism is a special form of Baptism that can only be legitimated by theological argument, and he praises the development of separate rites for infant and adult Baptism after Vatican II as an important step in the acknowledgement of its special character (86).³⁷⁷

By treating infant Baptism and adult Baptism as two different forms, seen in structure and wording,³⁷⁸ not only does Schneider's view reflect Vatican II thinking, but he also

³⁷⁶ Ott, for example, using the old approach, begins every section in his Baptism chapter with a statement of the teaching of the church. Ott, *Grundriss*, 419-32.

³⁷⁷ SC 67.

³⁷⁸ Similarly, Calvin describes the meaning and practice of Baptism first in general (Inst. 4:15) and then addresses infant Baptism in a separate chapter (Inst. 4:16).

acknowledges adult Baptism as the norm used in the mission situation of the Apostolic and Early Church. Consequently, he criticises Augustine's close connection of Baptism and the doctrine of original sin, which he regards as creating theological imbalances that subsequently led to infant Baptism becoming the model for baptismal practice. For Schneider, therefore, acknowledging the special character of infant Baptism and regarding adult Baptism as normal form means to return to the understanding of the Early Church however, without rejecting the historically developed practice of infant Baptism. We must note also, however, that one of Schneider's main arguments for the validity of infant Baptism is the dependence of personal faith unto the community of faith, an argument used by Trent, although not explicitly indicated by Schneider.³⁷⁹

4.5.3 *Theological Frameworks*

Finally, we examine some major theological frameworks that are manifest in Schneider's baptismal view. We will focus on frameworks typical for Catholic theology, like baptismal regeneration and original sin, or frameworks that are given by Schneider's general acceptance of topics of tradition, like Trent's postulation of the necessity of Baptism for salvation (79).

Baptism, Regeneration and Original Sin

Traditionally in Catholic theology there is a close connection between Baptism, regeneration, and the remission of original sin. Baptism is seen as deliverance from original sin and sanctifying through filling with the Holy Spirit, which is also the origin of the talk of baptismal regeneration.³⁸⁰ This traditionally close connection between Baptism and original sin is not present in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*. In the whole book the actual relationship between Baptism and original sin is never explained, and Schneider rather concludes that the connection of Baptism and the doctrine of original sin was a rather negative result from the Pelagian controversy as it led to an understanding of Baptism as finalised event (85-86).

Although Schneider does not explicitly explain the relationship between Baptism and original sin, he does connect Baptism, regeneration and remission of sin. He states that in the late writings of the NT and in Early Church tradition Baptism and its effect has been regarded as regeneration (63), and that through God enabled repentance forgiveness of sin is given and a new life in the Holy Spirit begins (79). Baptism in the name of Jesus,

³⁷⁹ Cf. DH 1626.

³⁸⁰ Cf. Ott, *Grundriss*, 425.

therefore, removes the power of sin and death (66), is a new beginning and forsaking of the old way of sin (75). Schneider, therefore, calls Baptism the fundamental sacrament of remission of sin (204) and a celebration of salvation from sin and death (57), as in the sign of washing man is justified and sanctified, which means that remission of sin is already bestowed (74).

We need to remember, however, when Schneider describes Baptism as regeneration and remission of sin he does so in the context of adult Baptism. When he discusses infant Baptism, he neither refers to original sin to approve its validity, nor does he speak of regeneration. He gives theological reasons for its validity such as the fact that faith needs to grow and is not a single event in time or the inclusion of the baptised person in the community of believers, but he does not define an immediate effect of infant Baptism (88). Also, when Schneider states that the possibility of infant Baptism is maintained by Trent, he does not speak about Trent's clear connection between infant Baptism and original sin,³⁸¹ but just states that Trent does not give theological reasons for infant Baptism (79). It seems, therefore, that Schneider tries to detach Baptism and the doctrine of original sin in his baptismal chapter, as he also described their connection as a negative development in history (86). Schneider, however, does not generally reject the doctrine of original sin as he introduces the doctrine in the chapter on Penance. He states that the originally intended meaning of the doctrine is essential to maintain the freedom of both God and man, but also admits that the term can be misleading and that a theological reinterpretation of the doctrine is necessary and in progress (189).

In later works Schneider explicitly connects Baptism with deliverance from original sin, but he never links it directly to infant Baptism. In *Sieben heilige Feiern*, for example, Schneider states that every person from birth on is bound in a situation that does not allow him or her to choose the good and to live without sin. This inherited disrupted relationship with God is only restored through the community of the Holy Spirit, in which one enters through Baptism.³⁸² This explicit connection between Baptism and original sin, again, is not made in the chapter on Baptism but indirectly in the context of Penance. Similarly, in his book on the *Apostles' Creed*, in the chapter on the doctrine of creation in *Handbuch der Dogmatik*, and in a theological meditation at the feast of the Conception of Mary³⁸³ Schneider explicitly connects Baptism with deliverance from original sin and in these works, Schneider additionally attempts the theological reinterpretation of original sin he

³⁸¹ Cf. DH 1514.

³⁸² SHF 143.

³⁸³ ASS 189-203.

demanded in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*. Schneider again affirms that the basic intended message of the doctrine of original sin is important to maintain the freedom of both, God and man. Everybody experiences a sinful situation, which has its origin in a free historical action of man, that on the one hand negatively determines every human life, but on the other hand this imprint is also acknowledged by the individual actions of every person.³⁸⁴ Schneider demands, however, that the German term for original sin, *Erbsünde* (inherited sin) needs to be interpreted,³⁸⁵ as modern science conclusively showed that there is no mono-genetic connection between all men. New ways, therefore, must be found to explain the reality that is expressed by the doctrine of original sin.³⁸⁶ Schneider sees a social-theological model as a way to maintain and clarify the elements of the traditional doctrine of original sin.³⁸⁷ Original sin, he explains, is a fundamental and internalised disturbed structure of communication, into which every man is born, and healing from original sin is the gift of relationship and real communion with God.³⁸⁸

In this social-theological interpretation of original sin Baptism is understood by Schneider as delivering from original sin as it incorporates into the community of believers. In this community of the people connected through Christ's salvation, original sin and its consequences can be overcome insofar as the communion in the Holy Spirit is realised, and the many members form the body of Christ and carry each other's burden.³⁸⁹ Baptism, thus opens a new positive space of relationship through initiation into the people of God that restores the originally disturbed communication structure and enables us to live a life in relationship with God through the Holy Spirit.³⁹⁰ The church as community of the baptised thus is the space where redeemed life can be experienced explicitly in this world.³⁹¹ The historical connection of the doctrine of original sin and infant Baptism, according to Schneider, can be understood as an attempt to use the extreme case to explain that the necessity of salvation does not depend on each person's decision for good or evil but that the contiguity of generations requires the redemption of every individual.

³⁸⁴ WWG 176.

³⁸⁵ WWG 117.

³⁸⁶ Cf. HdD 1:219-229.

³⁸⁷ HdD 1:227. The discussion about the reinterpretation of the doctrine of original sin is still ongoing in Catholic theology and Schneider's social-theological argument for the universality of sin did not find general acceptance. Hoping, for example, states that the universality of original sin cannot be explained and actually only can be justified soteriologically as the premise of the universal need of salvation. Helmut Hoping and Michael Schulz, eds., *Unheilvolles Erbe?: zur Theologie der Erbsünde* (Freiburg: Herder, 2009), 190, 208, 232.

³⁸⁸ WWG 177.

³⁸⁹ WWG 177.

³⁹⁰ WWG 431.

³⁹¹ HdD 1:230.

Schneider finally concludes that although the connection of the two theological themes is explainable the whole message of both themes is far more comprehensive.³⁹²

In Schneider's thoughts on Baptism and original sin we see that he acknowledges the relevance of historically developed and by the teaching of the church received doctrines and practices, while also trying to reinterpret and describe them in contemporary acceptable terms. He maintains the biblical connection of Baptism, forgiveness of sin, and regeneration, but disentangles infant Baptism and original sin, as he sees them as independent before Augustine. He gives other theological reasons than original sin for infant Baptism and acknowledges the importance of the basic meaning of the doctrine of original sin but explains it in ways relevant to the present situation and in accordance with contemporary science.

Baptism is Necessary for Salvation

Schneider introduces the necessity of Baptism for salvation as one of the teachings underlined by Trent (79)³⁹³ and as an important topic that needs to be considered in interreligious dialogue, as it is closely related to Christian absolutism (81). The basic rationale behind the teaching of the necessity of Baptism for salvation is seen by Schneider in the absolute necessity of Christ for salvation. And as only faith in Christ saves, the close connection of faith and Baptism leads to the understanding that Baptism is not arbitrary. While the close connection of faith and Baptism establishes for Schneider the necessity of Baptism for salvation, this connection also relativises its necessity as not every believer has the chance to receive Baptism. In the Early Church, therefore, the necessity of Baptism is seen with a certain flexibility, which is described by Schneider with the topics of blood baptism, Ambrose's view of the subjective justification through the desire for the sacrament (*votum sacramenti*), and the modern theological expression 'Baptism of desire.' Although, according to Schneider, the later thought is a deficient theological helping construct, it still helps to prevent a magical misunderstanding and he concludes that Baptism is only necessary for salvation if a person has the chance to understand and receive it (82). Schneider then contrasts the necessity of Baptism for salvation with God's universal will for salvation. The fact that only part of humanity receives Baptism, also caused through the shortcomings of the church, remains in tension with Christ's universal meaning for salvation. Schneider again concludes, that from this aspect the understanding of the necessity of Baptism for salvation is relativised and that God's possibilities are greater than

³⁹² HdD 1:227.

³⁹³ DH 1618.

the church's (83). For Schneider, however, this does not modify the disturbing concreteness of God's revelation, the message that God binds his presence to Christ and his followers, and that the mission of the church to proclaim this message is essential. He affirms that church without missions is no church of Jesus Christ anymore (83). Schneider's final conclusion, therefore, is that the teaching of the necessity of Baptism for salvation is the concrete expression of Christ's universal meaning for salvation, which must be described, however, in ways that maintain man's freedom for a decision of faith and also the sovereignty of God in his universal will for salvation (83).

Although Schneider introduces the necessity of Baptism for salvation as teaching of Trent, in his systematic discussion he only uses Scripture and affirmations from Early Church tradition and their later developments. In his argument, therefore, he does not resort to the authority of the teaching of the church that later received these same thoughts, such as the official reception of 'Baptism of desire' in the Letter from the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston, Fr. Leonard Feeney, in 1949.³⁹⁴ Additionally, although Schneider introduces the necessity of Baptism for salvation as teaching of Trent alongside with Trent's affirmation of the unbreakable connection of Christ and Church, he does not link the necessity of Baptism for salvation with its function of incorporating in the church. This is especially interesting as Schneider's systematic discussion on the necessity of Baptism for salvation also reflects several key points of Vatican II's argument about the necessity of church for salvation:³⁹⁵ in *Lumen Gentium* we find the thought that catechumens by their mere intention to join the church are already incorporated,³⁹⁶ the thought that God's universal will for salvation allows people to be saved 'who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church,'³⁹⁷ and also the resulting missionary obligation of the Church.³⁹⁸ These same thoughts, however, appear in Schneider's discussion not connected to the church but to Baptism. Although in *Lumen Gentium* as in Schneider's thought the foundational role of Jesus Christ for salvation is expressed as 'the one Mediator and the unique way of salvation,' Schneider emphasises the conclusion about the necessity of faith and Baptism for salvation, whereas *Lumen Gentium* adds the final conclusion about the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation, as 'through baptism as through a door, man enters the Church.'³⁹⁹ Schneider does not follow this final

³⁹⁴ DH 3870.

³⁹⁵ LG 14-17; cf. also GS 22; AG 7.

³⁹⁶ LG 15.

³⁹⁷ LG 16.

³⁹⁸ LG 17.

³⁹⁹ LG 14.

step but always emphasises the necessity of Baptism as consequence of the universal role of Christ and the necessity of faith. This is not to say that Schneider does not affirm the essential role of the church, but his thoughts reflect the recent Catholic thinking that the actual necessity for salvation is the communion with the triune God and that sacrament and membership in the church only have mediating function.⁴⁰⁰

4.6 Evaluation of the Use and Understanding of Tradition and Church History

After analysing the individual explicit references and important implicit reflections of tradition and church history in Schneider's view of Baptism, we will now bring everything together to evaluate the general understanding and use of tradition and church history in his baptismal theology. We will first deduce and evaluate Schneider's views of tradition and church history, also considering his explicit explanations in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* and other relevant works. Finally, we will evaluate the general use of tradition and church history in Schneider's baptismal theology, in order to understand how his baptismal view is influenced by them.

4.6.1 View of Tradition

We have seen the importance of tradition and church history in Schneider's view of Baptism in both, the explicit use, and the implicit reflections. The references to tradition are constantly woven into Schneider's view of Baptism, which shows that tradition besides Scripture heavily influences his theological thought. We also have seen that Schneider claims Scripture to be the absolute norm and starting point of theology (cf. 4.2.4), which is as well reflected in his methodical approach (cf. 4.5.2). Schneider's use of explicit references to tradition to affirm and illustrate thoughts deduced from Scripture, therefore, is compatible with his claims. We also have seen, however, that some explicit references to tradition appear to be sources in Schneider's thought:

Schneider, for example, explicitly describes the specific manner of baptismal practice as a part of the apostolic heritage that must be transmitted (60). The wording, combined with the absence of scriptural statements and the reference to the *Traditio Apostolica*, implies that the apostolic heritage for Schneider is not confined to Scripture alone, which turns tradition into an additional source. A similar thought is also found when Schneider describes the *Didache* as providing more detail about the baptismal practice than the NT

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Frohnhofen, 'Sakramentenlehre', 12.

(76), and as being written earlier than the late writings of the NT, or at some places originally even counted among the writings of the NT. The reference to the *Traditio Apostolica* as a source for the use of the question-answer form of Baptism and the baptismal creed, I discussed with Schneider personally. Schneider affirmed that it is essential for him to use Scripture as foundation and that the question-answer form and the creed both have their scriptural basis, which should be clarified to prevent wrong impressions.⁴⁰¹ A similar case we have seen in the Vatican II quotes about the ecumenical dimension of Baptism that appear to be sources in their immediate context, but as Schneider earlier in the chapter also provided a scriptural foundation he certainly would clarify if confronted. So, although in theory Schneider claims Scripture to be the only source, his usage of tradition occasionally gives the impression that tradition still has material qualities in his thought, which especially seems to apply to Early Church tradition.

For later tradition, however, Schneider distinguishes more clearly between Scripture and tradition, as he describes Scripture as the norm for further historical development of Christian thought (74) and sees tradition as part of this further development. The other explicit references to tradition that appear to be sources in Schneider's baptismal view, are introduced as such developments. The further development of the Early Church baptismal practice is illustrated by Schneider by referring to the reconstruction of the baptismal practice in Augustine's church (76). The testimonies about the heretical Baptism and Donatist controversies are used by Schneider to show theological developments that were necessary to address specific questions that did arise in new situations and were not answered in Scripture (77). The acceptance of development in tradition also enables Schneider to regard infant Baptism as a possible later development, even attributing more certainty to a practice of infant blessing in the Early Church (85), but still acknowledging the theological validity of infant Baptism in the light of the historic developed situation (89). Schneider's understanding of development, however, is not arbitrary, as he emphasises that Scripture is the norm (74) and the basis (78).

The impression that Schneider occasionally uses tradition as a second source with material qualities, therefore, is alleviated by a vague distinction of Scripture and tradition close to the formative apostolic times and by the introduction of the concept of

⁴⁰¹ According to Schneider the scriptural basis for the question-answer form, which means that there is a personal contact between the person who conducts the Baptism and the person who receives Baptism can especially be seen in Acts 8:35-39 and 19:2-5. Regarding the *Apostles' Creed* Schneider explains that every sentence can be identified with a sentence from Scripture, which binds the content of the creed to the scriptural foundation. Appendix 2.2.6:a; cf. also WWG 48-49.

development. For the later developments, Schneider claims that tradition is unfolding the apostolic heritage based on Scripture and under the norm of Scripture, which means that tradition has no material but only formal qualities. It would have been helpful to prevent misunderstandings, however, if he also would have explained the scriptural basis for the individual developments, instead of just generically claiming that there is one.

Regarding the authority of tradition Schneider explains that the developments in baptismal theology from the Early Church to the Medieval Ages found a binding expression in statements of the teaching of the church, presented by the declarations on Baptism of the councils of Florence and Trent (78-79). Schneider also affirms the authority of tradition, as he uses ‘Scripture and tradition’ on the same level to formulate his summarisation theses (79), and when he uses the expression ‘Angesichts von Heiliger Schrift und lebendiger Überlieferung’ to judge the view of a contemporary Protestant theologian (80, fn. 25).⁴⁰² Although Schneider affirms the authority of tradition, he still criticises developments, such as the connection of original sin and Baptism (85-86) and calls for the continuous renewal of the church according to the norm of its apostolic origin (89). But as Catholic theologian, he must accept the authority of tradition officially received by the teaching of the church, and, therefore, he only can relativise problematic teaching by putting it into historical perspective. This is seen, for example, in his explanation that Trent’s canons on Baptism are not a systematic discussion but a defence of key points in a special situation, and that some wordings are only understandable in perspective of the historical events (78; cf. 201-202). This approach gives Schneider the possibility to accept traditional teachings as valid development of scriptural thought in a special situation, while also being able to criticise their substance, rediscover the scriptural basis, and re-explain their basic idea relevant to the changed contemporary situation, which we especially have seen in his thoughts on original sin and its connection to Baptism (cf. 4.5.3).

In Schneider’s view of Baptism, therefore, we see the key points of his view of tradition which are a) tradition as living transmission of the Gospel, b) based on Scripture, and related to the present situation of the church, c) under the absolute authority of Scripture. These key points are an integral part of Schneider’s theological thinking and are manifest in many of his works. We have also observed, however, that at certain points despite Schneider’s claim that tradition is only referring to the formal transmission of the scriptural message and that tradition is under the authority of Scripture, its use also reflects

⁴⁰² Here Schneider uses the term living transmission (*lebendige Überlieferung*) as alternative wording for tradition, also found in CCC 78. Cf. also the expression ‘living tradition’ in MG 131.

material qualities and that formal declarations of councils, although evaluated in their historical perspective, still must be accepted as authoritative.

Tradition as Living Transmission – Continuity in Change

For Schneider the testimony of Jesus Christ is the climax of God's self-revelation that cannot be surpassed and must be transmitted to following generations.⁴⁰³ The emergence of Scripture as part of this transmission process was a necessary development for the faithful transmission, while also being a sign for its lasting and universal significance.⁴⁰⁴ The content of Scripture, however, already shows a non-static understanding of transmission and presents itself also as a result of the living transmission process, in which the original message of Christ is already adapted to the hearers of the first century churches.⁴⁰⁵ In the process of living transmission, therefore, the written message must again and again become the spoken word of God that reaches the hearers.⁴⁰⁶ This does not mean that the content of Scripture is just read out and repeated, but for Schneider the missionary character of the message itself demands an interpretation oriented to the present situation of the recipients.⁴⁰⁷ This requires a certain variability in the teaching of the church that cannot be achieved through a rigid system of unchangeable teachings, a certain variability that also can be seen in the NT.⁴⁰⁸ The teaching and preaching of the church, therefore, must continuously 'express the same without saying the same,' which means to give up old forms and words in order to transmit the same meaning in a new context.⁴⁰⁹ In this context Schneider also explains the Catholic expression of 'revelation comes to us through Scripture and tradition'⁴¹⁰ as tradition referring only to the manner of transmission and not to additional content in regard to Scripture. He thus also boldly speaks of Scripture as 'the one and only source of revelation,' and illustrates his meaning with an image of Scripture as the well and tradition as the attempt to let this well flow and to channel its water.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰³ ASS 33.

⁴⁰⁴ KT 272; MG 39.

⁴⁰⁵ ASS 115.

⁴⁰⁶ KT 272, 338; DTV 213.

⁴⁰⁷ KT 322-23; ASS 33, 323; cf. WWG 98.

⁴⁰⁸ DTV 42; ASS 38.

⁴⁰⁹ ASS 37.

⁴¹⁰ DV 9-10; CCC 80-82.

⁴¹¹ Appendix 2.2.2:c, 2.2.4:c-d. The same understanding of the Catholic view of tradition as 'functional-modal way as a realisation of the living transmission of the gospel' and the rejection of the 'conception of tradition as transmissions of truth apart from Sacred Scripture which 'add to it' in terms of content' is found in the concluding report of *Binding Testimony*. VZ.E 149-50.

The many concretisations of the Gospel over the course of history in the tradition and teaching of the church all claim to express the original message, but Schneider observes, that they often went beyond the Gospel or even contradicted it.⁴¹² For Schneider, therefore, the ‘problem of continuity in change’ expresses the necessity to preserve and protect the original message from distortions in the process of transmission (129). This ‘protection of the apostolic heritage’ is first of all achieved by faithfulness to Scripture, which as foundation of the apostles is the norm for transmission and all development, the common basic shape that limits variability (143).⁴¹³

Double Relationality of Dogma

According to Schneider the dogmas of the church are outstanding historical testimonies of the process of living translation.⁴¹⁴ The history of dogma represents a continuous interpretation process, the attempt to make the original and unchangeable Gospel relevant for a specific historical situation.⁴¹⁵ In referring to this developing process of the dogmas of the church Schneider often refers to Kasper’s concept of the ‘double relativity of dogma.’⁴¹⁶ This concept means that every dogma of the church is relative insofar as it is related to the teaching of Scripture, and relative insofar as it is related to a specific historical situation. Schneider, however, prefers the term ‘double relationality of dogma’ (*doppelte Bezüglichkeit* or *doppelte Relationalität*) over Kasper’s original wording, as for him the term relationality conveys the intended meaning more precisely.⁴¹⁷

The relation to Scripture is demanded as Scripture contains the binding original testimony of Christ and, therefore, must be the foundation for all teaching of the church. Even if there is no direct answer on some questions in Scripture or even in tradition, everything must be compatible to the original apostolic message (186).⁴¹⁸ Schneider, therefore, understands dogmas not as exceeding Scripture but leading in a new deeper sense into Scripture.⁴¹⁹ Relation to a specific historical situation means that dogmas are attempts to give answers to specific problems and thus serve to represent the word of God at a certain time. Because of this relation to a specific situation, dogmas have their specific wording and

⁴¹² KT 323; cf. DTV 44.

⁴¹³ WWG 50; DTV 44; KT 331.

⁴¹⁴ MG 39; KT 272.

⁴¹⁵ ASS 27; KT 106.

⁴¹⁶ Kasper’s concept of the ‘double relativity of doctrine’ is found in Kasper, *Methoden*, 38. Schneider refers to Kasper’s ‘double relativity of doctrine’ in DTV 63-64, 69-70; ASS 27, 158, 287; KT 106-7, 272, 297; ZdNG 124; MG 23; Schneider, *Leib*, 127-28.

⁴¹⁷ Cf. Appendix 2.2.4:b; ASS 287.

⁴¹⁸ SHF 186; Schneider, *Leib*, 27-28.

⁴¹⁹ DTV 64.

emphasis, which naturally causes one-sidedness and limitations.⁴²⁰ For Schneider, therefore, to acknowledge the historical relation of dogma also opens the freedom for contemporary restatement and correction to convey the originally intended truth, while leaving the dogma's wording as a 'crooked branch or strange flower.'⁴²¹ This approach helps to acknowledge a dogma as valid explication at a certain time, while preventing misunderstanding a dogma as the only correct and for all people and all times necessary form.⁴²²

Scripture as Exclusive Norm for Tradition and the Teaching of the Church

Although Schneider acknowledges the developments of tradition and its specific expressions in the teaching of the church, there is no doubt where he sees the actual authority. Schneider describes Scripture as *norma normans non normata*, as the ultimate and only norm of every later development in tradition and doctrine.⁴²³ To underline the special significance and authority of Scripture, therefore, Schneider uses a great variety of terms such as lasting standard, sole standard, *sola scriptura*, canon, norm, normative element, foundation, guideline, basic law, and charter.⁴²⁴ According to Schneider only the canon of Scripture can protect from corruption, and the church must constantly place itself under the norm of Scripture if she wants to be faithful to the origin.⁴²⁵

In addition to Scripture as the material element of the protection of the apostolic heritage Schneider also places a high value in the teaching office as the formal element.⁴²⁶ Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the teaching office has to protect the original Gospel from corruption and has to guide the process of living tradition, which for Schneider is both implied by the concept of apostolic succession.⁴²⁷ This, however, does not mean that Schneider sees the authority of the teaching of the church and Scripture on the same level. He explicitly states that the norm for synods and councils is the canon of Scripture, which as the original tradition judges or legitimates deduced traditions.⁴²⁸ He also states that council and pope cannot add new or different elements to the original Gospel but have to speak on the foundation of Scripture and have to expound it.⁴²⁹ In regard to the notion of papal infallibility, therefore, Schneider emphasises that the pope cannot freely

⁴²⁰ KT 272; DTV 37.

⁴²¹ Appendix 2.2.4:b.

⁴²² DTV 64-5.

⁴²³ MG 39; ASS 427; KT 303.

⁴²⁴ Cf. DTV 122, 213; ASS 28, 158, 325; KT 272, 331; ZdNG 227; SHF 210; MG 39.

⁴²⁵ DTV 44, 122; Cf. ASS 325.

⁴²⁶ Cf. KT 275, 298; ZdNG 143; DTV 75.

⁴²⁷ KT 108; cf. ASS 29.

⁴²⁸ KT 323; cf. Appendix 2.2.3:c.

⁴²⁹ DTV 45, 122; ZdNG 129; Schneider, *Leib*, 29, 57.

declare things, but there must be conformity to Scripture, tradition, and the consensus of the worldwide church.⁴³⁰

Ambiguity between Understanding and Use of Tradition

Although Schneider boldly presents Scripture in his thought as the exclusive source and norm for every Christian tradition and teaching, we have still seen that the use of tradition in his baptismal view occasionally seems to reflect material qualities. The same fact is even more evident in his treatment of the Marian dogmas that are not found in Scripture at all. Schneider even admits that only a few dogmas have such a contradictory and laden history as the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and that the thought was foreign to the official teaching of the church for centuries.⁴³¹ Still, he embraces the dogma with a credit of trust, accepting it as an expression of a valid origin that further developed over the course of history. To demonstrate this Schneider borrows Balthasar's concept of *Einfaltung* (which means infolding in the sense of folding inwards, in contrast to unfolding),⁴³² as a method to find the right and true (scriptural) origin of a dogma, with the purpose to distinguish between the essential and the questionable content. This process of infolding a dogma also includes the possibility of correction and reduction, to find and rephrase the right origin, which despite the historical relationality of the dogma is a timeless truth.⁴³³

Schneider uses this approach with the questionable dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary.⁴³⁴ The origin of the dogma of the Assumption Mary, for example, is seen by Schneider in the scriptural hope of the bodily resurrection of all believers in contrast to a mere spiritual understanding. He admits, however, that this primarily should be attached to Christ and his resurrection. For both dogmas, he emphasises that the focus is not Mary as an individual but Mary as a type for the church (*Maria-Ecclesia*).⁴³⁵ Individualistic understandings of Mary, popular tendencies to put the mother before the son, or to see Maria as mediator for redemption are rejected by Schneider, and he emphasises the christological and soteriological relatedness of the dogmas. An approach like his treatment of the Marian dogmas we also observed in Schneider's view of Baptism regarding original sin or infant Baptism. He takes the declarations of the councils

⁴³⁰ KT 281.

⁴³¹ ASS 193.

⁴³² ASS 196-97; DTV 65; KT 326-28; Originally found in Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Einfaltungen. Auf Wegen christlicher Einigung* (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1980), 7-10, 124-26, 130-32, 136-41.

⁴³³ DTV 65. Cf. also Bauckham, 'Tradition', 140-42.

⁴³⁴ Appendix 2.2.4:a; ASS 189-203.

⁴³⁵ Cf. LG 52, 65.

as historical unfolded tradition seriously and tries to discover their right and scriptural basis to find a contemporary acceptable formulation. We must note here, however, that the scriptural basis for original sin and infant Baptism is more obvious and direct than for the Marian dogmas.

In general, we see that Schneider does his best to explain everything from Scripture, but although he affirms obscure and hindering developments in tradition, he avoids cutting down certain branches. He discards wrong developments or understandings that are at the periphery, but for official dogmas, Schneider can only interpret and explain, even if he acknowledges that they are not ideal. In Schneider's thought, therefore, the missing possibility to reform and critique tradition that has been officially received by the teaching of the Catholic Church is manifest,⁴³⁶ a shortcoming that also through the new direction of Vatican II only 'has been muted, not eliminated.'⁴³⁷ Also Schneider's method of infolding in a sense contradicts his insistence on the new dogmatic method that defines Scripture as starting point, as in this approach the direction is inverted: not from Scripture, but towards Scripture. But as there is no way to criticise questionable dogma in Catholic theology this seems for Schneider to be the only way to come from the questionable content back to the solid scriptural foundation he is seeking in his theology. Therefore, also Vatican II's ambiguity regarding the material quality of tradition is seen in Schneider's thought, as the role of tradition even though described as formal element of transmission, sometimes also appears to be a second source.⁴³⁸ *Dei Verbum* even contrasts Schneider's illustration of 'Scripture as the well and tradition as the attempt to let it flow,' with another water illustration, saying 'it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything,' which implies not one but two wells.⁴³⁹

Evaluation

We saw that Schneider's baptismal view shows the main characteristics of his view of tradition, which we also confirmed by his thought in other works. Overall Schneider's view of tradition reflects the basic aspects of a post Vatican II Unfolding view (cf. 2.4.1), with its notion of the development of doctrine, its close connection of Scripture and

⁴³⁶ The missing option to critique tradition in Vatican II is also lamented by Ratzinger 'as an unfortunate omission.' Herbert Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 3:193.

⁴³⁷ Lane, 'Authority', 307.

⁴³⁸ This is according to Verweyen especially seen in DV 9 and the first sentence of DV 10, where although the wording of 'two sources of revelation' is avoided, still a material coexistence of Scripture and tradition is expressed. Hansjürgen Verweyen, *Joseph Ratzinger - Benedikt XVI. : die Entwicklung seines Denkens* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2010), 37–38.

⁴³⁹ DV 9.

tradition, both equally transmitting the Gospel, but with tradition and the teaching office both subordinated under the authority of Scripture.⁴⁴⁰ In Schneider's view, however, also the shortcomings of the Vatican II are visible, which are the ambiguity whether the function of tradition is only formal or has material qualities, and the missing explicit option to reform and critique tradition. Schneider's view in many aspects also resembles the common position on Scripture and tradition that the ecumenical working group of Catholic and Protestant theologians agreed on, which he himself affirms by referring to the agreement.⁴⁴¹

4.6.2 *View of Church History*

The developments of church history have an important place in Schneider's baptismal view, mostly evaluated positively or neutrally, either confirming his baptismal thoughts or providing additional information. Schneider also explicitly describes history as breeding ground for doctrinal development (74, 77) and as a factor that needs to be reckoned with (89). This generally positive view of history, however, does not mean that Schneider sees church history uncritically. As we already saw he speaks openly about the imbalances that came from the close connection of infant Baptism and original sin, about the continuous task to reform (79), and also when he talks about the Medieval reform movements he does not condemn them as heretical but sees part of the reason for their existence in the moral corruption of the church (86).

In the chapter about Baptism in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* Schneider explicitly distinguishes different periods of church history that guide his thinking. These are the age of the Early Church that shaped doctrine, the Scholastics who reflected upon the developments of the Early Church, and the councils around the Reformation that officially received the developments as teaching of the church (78). In describing the periods after the Early Church rather passively as reflecting and accepting Early Church thought we already see that for Schneider the most important period is the Early Church, which is also confirmed by the mere number of explicit references to this period. Apart from these explicitly mentioned periods, we also saw in the explicit references and implicit reflections the importance of Vatican II and its subsequent ecumenical and liturgical developments, however, generally understood by Schneider as return to the wider thought of the Early Church.

⁴⁴⁰ DV 8-10, 21.

⁴⁴¹ Appendix 2.2.4:c. Cf. VZ.E 133-70, especially chap. 9 'The Interpretation of Scripture and the Binding Teaching of the Church.'

The basic aspects of Schneider's view of church history that we have seen in the Baptism chapter of *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* are also visible in the rest of the book and in his other works. With few exceptions Schneider always includes the developments of church history in his argument, however, also criticising them where necessary. His understanding of living transmission obliges him to consider 'the phenomenon of historicity' to maintain and regain the full extent of the scriptural message and to understand the teaching of the church in its historical context.⁴⁴²

The Church as Sacrament: Church History between Holiness and Sinfulness

The basic aspect of Schneider's view of church history is God's self-revelation in history. Like the people of Israel, we can only experience God through his actions in history, which enables us to draw cautious conclusions about himself, his existence and his love.⁴⁴³ Schneider emphasises that especially the experiences with Jesus and with the Holy Spirit in the community of the believers open a way to see God's innermost being.⁴⁴⁴ In this context Schneider also sees Vatican II's concept of the church as a sacrament, which refers to the church as sign and tool of God's encounter with humanity. The talk of the church as a sacrament means, according to Schneider, God's arrival in history, his faithfulness and companionship on our way through history.⁴⁴⁵ The history of the church, therefore, is the place where God's action, his love and his care can be seen best, and therefore is of fundamental importance.

The concept of the church as sacrament, however, does not lead Schneider to regard the church as a perfect institution or its history as flawless. He sees the church in the constant tension between what she actually is and what she should be ('Sein und Sollen'), a tension between sinfulness and holiness. As the church consists of sinners, her actions in the world are also deficient and sinful, but still she is called by God to show his holiness.⁴⁴⁶ The church, therefore, is an effective sign for the already present love of God and his Spirit, but as she does not possess the Spirit she is still an intermediate reality that is not yet completed. Schneider illustrates this by calling the church a signpost, but a signpost that is often worn out, illegible or even misleading.⁴⁴⁷ Schneider is faithfully

⁴⁴² Cf. DTV 213-14.

⁴⁴³ WWG 87, 98-99; HdD 1:217.

⁴⁴⁴ KT 86; WWG 115, 322; cf. ZdNG 15, 19-21; HdD 1:154; MG 36.

⁴⁴⁵ KT 309-10; MG 98.

⁴⁴⁶ WWG 380-81.

⁴⁴⁷ KT 310-11.

following this signpost through the ages, while also being aware of its shortcomings and ready to criticise where necessary.⁴⁴⁸

Focal Points of Church History: Rediscovering the Original Broadness

In the Baptism chapter in *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes* we already observed the special significance of certain periods of church history, which can also be seen in Schneider's thought in general.⁴⁴⁹ Even though Schneider admits that in some respects the data of the first centuries is diverse, sparse, and fragmentary, the Early Church as shaping period in church history still is most important to him. This importance is found in the fact that the things that are clear from this period can serve as a baseline that does help not to deviate from the scriptural basis, as the fathers in the first five centuries, still relatively close to the Apostolic time, interpreted Scripture to protect its original meaning (*consensus quinquesaecularis*). Additionally, the Early Church period also represents the common history for all denominations in the East and the West.⁴⁵⁰ The Early Church foundation, therefore, allows to see where the teaching of the Catholic Church became too constricted while also providing a broadness to include other streams of Christian theology.

Regarding the following Medieval Ages Schneider generally acknowledges wrong developments but he does not go so far as seeing the church as in decline into darkness as many reformers did.⁴⁵¹ Schneider sees the Early Medieval shortcomings partially corrected by the Scholastics, whom he evaluates rather positively, especially Aquinas (cf. 224). The period from the Late Medievals to Trent as time of reception and defence also plays a major role in Schneider's thought. He especially acknowledges Trent's unusually strong influence on the theology of following centuries, while also emphasising that Trent's teachings must be seen in the context of the polemical discussion of the Reformation (78). For the centuries after Trent Schneider evaluates the one-sidedness of theology and the positivism about the teaching office of the church especially negatively.⁴⁵² The period since Vatican II, in contrast, is for Schneider a time of correction and convergence, as through Vatican II the one-sidedness and restrictions of the previous centuries have been corrected.⁴⁵³ According to Schneider the endeavours of Vatican II have been

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. Appendix 2.2.2:a-c. For examples of Schneider's criticism of historical developments in the Catholic Church see KT 341; MG 175; DTV 57; ASS 51.

⁴⁴⁹ A similar scheme, for example, is seen in Schneider's summation of the most important councils, which are the Early Church councils in the fourth and fifth centuries, Trent and Vatican II. MG 33.

⁴⁵⁰ Cf. ZdNG 141, 221; KT 323, 334.

⁴⁵¹ Cf. Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin Student of Church Fathers* (London: A&C Black, 1999), 42.

⁴⁵² ZdNG 257; DTV 19; cf. KT 233, 239, 280-82; cf. Appendix 2.1.1, 2.2.2:a-b.

⁴⁵³ Cf. DTV 19.

‘die gesamte Tradition in ihrer Vielfarbigkeit und Bewegtheit - auch das Hochmittelalter und die frühe Väterzeit von den Anfängen der Schriftwerdung an - wieder in den Blick zu nehmen, auf vergessene Perspektiven aufmerksam zu machen und auf Texte und Übungen früherer Jahrhunderte zurückzugreifen’ (128). Vatican II, therefore, is for Schneider the attempt to restore the broader tradition of the Early Church and to bring it to new life in the current time (123-124), which is a basic demand of Schneider’s overall work, and which also provides an important foundation for his ecumenical openness.⁴⁵⁴ The reforms of Vatican II, therefore, are frequently referred to by Schneider and he even published a book with the depressed title ‘the forsaken reform,’ in which he warns against forgetting Vatican II’s impulses for the reform of the church.⁴⁵⁵

Evaluation

We have seen the key points of Schneider’s view of church history in the Baptism chapter of *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*, which we also have affirmed by his work in general. For Schneider church history as the place of God’s self-revelation is of major importance, but he also acknowledges that the church reflects the tension of sinfulness and holiness of its members.⁴⁵⁶ It is important, therefore, to admit the shortcomings and failures in the history of the church, as the Würzburg synod declared and pope John XXIII in his opening speech of Vatican II urged,⁴⁵⁷ and to rediscover the original broadness of the Early Church, which is also key to ecumenical convergence. Schneider’s view of church history, therefore, is in line with recent Catholic understanding (cf. 2.4.2), in some aspects even close to a Protestant view of Critical Reverence, as he does not exclusively bind the reality of the church and its history to the Catholic Church.

4.6.3 General Evaluation

Given Schneider’s basic understanding of tradition as living transmission of the original message of Christ, it is not surprising tradition has an important place in his baptismal view. Because of the basic focus on the development of the transmission of the Gospel, however, we see rather an emphasis on the positive developments of tradition and not as much critical interaction. Also surprising is Schneider’s superficial discussion of Scholastic baptismal theology, with Aquinas’ understanding of Baptism as infusing grace

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. Schneider, *Leib*, 14–15, 20–21.

⁴⁵⁵ The German word *aufgegeben* is intended by Schneider as ambiguous expression. On the one hand it can mean the reform is forsaken, on the other hand it can also mean that the reform is assigned but still waits for implementation. Schneider, *Reform*, 9.

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. LG 8.

⁴⁵⁷ MG 34.

completely missing, or his rather simplistic interaction with other non-Catholic baptismal views. The influence of tradition and church history, therefore, is especially seen in Schneider's reliance on Early Church views and practices and in the many reflections of Vatican II.

Particularly the sacramentality of Baptism is seen by Schneider as a key view of the Early Church that cannot be given up, underlined by Schneider's rare negative evaluation of positions that separate God's action from water Baptism and thus make it a mere symbolic or human act. Also, the whole field of baptismal practice, such as the application of water, the definite formula for Baptism, or the sequence of the rite of Baptism is basically covered by illustrations of Early Church tradition without much additional explanation from Schneider. Especially regarding these practical topics taken from earliest tradition we have seen ambiguity whether tradition is an additional source, which might be a consequence of Schneider's understanding of Scripture as being part of the process of living tradition. Topics like the effect of Baptism as forgiveness of sin and regeneration, the lasting character of Baptism (*character indelebilis*), or the subordinate role of the person who administers Baptism are also acknowledgements of Early Church tradition. These topics, however, are seen by Schneider as developments of scriptural themes, although he did not express the scriptural foundation clear enough, which also allows to misunderstand him as giving material quality to tradition.

Especially Vatican II is a key influence on Schneider's view of Baptism, not only seen in explicit references to documents of Vatican II, but especially in many implicit reflections. Schneider, for example, accepts historical-critical exegesis; he uses findings of contemporary sciences and philosophy to emphasise the ecclesiological aspect of Baptism; and he affirms the ecclesiology of Vatican II, which also favours his ecumenical focus. We have also observed, however, that Schneider sees Vatican II not just as an authority for itself but as rediscovery of the wider tradition of the Early Church. This is also reflected in the usage of Vatican II's new dogmatic method that practically illustrates Schneider's main concern to protect the original Tradition, normatively found in Scripture and handed on by living transmission, and to make it relevant for the present situation.

Schneider's attempt to make the message of Christ relevant for the contemporary situation, while at the same time respecting the teaching of the church, is especially seen in the systematic subchapter of the Baptism chapter of *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*. There he discusses questions that are relevant to the present situation of the church in the West, which are the question of the necessity of Baptism in a pluralised world and society, the

discussion about infant Baptism, and the ecumenical dimension of Baptism in a time where the traditional churches all face the same cultural challenges. The contemporary relevance of these topics is also affirmed by the BEM document, which according to Schneider, lines out the remaining differences regarding Baptism in the areas of infant Baptism, the necessity of Baptism for salvation and the understanding of original sin (91).

In Schneider's discussion of infant Baptism, the connection of infant Baptism and original sin, and the necessity of Baptism for salvation, we also see his acceptance of the authority of the teaching of the church, as these topics all were officially received by Trent. He never appeals, however, to the authority of the official teaching of the church in arguing for his view but understands the teaching of the church merely as receiving and acknowledging developments that have their foundation in Scripture. If Schneider sees the original meaning distorted, however, he either directly criticises the teaching of the church, or if this is not possible due to a teaching's unquestionable status in the Catholic Church, he historically relativises it and either ignores it for the time being or attempts to rediscover its scriptural basis and early understanding and then reinterprets the intended meaning for the present time.⁴⁵⁸ This approach of handling problematic doctrine we saw in Schneider's social-theological reinterpretation of the connection of original sin and Baptism, and also in the relativisation of the connection between infant Baptism and original sin as mere attempt to use the extreme to underline the validity of both teachings. In the case of other traditional expressions of Catholic theology, such of the *habitus* or *gratia-qualitas* teaching of Aquinas, Schneider seems to have the freedom to just ignore them as they have not been officially received into the teaching of the church.⁴⁵⁹

4.7 Conclusions

Schneider's view of Baptism is a solid contemporary Catholic view that is grounded in the tradition of the Early Church and its further developments over the course of history, while also clearly reflecting many features of Vatican II. The Catholic core of Schneider's view is clearly manifest in his insistence on the term sacrament to describe God's real action in Baptism, in the understanding of baptismal regeneration, in the defence of infant

⁴⁵⁸ Ritschl also observed this methodical approach in Schneider's work on the Eucharist. Dietrich Ritschl, 'Erfahrene und reflektierte Eucharistie – Zu den impliziten Axiomen in Theodor Schneiders Eucharistielehre', in *Vorgeschnack. Ökumenische Bemühungen um die Eucharistie. Festschrift für Theodor Schneider*, ed. Bernd Jochen Hilberath and Dorothea Sattler (Mainz: Grünewald, 1995), 573–580.

⁴⁵⁹ Kuhn suspects that because of the at that time ongoing theological controversy regarding the nature of justifying grace, Trent used simple scriptural and patristic language, and omitted these Scholastic technical terms. Johannes Kuhn, *Die christliche Lehre von der göttlichen Gnade* (Tübingen: Verlag der Lauppischen Buchhandlung, 1868), 401–2.

Baptism, and in the teaching about the necessity of Baptism for salvation. By relating all these topics to faith, however, Schneider avoids misconceptions that emerged in the history of Catholic baptismal theology. He avoids the misunderstanding of magical effectiveness of Baptism by emphasising that the term sacrament also implies the necessary acceptance of Baptism in faith. Infant Baptism, although probably a later development, is for Schneider a valid theological concept because faith can follow Baptism. This also shows that the appropriation of Baptism is a lifelong process, and he thus avoids the misunderstanding of Baptism as finished event that only has relevance for the beginning of the Christian life. Also, the necessity of Baptism for salvation is seen by Schneider as consequence of the universal role of Christ and the close relationship of faith and Baptism. By emphasising the role of faith for salvation Schneider also avoids putting too much importance on the necessity of the institutionalised church for salvation, which also fits to his general emphasis on the spiritual reality of the church. The result then is a balanced baptismal view that acknowledges both the individual and ecclesiological aspects of Baptism. Schneider's mainly positive focus on the developments of Early Church tradition, however, also leads to some shortcomings in the critical discussion of later developments in the history of baptismal theology, whereas especially the Scholastics and views of other denominations are presented rather briefly and superficially.

In general, however, Schneider's baptismal view is a good example for the use of tradition and church history in a recent Catholic view. The influence of Vatican II is clearly seen in the use of the new dogmatic method, the acceptance of the historical-critical method, and in ambiguities whether tradition is only formal element of transmission or has material qualities. Nevertheless, Schneider's baptismal view is thoroughly based on Scripture, and while tradition has an important place in his thought, his acceptance of Catholic teachings does not depend on the teaching authority of the church, but he tries to explain them as legitimate developments of scriptural truth. The result is a baptismal view that is clearly based on Scripture while reflecting certain Catholic characteristics and being open for correction as far as possible given the Catholic restriction of the missing possibility to ultimately criticise tradition.

‘Baptism ... is the actual reconstitution of the person in the form of the sacramental sign. As an anticipatory sign of the whole life history of the baptized in terms of its end it is referred to its out-working by appropriation of its content in faith.’⁴⁶⁰

– Wolfhart Pannenberg –

Chapter 5

Wolfhart Pannenberg – A Protestant View of Baptism

Wolfhart Pannenberg was born in 1928 in Stettin, and during his childhood his family moved several times.⁴⁶¹ Even though Pannenberg was baptised as a child, his family was only formally Christian and soon left the church. During his early years Pannenberg was strongly interested in music and philosophy, which instilled a rather negative view of Christianity in him. Due to a spiritual experience in his adolescence and the positive example of a Christian teacher, however, Pannenberg became interested in Christianity and decided to study philosophy and theology.

From 1947 to 1955 Pannenberg studied in Berlin, Göttingen, Basel and Heidelberg, under teachers like Karl Barth, Gerhard von Rad, Hans von Campenhausen, and Edmund Schlink. In 1953 Schlink supervised Pannenberg’s dissertation about the predestination

⁴⁶⁰ ‘Die Taufe ... ist in der Form des sakramentalen Zeichens tatsächliche Neukonstitution der Person. Dabei ist sie als zeichenhafte Antizipation der ganzen Lebensgeschichte des Getauften von deren Ende her angewiesen auf den Nachvollzug durch Aneignung ihres Inhalts im Glauben.’ ST 3:305.

⁴⁶¹ If not referenced otherwise all data on Pannenberg’s life is obtained from his autobiographical sketch in Braaten and Clayton, *Pannenberg*, 11–18; his autobiographical article Wolfhart Pannenberg, ‘God’s Presence in History’, *Christian Century*, 11 March 1981, 260–63; Oord’s interview with Pannenberg, Thomas Jay Oord, ‘Pannenberg Dies; An Interview’, 8 September 2014, http://thomasjayoord.com/index.php/blog/archives/pannenberg_dies_an_interview; Gunther Wenz, ‘Ein Nachruf - Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014)’, *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt* 114, no. 10 (2014): 593–94; Klaus Koschorke, ‘Grußwort anlässlich des 75. Geburtstages von Herrn Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c. D.D. (mult.) F.B.A. Wolfhart Pannenberg’, LMU München - Evangelisch Theologische Fakultät, 11 December 2003, http://www.evtheol.uni-muenchen.de/aktuelles/nachrichten/archiv/2003/ehrung_pannenberg/grusswort_pannenb/index.html.

teaching of Duns Scotus,⁴⁶² and in 1955 Pannenberg finished his habilitation about the history of the use of the term ‘analogy’ in theology.⁴⁶³ In 1954 Pannenberg married and in 1956 he was ordained as minister in the Protestant state church. From 1955 to 1958 Pannenberg began teaching Systematic Theology in Heidelberg, then until 1961 he taught with Jürgen Moltmann in Wuppertal. From 1961 to 1967 Pannenberg taught in Mainz before he was called to be professor for Systematic Theology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where he stayed until his retirement in 1994 and served as director of the Institute for Fundamental Theology and Ecumenism. Over his whole career and after his retirement Pannenberg regularly was visiting professor at American universities, which contributed to his prominence in the English-speaking world. In 2014 Pannenberg died at the age of 86.

Pannenberg is highly recognised, especially due to his academic work, seen in the huge *Festschrift* published in honour of his 60th birthday;⁴⁶⁴ the translations of his works in English and other languages; the many secondary works published about his thought; his several honorary doctorates from all over the world; his multiple memberships in academies of sciences; and several medals of the Bavarian state and federal German government.

Although Pannenberg’s focus was his academic work, he emphasised the importance of theological education for the ministry of the church and the proclamation of the Gospel.⁴⁶⁵ He himself regularly preached at university chapels in Heidelberg and Munich and published two volumes of his sermons.⁴⁶⁶ Some of his lectures also appeared as radio-broadcasts and as small and accessible books for interested readers.

Pannenberg constantly encouraged ecumenical exchange and was personally involved in ecumenical dialogue. He published many essays on ecumenical topics,⁴⁶⁷ and participated in ecumenical exchange at the university. Additionally, he was member and academic leader of the Protestant side of the Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians, and from 1975 to 1990 was delegate of the German Protestant state

⁴⁶² Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Die Prädestinationslehre des Duns Scotus im Zusammenhang der scholastischen Lehrentwicklung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954).

⁴⁶³ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Analogie und Offenbarung: eine kritische Untersuchung zur Geschichte des Analogiebegriffs in der Lehre von der Gotteserkenntnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

⁴⁶⁴ Jan Rohls and Gunther Wenz, eds., *Vernunft des Glaubens: wissenschaftliche Theologie und kirchliche Lehre; Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Wolfhart Pannenberg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988).

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. Oord, ‘Interview’; Christian Bell, ‘Wolfhart Pannenberg (Interview)’, *Chimes (The Official Student Newspaper of Calvin College)* 95, no. 22 (9 March 2001).

⁴⁶⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Gegenwart Gottes: Predigten* (München: Claudius, 1973); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Freude des Glaubens: Predigten* (München: Claudius, 2001).

⁴⁶⁷ Collected in BSTh 3.

churches in the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. Pannenberg also engaged in interdisciplinary dialogue and encouraged interreligious dialogue, however, without sacrificing the Christian truth claims.⁴⁶⁸

Wolfgang Pannenberg stood firm in his convictions, in society as well as in the church. He constantly reminded the leadership of the church not to comply with the zeitgeist to not become obsolete.⁴⁶⁹ Although he was critical about the direction of the church he still was faithful to her, also seen in the words of bishop Bedford-Strohm who stated, ‘Our church is greatly indebted to him, even though he often disagreed with her, she was always central in his horizon.’⁴⁷⁰

Pannenberg is especially known for his new theological direction, published 1961 in *Offenbarung als Geschichte*,⁴⁷¹ which describes universal history as comprehensive medium of God’s revelation, in contrast to Barth’s and Bultmann’s ahistorical subjectivism.⁴⁷² Pannenberg further focused on his theological method in many smaller contributions⁴⁷³ and in *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*.⁴⁷⁴ He also put his method into practice in his works on christology⁴⁷⁵ and anthropology,⁴⁷⁶ which together with the work mentioned before were considered by Pannenberg as ‘necessary stages before I could produce a systematic theology.’⁴⁷⁷ The masterpiece of Pannenberg’s work then is the three volume *Systematische Theologie* that was published from 1988 to 1993, which is counted among the great systematic conceptions of the 20th century.

5.1 Baptism in the Thought of Pannenberg

Even though Baptism is only a small part of Pannenberg’s extensive work, we saw that several authors regard his view as a representative modern Lutheran view (cf. 3.2). Pannenberg addressed Baptism in several works, most comprehensively in an extra chapter in the third volume of his magnum opus *Systematische Theologie*, which, therefore, will

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Bell, ‘Pannenberg’.

⁴⁶⁹ Cf. Achim Schmid, ‘Zum Tod von Wolfgang Pannenberg - Ein großer Mann der Ökumene’, 15 September 2014, 1, <http://www.bayern-evangelisch.de/wir-ueber-uns/zum-tod-von-wolfgang-pannenberg.php>.

⁴⁷⁰ Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, ‘Kondolenzkarte an Frau Pannenberg’, 6 September 2014.

⁴⁷¹ Wolfgang Pannenberg, ed., *Offenbarung als Geschichte*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).

⁴⁷² Wenz, ‘Nachruf’, 1.

⁴⁷³ Collected in the volumes *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie* (GSTh).

⁴⁷⁴ Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1973).

⁴⁷⁵ Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Grundzüge der Christologie*, 5th ed. (Gütersloh: Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1976).

⁴⁷⁶ Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Anthropologie in theologischer Perspektive* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).

⁴⁷⁷ Braaten and Clayton, *Pannenberg*, 17.

be the focus of this investigation.⁴⁷⁸ In addition to occasional references to Baptism in other works, Pannenberg also published several practical contributions about Baptism and Christian spirituality, referred to Baptism in ecumenical contributions, and preached about Baptism, which we will consider if necessary.

5.1.1 *Main Focus: Baptism in 'Systematische Theologie'*

The chapter about Baptism is found in the third volume of *Systematische Theologie* (3:268-314). The general scope of the third volume is the work of the Spirit, which is the foundation for the fellowship of the church and its eschatological completion. In this context Pannenberg sees the foundational role of Baptism, as in Baptism the gift of the Spirit is received, which enables participation in the sonship of Christ with the father and includes the hope of eschatological completion (3:18, 21, 23, 28-29, 595, 672).

In main chapter 13 of *Systematische Theologie* Pannenberg discusses the relation of the church and the individual Christian by first defining his ecclesiology (chapter 13:1), and then outlining 'the basic saving works of the Spirit in individual Christians (chapter 13:2), which become manifest in the life of the church in signifiatory form (chapter 13:3). The discussion about 'the presence of Christ's salvation in signifiatory form' is divided in chapters about Baptism, Eucharist, and the sacraments in general. Pannenberg affirms that Baptism and Eucharist both are related to the fellowship of the individual with Christ: Baptism as its constitution and Eucharist as its assurance and preservation. Pannenberg, therefore, emphasises the meaning of Baptism as regeneration and constitution of the new existence and identity in Christ, which only as secondary consequence also constitutes the fellowship of the church (3:266-267; cf. 3:324, 358).

The Baptism Chapter: 'Baptism and the Christian Life'

In the Baptism chapter Pannenberg presents his view of Baptism by introducing the key points of his view in the first subchapter, then discussing special topics with relevance to Baptism, such as Penance, infant Baptism and Confirmation, before he concludes with a subchapter investigating the origins of Baptism in Jesus' life and ministry.

In the first subchapter, 'a) Die Taufe als Konstitution christlicher Identität,' mainly biblical-theological in nature, Pannenberg describes Baptism as an act of transfer to the triune God, which regenerates or reconstitutes a person. The relationship to the triune God is established by participation in Christ's sonship, which happens through the

⁴⁷⁸ In this chapter page references in brackets are referring to Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie* (ST) If not indicated otherwise quotes are taken from Bromiley's English translation *Systematic Theology* (ST.E), but with page references still referring to the German original (ST).

connection with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In consequence the baptised person also participates in the fruit of Christ's death, which includes the forgiveness of sin and the giving of the Spirit (3:269). The core of Pannenberg's view is that in Baptism the death of the baptised person is anticipated in the real fellowship with Christ's death (Romans 6). This real fellowship, however, is depicted in form of a sign that is only realised by the faith of the recipient, whereas the recipient's subjective faith does not affect the sign's objectiveness and validity.

The anticipation⁴⁷⁹ of one's own future death in Baptism by the linkage to the death of Christ, which can be regarded as the core of Pannenberg's baptismal view, also constitutes the lifelong relevancy of Baptism, as 'the whole life story of a Christian between life and death becomes the re-enactment of what already has been significant anticipated in Baptism' (3:272).⁴⁸⁰ Pannenberg criticises that the anticipatory understanding of Baptism and its resulting significance for the whole Christian life has mostly been neglected in church history, fostered through developments that led to the reduction of Baptism's significance to only the beginning of the Christian life. These developments provide the basis for Pannenberg's further discussion in the following systematic subchapters and are the penitential practice of the church (Penance), the rise of infant Baptism, and the detachment of Confirmation from Baptism.

In the second subchapter, 'b) Taufe, Bekehrung und Buße,' Pannenberg discusses the relation of Baptism, conversion and repentance, beginning by presenting the biblical foundation. Pannenberg concludes that from a biblical perspective conversion and Baptism mean the same. Coming to faith and Baptism, therefore, are inseparable, as only in Baptism the believer objectively receives fellowship with Christ and forgiveness of sin, whereas faith without Baptism still happens in the subjective realm of a human being, who only through Baptism gets a new objective identity (3:275). With this foundation Pannenberg criticises the development of penitential practice and Penance in the medieval church, which dissolved the link between Baptism and repentance, and praises Luther for reconnecting them. Pannenberg affirms the lasting effect of Baptism, which, however, must be correctly understood as significant and not as immediate physical causality. This is also the key to understand that while original sin is already overcome in the

⁴⁷⁹ The concept of anticipation, or also described by Pannenberg as systematic category of the prolepsis, is a central aspect in his whole theology, especially regarding Jesus' resurrection and the kingdom of God. Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), esp. 69-70, 75; Pannenberg, 'Presence', 261-62. Similarly described in Ted Peters, *Anticipating Omega: Science, Faith, and Our Ultimate Future* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 32.

⁴⁸⁰ Own translation as the English version (ST.E) incorrectly translates 'the story of the life of Jesus.'

reconstituted identity in Christ, it is still experienced in empirical reality. As the new identity is based on the anticipation of the future death, the old man must be absorbed by the new identity every day until the sign of Baptism is fulfilled in the end. Regeneration, therefore, is already realised in the realm of the sacramental sign of Baptism but must be appropriated by faith in a lifelong process (3:285).

The subchapter on infant Baptism and Confirmation, ‘c) Taufe und Glaube (Kindertaufe, Konfirmation und Krankensalbung),’ begins again with the biblical affirmation that Baptism and faith belong together, whereas Baptism both is the seal of faith and must be appropriated by faith (3:287). In the Early Church Pannenberg sees faith and confession as preceding Baptism, which changed through the rise of infant Baptism. Infant Baptism has been consolidated by the growing understanding of Baptism as mystical unity with Christ in his death and resurrection that can only be God’s work, which then led to understand faith as acceptance of God’s word given in Baptism (3:288). The question about the validity of infant Baptism is important to Pannenberg, as the answer reflects the understanding of the nature of Baptism and the relationship of faith and Baptism. He concludes that Baptism mediates an effect, the linkage with the death and resurrection of Jesus, that can only be received in faith, whereas faith does not create the effect but only receives it step by step in the Christian life. As Baptism, therefore, aims for the personal faith of the recipient without presupposing it, Pannenberg concludes that adults are in the same situation as infants, and the nature of Baptism, therefore, allows the Baptism of infants, without implying that all infants must be baptised immediately (3:290-293).

No matter how Baptism is received, its appropriation through faith is indispensable, as only then is the regeneration and justification that happened in the event of Baptism fully realised. A later personal confession of faith, as happens in Confirmation, therefore, must not be understood as an additional event but as ratification of what happened in Baptism (3:296). This is also the foundation of Pannenberg’s discussion of Confirmation in Catholic and Protestant churches, which should not emphasise the human act but the necessity of the Spirit to strengthen the already baptised person’s personal faith in the lifelong process of appropriating Baptism (3:300). Along these lines Pannenberg also describes the rite of Anointing of the Sick as expression of the lifelong reliance on the Spirit to appropriate Baptism especially in the storms of life (3:302).

In the final section of Pannenberg’s discussion of faith and Baptism he focuses on its implications for justification and concludes that Baptism ‘is the concrete place of justification in the lives of Christians, and faith is this only insofar as on our behalf it

appropriates throughout life the new identity that rests on baptism' (3:304). Through Baptism the new identity of a Christian is created outside of oneself (eccentric, *extra se in Christo*), which must be appropriated over the whole course of one's life. The appropriation of Baptism, however, is only possible through the power of the Spirit, given in Baptism, which implies that the appropriation of Baptism happens through the already reconstituted subject (3:306).

Rebirth and reconstitution of the human identity as effect of the baptismal sign depend on its divine institution, and Pannenberg, therefore, discusses in the last subchapter, 'd) Die Einsetzung der Taufe und die Symbolik des Taufritus,' the exegetical evidence for the institution of Baptism by Jesus, which he does not find in the classical passages Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:16, but rather in Jesus' baptism by John. Jesus' baptism is based on solid historical evidence (3:308), and also corresponds with Paul's understanding of Baptism as participation in Christ's death (3:312), as Jesus connected his baptism with his death on the cross (Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50). Pannenberg, therefore, sees in Jesus' baptism the foundation for Christian Baptism, even providing the meaning of dying with Christ. Only from the perspective of Christ's resurrection, however, does his baptism also become the pledge of the future hope, which is why Baptism was reintroduced in the church. Participation in the cross of Christ in Baptism also requires taking up one's own cross which then becomes the reason to follow one's own divine calling in proclaiming the kingdom of God and participating in the fellowship of the church (3:314).

Other References to Baptism in 'Systematische Theologie'

Apart from the central role of Baptism in the third volume, the first two volumes contain only two significant references to Baptism. In the first volume, which addresses the question about God, Pannenberg regards the trinitarian baptismal formula of Matthew 28 not as conclusive evidence for the doctrine of the trinity, but as reflection of baptismal theology, emphasising that only through the work of the Spirit is participation in the sonship with the son to the father possible (1:291-292, 328). In the second volume with the focus on anthropology, christology, and reconciliation, Baptism appears mainly in relation to its real effect in delivery from sin (2:276-278). Delivery from sin is possible 'for sin will reach its end with death, and it has already done so proleptically for believers, whose future death is linked to the death of Christ' (2:482; cf. 2:466, 498), a link that becomes effective for the individual by its appropriation through faith, confession and Baptism (2:466, 473-475). Pannenberg also emphasises that the new life out of the Spirit already began in the historical event of one's delivery from sin in Baptism, which means that

redemption does not only happen in future judgement, but already defines the Christian life in this world (2:344, 445-446; cf. 3:658).

In the third volume Pannenberg further explains the relationship of Baptism, confession and faith. The relationship between Baptism and faith is not only discussed in the Baptism chapter, but also in the preceding chapter about justification (chapter 13:2:4). Baptism and faith belong together regarding the effect of uniting with Christ, as by faith justification happens on the basis of the forgiveness of sin that is granted through Baptism (3:260-262). Pannenberg sees in Baptism the clarification of how being 'believers in Christ and their earthly existence' relate to each other. Baptism establishes the new identity in Christ (*extra se in Christo*), which then is appropriated by ecstatic faith that lifts believers above themselves to fellowship with Christ (3:262-265; cf. 3:324, 518).

The relationship of Baptism and confession is explained by Pannenberg regarding the community of the church (chapter 13:1:2). He explains that faith in itself is focused on the personal relationship of the individual to God and that only by a shared content of faith does the individual realise that he belongs to the fellowship of believers. The public confession of faith, therefore, is foundational for the fellowship of the church, as it symbolises the participation in the common faith of the church, and also as the church on behalf of Christ accepts the confession as expression of authentic faith. Confession as the definitive declaration of one's relationship to Christ by participating in the faith of the church, and Baptism as definitive reception of this relationship, therefore, are the conditions for membership in the church (3:129-136).

In the chapter about the sacraments (chapter 13:1:3) Pannenberg further explains the special function of Baptism and Eucharist as being signs that represent and mediate the salvation mystery of Christ, which distinguishes them from other actions that might be called sacraments (3:390). The special function of Baptism and Eucharist relies on divine institution that Pannenberg, however, defines more widely than just an explicit commandment of the historical Jesus. He sees their institution as consequence of the disciple's experience of the history of Jesus that imposed these rites upon them, which Pannenberg considers as a trinitarian formulation of the institution, as God instituted them 'by Jesus Christ and in the power of his Spirit' (3:373-378). For Baptism, the defining element in the history of Jesus is his death and resurrection, in which the eschatological future of God once and for all already began. As Baptism links the future death of the baptised person with the death of Christ, and thus also with the eschatological hope of resurrection, in Baptism 'the same eschatological turn that came into human history through Jesus

Christ' takes place in the life of the recipient (3:100-101). The power of Baptism, therefore, rests on the 'eschatological future that has already broken in in this history,' but its signifiatory form also explains the eschatological tension in Christian existence (3:386-389). This anticipatory or proleptic character of Baptism is the recurrent core of Pannenberg's baptismal view, to which all other aspects of Baptism are related (3:473, 475, 503, 573, 593). For Pannenberg, finally, the anticipatory character of Baptism is also the reason for the eschatological character of the Christian understanding of election, as he sees the election of the individual Christian happening in Baptism (3:475), a thought that only appears here⁴⁸¹ and often goes unnoticed in the discourse about Pannenberg's understanding of election.⁴⁸²

5.1.2 *Baptism in other Works*

In early works, such as his early sermons⁴⁸³ or his book on the *Apostles' Creed*,⁴⁸⁴ Pannenberg already sees the anticipatory character of Baptism as reason for forgiveness of sin and the future eschatological hope. The implications for the whole Christian life and the connection to the gift of the Spirit in Baptism, however, are not yet fully developed. Although in his book on the creed Pannenberg already criticises the detachment of forgiveness of sin and Baptism in the development of Penance, the importance of Baptism for the whole Christian life comes only into focus in the later writings concerning Christian Spirituality. In these writings Pannenberg criticises the *Bußfrömmigkeit* (penitential piety), which he sees not only in medieval Penance but also in the Pietist movement. He criticises that while focusing on repentance to define the Christian identity, the continuity of the new existence and identity that is founded on Baptism is neglected.⁴⁸⁵ The daily remembrance of Baptism, therefore, is foundational for a healthy Christian spirituality, as it is the daily appropriation of the new identity, that is given in Baptism outside of

⁴⁸¹ In his earlier work on election and the destiny of man Pannenberg uses in nearly identical sentences only faith and regeneration to describe the growth of the people of God and does not yet express the connection between Baptism and election. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen: Menschsein, Erwählung und Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 104, 115.

⁴⁸² Dietz, for example, in his description of Pannenberg's understanding of election does not mention Baptism once. Walter Dietz, 'Kirche und Erwählung in der Theologie W. Pannenbergs', in *Kirche und Reich Gottes: zur Ekklesiologie Wolfhart Pannenbergs*, ed. Gunther Wenz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 145–56.

⁴⁸³ Especially seen in his ordination sermon on Romans 6:3-11 (1956). Pannenberg, *Gegenwart*, 22–26, cf. also 35, 51, 84, 174.

⁴⁸⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis: ausgelegt und verantwortet vor den Fragen der Gegenwart*, 165 (Hamburg: Siebenstern-Taschenbuch, 1972), 168–70, cf. also 151-152, 157, 177, 180.

⁴⁸⁵ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Identität und Wiedergeburt (1979)', in *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 2. Natur und Mensch - und die Zukunft der Schöpfung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 171–74.

ourselves in Christ, nicely worded in the title of one of Pannenberg's later contributions as 'Baptism as remembered ecstatic identity.'⁴⁸⁶

The focus on Baptism as establishing the new identity outside oneself in Christ and the resulting relevance for the whole life is also seen in Pannenberg's later sermons,⁴⁸⁷ and provides the foundation for the references to Baptism in the ecumenical writings about justification and the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. In these writings Pannenberg emphasises the connection to Baptism as necessary foundation on which justification by faith happens.⁴⁸⁸ The righteousness that is given to the believer outside of himself is not just a legal construct but is rooted in the fellowship of the believer with Christ established in Baptism as 'a new continuity of the Christian life.'⁴⁸⁹ The new existence in Christ outside of oneself then is also the basis to understand the still experienced power of sin in the Christian life.⁴⁹⁰

In Pannenberg's evaluations of the BEM document we see other interesting developments. Pannenberg generally praises the emphasis on the initiative of God in Baptism, without neglecting its relatedness to faith, whereas the human response is seen as secondary, maybe even as effect of the Spirit given in Baptism and the incorporation in Christ's death and resurrection.⁴⁹¹ Here we find for the first time explicitly expressed the idea that the Spirit is given in Baptism, an aspect often emphasised in *Systematische Theologie* as foundation of the participation in the inner life of the trinity. In response to the Protestant critique that the BEM document only speaks about the roots of Baptism in the life of Jesus, his death and resurrection, Pannenberg affirms that from an exegetical point of view this is right and that additionally John's Baptism of Jesus should be mentioned, which was

⁴⁸⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Christsein und Taufe (1984)', in *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 3. Kirche und Ökumene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 66–73; Pannenberg, *Spiritualität*, 9–21, 48–58, 89, 97–98; Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Baptism as Remembered "Ecstatic" Identity', in *Christ: The Sacramental Word - Incarnation, Sacrament and Poetry*, by David Brown and Ann Loades (London: SPCK Publishing, 1996), 77–88; Wolfhart Pannenberg, "'Outside Us"-Luther's Contribution to Christian Piety (2001)', *Luther Digest* 12 (2004): 68–69; Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Luther's Contribution to Christian Spirituality (2001)', *Luther Digest* 12 (2004): 73.

⁴⁸⁷ Especially seen in the 1998 sermon on Baptism (Romans 6:3-8). Pannenberg, *Freude*, 49–52, cf. also 18-19, 33, 42, 44-45, 56, 67, 100, 133.

⁴⁸⁸ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Die gemeinsame Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre aus Evangelischer Sicht', in *Zur Zukunft der Ökumene: die 'Gemeinsame Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre'*, ed. Bernd Jochen Hilberath and Wolfhart Pannenberg (Regensburg: Pustet, 1999), 73.

⁴⁸⁹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Die Rechtfertigungslehre im ökumenischen Gespräch (1991)', in *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 3. Kirche und Ökumene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 286.

⁴⁹⁰ Pannenberg, 'Zukunft', 76; Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Thesen zur "Gemeinsamen Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre" (1998)', in *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 3. Kirche und Ökumene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 301–2.

⁴⁹¹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Lima - pro und contra', *KuD* 32 (1986): 38–39.

seen as fundamental act of institution since the Early Church.⁴⁹² In a second response Pannenberg further elaborates the importance of the institution of Baptism and Eucharist by the worldly Jesus, at least in the sense that their origin is found in Jesus himself, as only this guarantees the work of the risen Lord in these actions.⁴⁹³ In earlier works, Pannenberg did not yet see a direct intention in the institution of Baptism by the earthly Jesus, but only stated that the first Christians practised Baptism in remembrance of Jesus' baptism,⁴⁹⁴ and that there is a factual connection between Christian Baptism and Jesus' baptism.⁴⁹⁵ In his book on christology, Pannenberg did not even see the roots of Christian Baptism in Jesus' baptism, but only the other way round describes that understandings of Christian Baptism were brought back into the accounts of Jesus' baptism.⁴⁹⁶ In the responses to the BEM document, therefore, we see a development in Pannenberg's understanding of the institution of Baptism, which comes to completion in *Systematische Theologie* where the anticipatory meaning of Baptism is also linked to Jesus' baptism.⁴⁹⁷

We can conclude, therefore, that the developments in Pannenberg's baptismal theology do not significantly change his view but are further expansions and clarifications around the core of the anticipatory character of Baptism, presented in its entirety in *Systematische Theologie*.

5.2 Use of Scripture

As we have seen, Pannenberg's baptismal view is best described in the Baptism chapter of the third volume of his *Systematische Theologie*, which therefore will be the basis for the detailed examination in the following sections, beginning with the use of Scripture.

5.2.1 Selection, Distribution and Function of Scripture References

Pannenberg's selection of Scripture references is relatively balanced, with both the Gospels and Pauline epistles represented by about one third each, and Acts about one quarter (cf. Figure 5.1). References to the OT and the general epistles are represented by 5-8%.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 40.

⁴⁹³ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Dogmatische Grundsatzentscheidungen?', *KuD* 33 (1987): 95–96.

⁴⁹⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Die Problematik der Abendmahlslehre aus Evangelischer Sicht (1971)', in *Ethik und Ekklesiologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977), 295.

⁴⁹⁵ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Thesen zur Theologie der Kirche*, 2nd ed. (München: Claudius, 1974), 37.

⁴⁹⁶ Pannenberg, *Christologie*, 138–39. Originally published in 1964.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. also Pannenberg, *Freude*, 44, 67.

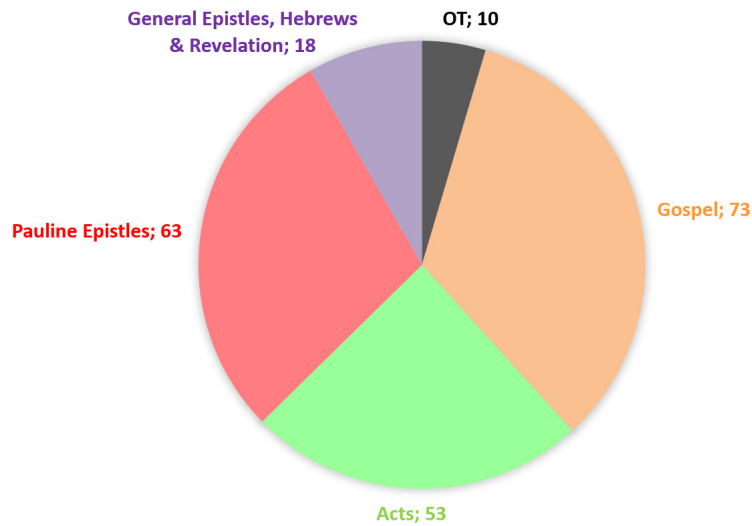


Figure 5.1 Selection of Scripture references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

If we examine the distribution and usage of Scripture references over the whole chapter (cf. Figure 5.2), the balanced selection of references is already obvious in the biblical-theological subchapter. Here Pannenberg establishes his basic understanding of Baptism by a synthesis of references to Pauline writings, Acts, the Gospels and the general epistles, all pointing to the ‘Constitution of Christian Identity’ based on the connection with Christ’s death which happens through Baptism (Romans 6). Pannenberg, therefore, relates everything to this key feature and consequently references to Pauline letters are spread out over the whole chapter with a regular return to the key theme of Romans 6. Additionally, Paul’s writings are also used in the other subchapters to show the close connection of Baptism and faith (3:287), and especially the discussion about Baptism, grace, and penitence in medieval and Reformation theology in the second subchapter is accompanied by several Pauline references. Noteworthy, however, is that Pannenberg uses 1 Corinthians 12:13 only to show the natural connection between the gift of the Spirit and Baptism, but never refers to this passage regarding the function of Baptism as incorporation into the body of Christ, the church. Instead Pannenberg argues that the fellowship with Christ, and thus the participation in his mission to establish the kingdom of God, is the reason for the function of Baptism as constitution of church membership (3:314). Furthermore, although Pannenberg shows an ecumenical interest in overcoming the mutual condemnations of the Reformation and misunderstandings regarding Baptism, he does not explicitly describe the ecumenical importance of Baptism, also seen in the absence of Ephesians 4:3-6 in the whole chapter.

Besides Pannenberg's regular references to the Gospels regarding repentance and the fate of Jesus, a massive use of Gospel passages appears in the last subchapter, where Pannenberg explains the origins of Baptism in Jesus' own baptism through John the Baptist (3:307) and Jesus' reference to his death in relation to his baptism (3:312). Another interesting accumulation of Gospel passages is found in Pannenberg's argument against obligatory infant Baptism, which according to him, is often based on wrong conclusions drawn from God's general desire for salvation in Matthew 18 in combination with the *Kinderevangelium* and John 3:5 (3:294).

References to Acts appear concentrated in certain places, mainly used to underline the connection of Baptism and the giving of the Spirit (3:269, 270, 289-290, 298), a key feature which in Pannenberg's view cannot be divorced from Baptism. Apart from that Pannenberg also refers to Acts regarding the primitive Baptism formula (3:269), to the connection of Baptism, forgiveness of sin, and repentance (3:269, 274-275), and to the household Baptisms (3:288).

The references to the general epistles, including Hebrews and Revelation, mainly appear regarding Baptism and forgiveness of sin (3:269), Baptism and repentance (3:274-276), and in the connection of anointing and belonging to Christ, also expressed in the Anointing of the Sick (3:297, 301). In describing the foundational importance of repentance for Christian life and for Baptism, references to the OT prophets also appear (3:274), and interestingly Luther's idea of *fides infantium* is commented upon by Pannenberg with the OT wisdom literature's description of God's care for animal babies (3:294). Finally, OT references to messianic prophecies in Psalms and Isaiah are used to underline Christ's messianic identity and the link between his baptism and the filling with the Spirit (3:311). Although Pannenberg mentions the relation of Baptism to God's covenant and circumcision while introducing the Reformed view, he neither evaluates this view, nor does he ever use Colossians 2:11-12, an important omission we already observed in Schneider's view.

An interesting final observation can be made by examining where Pannenberg uses fewer Scripture references, as in the practical considerations at the end of each section, but also in the discussion about Penance, infant Baptism, Confirmation, and especially the relation of Baptism and justification, which shows the systematic nature of these topics in Pannenberg's thought.

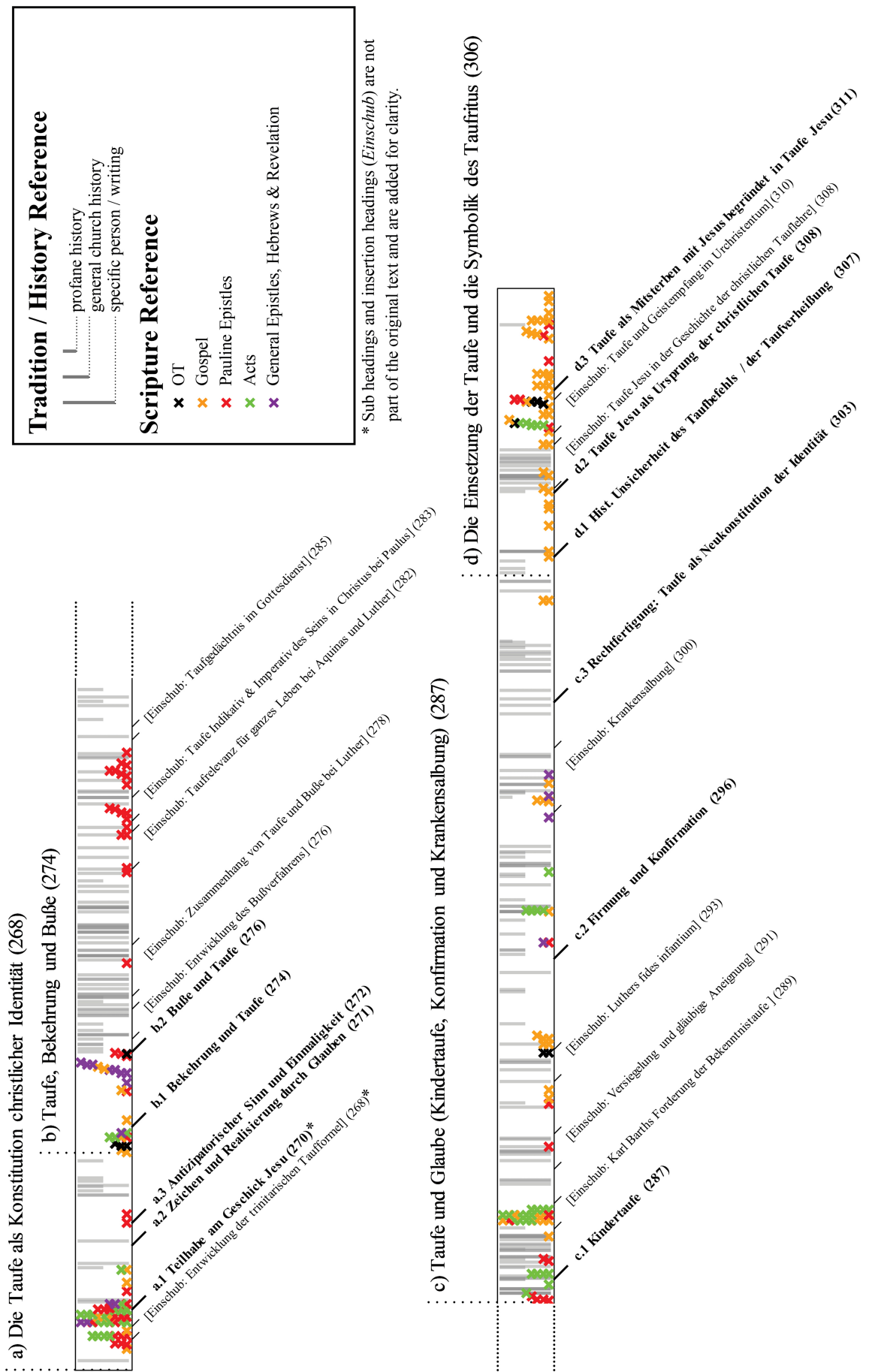


Figure 5.2 Distribution and category of Scripture references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

5.2.2 *The Special Nature of Scriptural Statements on Baptism*

Pannenberg partially acknowledges the missing and unclear statements about Baptism in the NT, but also tries to resolve these where possible. He admits that the household Baptisms in Acts allow no conclusion about infant Baptism, except that a decision for faith in Christ can also be a family matter (3:288). Pannenberg also states that other passages about Baptism do not speak about the special situation of infants and, therefore, the validity of infant Baptism can only be evaluated theologically by checking whether it fits with the nature of Baptism (3:289-292). Also, regarding the question why the early Christians after Jesus' death and resurrection reintroduced the practice of Baptism, Pannenberg admits that the reasons and motives are missing (3:275), which is resolved by the connection of Jesus' baptism to Christian Baptism (3:311). In regard to the unclarity of the mode of Baptism Pannenberg only mentions that immersion is an adequate practice to show the partaking in Christ's death and resurrection (3:272) but does not further discuss the topic. Regarding the words of Baptism Pannenberg resolves that the primitive formula of Acts is not an alternative to the trinitarian formula, as in the primitive formula the connection the trinitarian God is implied (3:269). Also, regarding the necessity of Baptism for salvation Pannenberg resolves that the presence of people of foreign cultures at the table in the kingdom of heaven shows that in the light of the overall testimony of the NT there can be no absolute necessity (3:295).

As Pannenberg sees the meaning of Baptism primarily in the participation in Christ's death and resurrection, the diverse statements regarding the meaning of Baptism, like the giving of the Spirit, forgiveness of sin, or washing, are all described as secondary consequences, or are not mentioned at all, such as enlightenment or exodus from bondage. The diverse statements about the order of Baptism and the giving of the Spirit in Acts are also resolved by Pannenberg into the argument that Baptism and the giving of the Spirit are inseparable and where exceptions are reported the purpose is to show that they are not corresponding with the norm (3:310).

The ambiguous statements regarding infant Baptism, such as the *Kinderevangelium* and 1 Corinthians 7:14 are recognised as such, but Pannenberg states that the use of them is still valid as they present anthropological facts that are applicable in the argument for infant Baptism (3:293). As for other ambiguous passages like John 3:5 or the *Todestaufligion*, Pannenberg clearly relates them to Baptism and even makes a major argument out of the *Todestaufligion* as bridge to Paul's understanding of Baptism as participation into Christ's death.

5.2.3 *The Complexity of NT Baptismal Theology*

Pannenberg does acknowledge developments in the NT baptismal theology, seen in his description of the development of the trinitarian baptismal formula (3:269, 271), or in comments about an early connection of Baptism to forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Spirit (3:269, 310). The development of baptismal theology in the early Christian church is also described by Pannenberg regarding Jesus' command to baptise in Matthew 28, the promise of Baptism in Mark 16 (3:307-308), or the addition of the baptismal confession in Acts 8:37 (3:131). He also observes different emphases, for example, that except of in the book Revelation conversion is hardly mentioned in regard to baptised Christians, or that the gospel of John never talks about conversion but only about regeneration (3:275). Pannenberg's acknowledgement of the complexity of NT baptismal theology, however, is not identical with its acceptance, but compels him to resolve everything into a conclusive theological system concentrated around the new identity in Christ.

5.2.4 *Scriptural Authority and Historical Criticism*

Although in the Baptism chapter Pannenberg does not explicitly explain his view of Scripture, the use of Scripture in his argument gives Scripture the qualities of a source and norm. Not only in the first subchapter, where Pannenberg describes the basic lines of his baptismal theology thoroughly based on Scripture, but also in every systematic subchapter a scriptural introduction of the topic provides the foundation, especially seen in the sections about Baptism's relation to conversion and penitence (Penance), the relation of Baptism and faith, and in the insertion about Anointing of the Sick. Finally, the last subchapter about the institution of Baptism is also solely based on Scripture and Pannenberg does not even mention contemporary Jewish washing rites or Hellenistic mystery cults to explain the origins of Baptism. Not only in the starting point of Pannenberg's arguments can we see the importance of Scripture, but also in his evaluation of historical developments, traditional and contemporary views. Pannenberg either negatively judges that positions, like Barth's separation of water and Spirit baptism, do not have an adequate scriptural foundation (3:289-290), or he positively shows how historical positions developed out of scriptural thoughts or at least are compatible to Scripture. This is clearly seen in his evaluation of Luther's view of Baptism and penitence as being compatible to Romans 6 (3:279, 282) or Luther's view of sin (3:284).

Pannenberg also uses the historical-critical method, however, not without critically evaluating its results. In Pannenberg's baptismal view we find the use of the historical-critical method especially where he tries to resolve conflicting statements, especially seen

regarding the late development of the trinitarian baptismal formula (3:308) or the attribution of forgiveness of sins to John's baptism in Mark, which he sees as Christian overpainting (3:269). Another point where Pannenberg thoroughly uses historical-critical considerations is the last subchapter about the initiation of Baptism through Christ. Here he shows why Matthew's Great Commission or Mark's baptismal promise are likely not original words of Jesus and therefore should not bear the burden of explaining the origin of Baptism (3:307-308). At the same time Pannenberg does not absolutise the historical-critical findings and he admits that the Great Commission still might be an original word of Jesus (3:308), but he prefers to use a historical more solid passage to explain the institution of Baptism, which he finds in Jesus' baptism through John (3:310).

In Pannenberg's baptismal view, therefore, we see the foundational role of Scripture as well as the acknowledgement of the historical-critical method, which is not a contradiction for him as he explains: 'Theology should be based on the scriptures, of course, but it should be based upon a reading of the scriptures through historical interpretation. After all, the scriptures are historical documents, notwithstanding their being the word of God. Even that has to be settled upon their content as historical documents.'⁴⁹⁸ It is important to understand here that for Pannenberg the authority of Scripture is only preliminary, and that the final authority is not found in the words of Scripture, but in the person and history of Jesus. Scripture, therefore, can be criticised as historical document to go back to Jesus as the final authority. The connection between the historical person of Christ and the early Christian message about him, however, must be held together as the historical actions of God, especially the resurrection of Christ, provide the authorisation of Scripture as Word of God, which then becomes the norm for everything else.⁴⁹⁹ The unity and authority of Scripture, therefore, is seen by Pannenberg not in the unambiguity and inerrancy of every single statement, but only in the testified event of Christ (1:24).⁵⁰⁰

5.3 Use of Literature

Now we will examine Pannenberg's use of literature. Works that simply provide the plain content of a reference to tradition, or are testimonies of tradition and history by themselves, are not included in this section.

⁴⁹⁸ Oord, 'Interview', 2; cf. also ST 1:254.

⁴⁹⁹ GSTh 1:16, 162; OaG 134; Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Schriftautorität und Lehrautorität', in *Autorität als Gegenstand und Element wissenschaftlichen Denkens: 6 Vortragsprotokolle*, by Erhard Denninger and Günter Eifler, Mainzer Universitätsgespräche, Sommersemester 1962 (Mainz: Universität Mainz, 1963), 9.

⁵⁰⁰ GSTh 1:166–71.

5.3.1 Selection of Literature References

Pannenberg draws heavily on literature from the fields of exegesis, historical, and systematic theology to develop and support his view of Baptism. Especially the numerous historical works show his interest in the historical developments that led to the various past and present-day systematic understandings connected to Baptism and its related rites. The small presence of practical and ecumenical works indicates Pannenberg's strong academic focus, given his ecumenical interest, however, one would expect more ecumenical works. Finally, there is only one reference to a secular work of philosophy, which is surprising as Pannenberg not only demands the interaction of theology and secular sciences,⁵⁰¹ but normally also consequently does so. On a second look, however, some expected references to secular sciences are found hidden in Pannenberg's references to his own book on anthropology.⁵⁰²

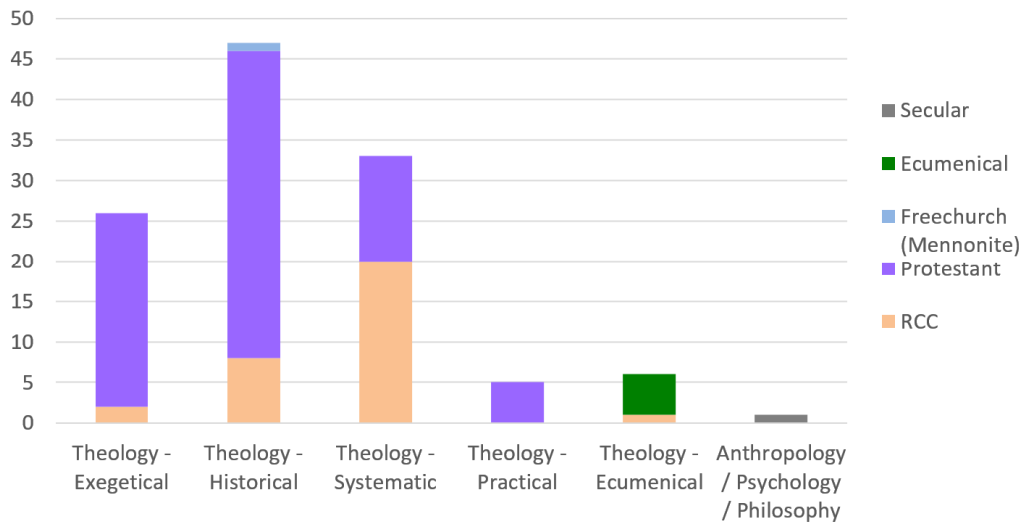


Figure 5.3 Category, number and origin of literature references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

The origin of the used works is largely Protestant, of which 80-90% are Lutheran. The only exception is in the systematic field, where we find over half of the references coming from Catholic authors (cf. Figure 5.3), which is due to the inclusion of the Catholic topics of Penance, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick in the Baptism chapter. This is positive, as Pannenberg quotes Catholic authors on specific Catholic topics and thus lets them

⁵⁰¹ Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith*, ed. Ted Peters (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 6; BSTh 2:30, 43, 84, 101-103. Also required by the universal character of the Christian faith, embodied methodically in the demand that every theological statement must be relatable to the corresponding field of experience and refer to reality as a whole. WuT 342-43, 348.

⁵⁰² Pannenberg, *Anthropologie*.

speak for themselves, but on common topics he mainly relies on Protestant authors. Especially in the field of exegesis, where due to the use of academic methods denominational differences nearly disappeared at the end of the 20th century, we would expect more Catholic works to appear. There are no works from Orthodox authors, and only one reference to an article from a free church author, which, however, only supplements the development of church discipline in Protestant state churches. Pannenberg, therefore, does not refer to a single free church author regarding Baptism, which is surprising given the past and present importance of the free churches in the Baptism discussion in Germany.

The publishing time of the used literature is spread out over Pannenberg's whole career (cf. Figure 5.4). While the Protestant systematic and exegetical works are distributed equally over the whole period, the Catholic works in these two fields are mainly published after Vatican II, which indicates systematic thinking in accordance with the council's recommendations. The few used practical and ecumenical works are mostly close to the publishing date of Pannenberg's *Systematische Theologie*, which on the one hand shows the recent importance of more practical and ecumenical topics in contrast to the more academic mid-20th century discussion about Baptism, but might also point to the academic nature of Pannenberg's work, whereas practical references were only considered at the writing time of *Systematische Theologie* for the sake of completeness.

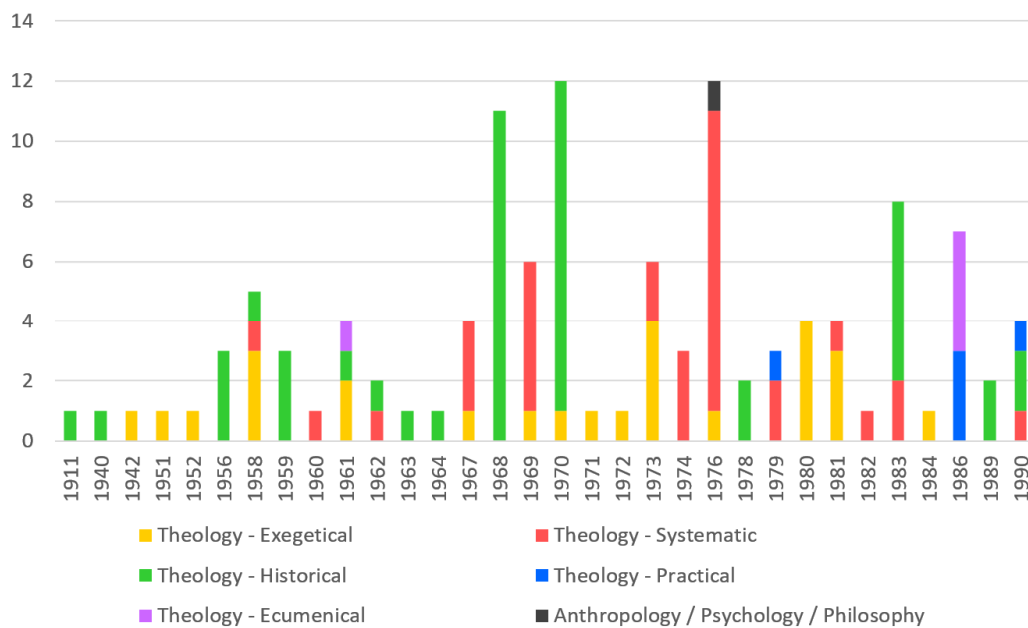


Figure 5.4 Publishing time and category of literature references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

5.3.2 *Distribution and Function of Literature References*

The position of specific categories of literature references matches with the general outline of Pannenberg's chapter on Baptism (cf. Figure 5.5). Most of the exegetical references appear in the first subchapter that presents the biblical-theological foundation and in the last subchapter that exegetically traces the origins of Baptism in the NT. The subchapters on Penance, infant Baptism, and Confirmation hold most references to systematic works, as these topics are systematic discussions based on the scriptural testimony. The practical works appear at the end of each of the systematic subchapters when Pannenberg draws practical conclusions regarding the discussed systematic developments. The historical works normally appear together with references to tradition and history, indicating where Pannenberg found them and also providing reference for further understanding. The ecumenical works appear mainly in coincidence with a tradition references that point to the mutual condemnation of the denominations and are used by Pannenberg to show the effort of the modern ecumenical movement in resolving the historical divisions.

In general, Pannenberg uses the literature references in a positive way to support his line of argument, and to supply literature for further study. Occasionally, however, Pannenberg also presents opposite viewpoints in the footnotes,⁵⁰³ or even evaluates references as uncertain or negative, for example by explaining how they contradict his understanding of Scripture.⁵⁰⁴ Most of the quotations are from Protestant works, not surprising given the dominance of them, but a few quotations also originate from Catholic and ecumenical works. Most references and quotations to literature are embedded in the footnotes and are directly addressed in the text only if considered especially important, for example, if they bear a certain inherent authority like works of Althaus (3:282, 294), Bultmann (3:310), or Barth (3:313).

⁵⁰³ E.g. ST 3:268, fn.455; 3:281, fn.487; 3:311, fn.584.

⁵⁰⁴ E.g. ST 3:269, fn.458; 3:312, fn.387.

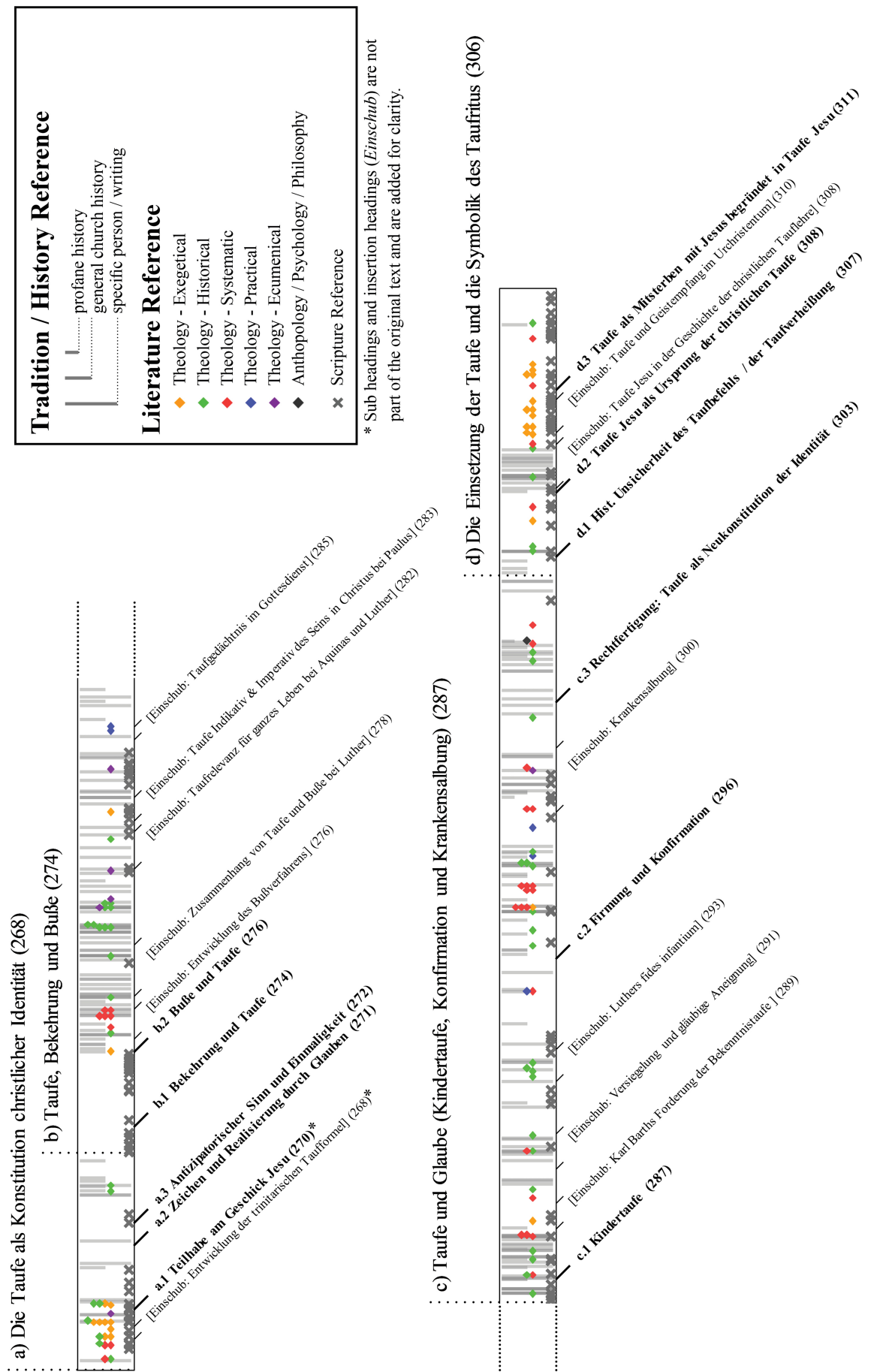


Figure 5.5 Distribution and category of literature references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

5.4 Explicit Use of Tradition and Church History

In order to understand Pannenberg's use of tradition and church history in developing his view of Baptism we will first collect all explicit references to tradition, church history, and profane history, and examine the general features of selection and usage. Secondly, we will examine the distribution of the references in the text, and how they are used and evaluated.

5.4.1 Selection of References to Tradition and Church History

Pannenberg uses an impressive amount of references to tradition and church history, while most of them are very specific and general references to developments of church history only count about 20% (cf. Figure 5.6). References to profane history are with 1% basically not present, which on the one hand is surprising as Pannenberg normally has a universal scope, but on the other hand also explainable as Baptism is a topic closely related to the spiritual life of the church. About two thirds of Pannenberg's references point to specific authors or writings of tradition, supplemented with about another 20% references being actual quotations of Christian authors. In Pannenberg's baptismal view, therefore, we see a great appreciation of tradition, not only in the huge percentage of specific references and quotations, but also in the fact that Pannenberg largely precisely indicates the work of origin.

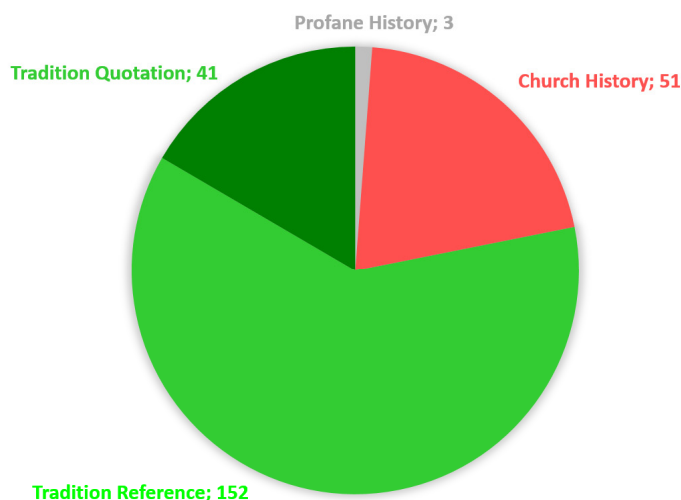


Figure 5.6 Type of tradition and church history references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

The temporal distribution of the references to tradition and church history shows a special focus on the Early Church and the Reformation, but there is also a significant

number of references to the Scholastics (cf. Figure 5.7). References to pre-Apostolic times are not present at all, the Apostolic period is also basically not present, and references to the Early Medieval times are as few as references to the modern times. References to the Early Medieval times are more unspecific and mainly refer to developments regarding Penance and Confirmation. Similarly, references to modern times are mainly unspecific and relate to developments regarding the modern tendency of emphasising human subjectivity, or specifically refer to Vatican II, Barth, and the BEM document.

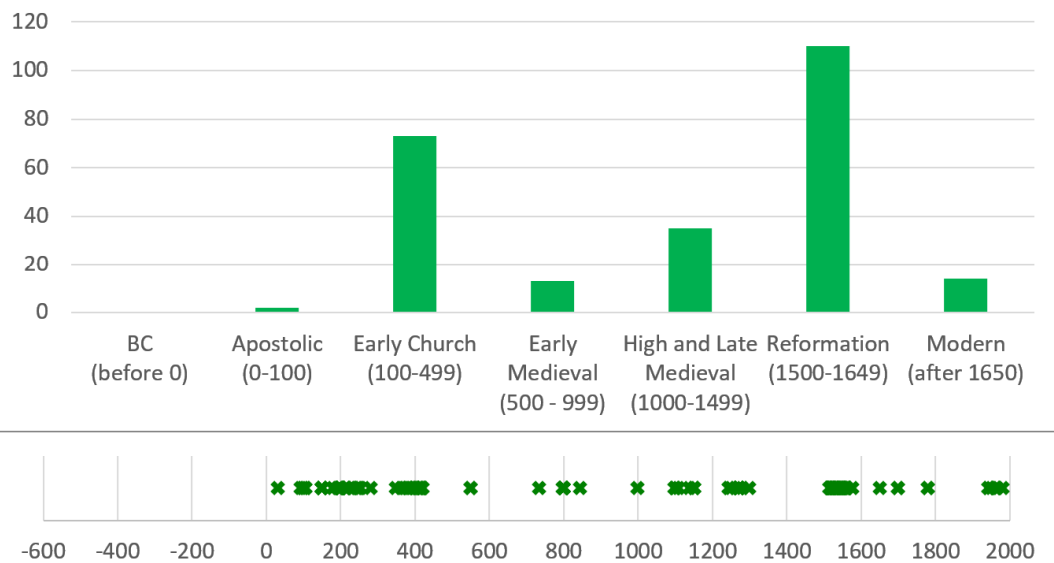


Figure 5.7 Temporal distribution of tradition and history references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

The large amount of references to the periods of the Early Church, the Scholastics, and the Reformation, and also the fact that nearly all quotations are from these periods, makes it worthwhile to take a closer look at the selection of these references (cf. Figure 5.8). Over two thirds of the quotations are from the two persons Luther⁵⁰⁵ and Aquinas, while the rest is divided among several Early Church authors, Trent, the *Confessio Augustana*, and the BEM document. The specific references show a similar picture, as most of the references are from Luther, who clearly dominates over the other Reformers. Similarly, the Summa of Aquinas dominates over other Scholastic works, and Pannenberg often seems to see Aquinas as the epitome of the Scholastics. The picture for the Early Church

⁵⁰⁵ In our analysis we count the references to the LC and SC as references to Luther, as the catechisms, in contrast to the other confessional writings, do not define the official doctrine of a church with the purpose of distinguishing it from the teaching of other churches. The references to CA, Apol, SC, and FC are counted as references to Lutheran confessional writings. Cf. Reiner Preul, *Kirchentheorie: Wesen, Gestalt und Funktionen der Evangelischen Kirche* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 72.

is more mixed, but with many references pointing to Tertullian and Augustine, who both had a prominent place in the development of infant Baptism. A considerable number of references to creeds, councils and synods are also present, mainly from Trent and Vatican II, as well as to the Lutheran confessional writings, whereas other Protestant confessional writings are nearly completely absent, with exception of two references to the *Heidelberg Katechismus*.

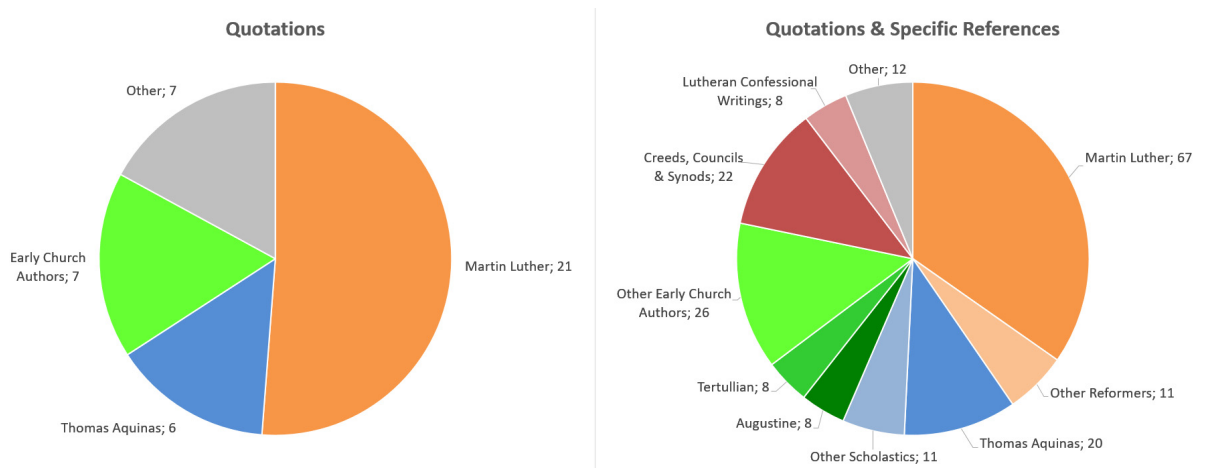


Figure 5.8 Origin of Quotations and Specific References (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

If we take a final look at the numerous references to Luther (cf. Figure 5.9), we see that most of them are from the Baptism sections of his catechisms and from *De captivitate*, which is not surprising given the importance of these works for Luther's understanding of Baptism and the sacraments in general. We also see several references to early works, such as the 95 theses and related sermons, mainly showing Luther's reflections on Penance and the accompanying realisation of the importance of Baptism. References to Luther's later works are mainly to works and sermons concerning Baptism.

In the references to Luther we see that Pannenberg largely thoroughly gives the page and even line number in the *Weimarer Ausgabe*, a thoroughness we can also see in his other tradition references. We must also note, however, that some references are inconsistent in style or even contain mistakes (for a complete list of the wrong references see Appendix 3). This, however, is excusable given the huge amount of references to tradition in Pannenberg's work, and the fact that the references are easily verifiable already demonstrates the detail Pannenberg uses in the first place.

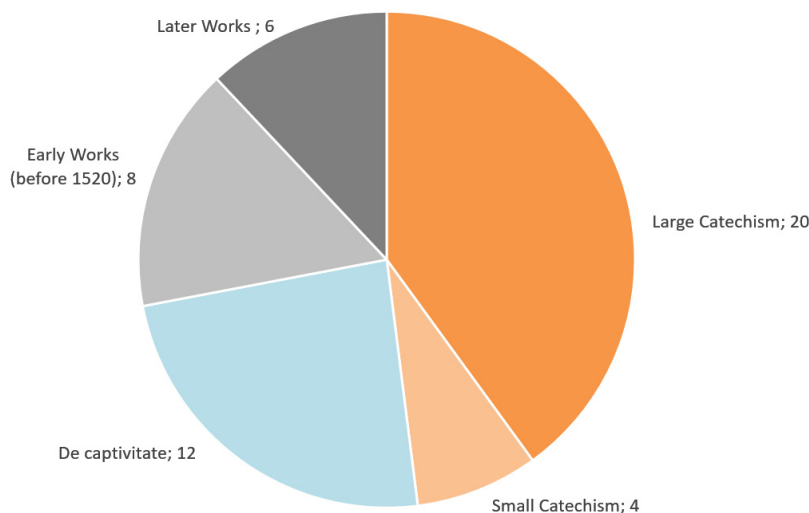


Figure 5.9 Origin of Specific References to Luther (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

In comparison to Pannenberg's use of Luther, there are only a few references to other Reformers or other streams of the Reformation. From the Lutheran side Pannenberg only briefly refers to Melancthon's view of original sin in the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (3:284) and Flacius' view of justification (3:304). From the Reformed side, there is only one reference to Bucer and Zwingli regarding Confirmation (3:299), and Zwingli's name is mentioned one more time in a footnote as suggestion for further reference to Reformed baptismal theology (3:289). Most references to the Reformed side are originating from the *Heidelberger Katechismus* and from Calvin and are concerning the Reformed view of the sacraments and Baptism, without explicitly appraising these views in detail. Most peculiar is Pannenberg's nearly complete omission of the Anabaptist movement of the Reformation, which is surprising given the ecumenical scope of Pannenberg's work and the importance of the Anabaptist movement, if not in numbers, at least in significance for the historical and contemporary discussion about Baptism. The only explicit use of the term Anabaptist is found in Pannenberg's rejection of the condemnation of the Anabaptists in the *Confessio Augustana* (3:294). Besides that, there is only one more unspecified reference when Pannenberg introduces Barth's rejection of infant Baptism and incidentally mentions that there already have been churches before that held this view (3:289).

When Pannenberg refers to Baptism in other places of his *Systematische Theologie* he mainly uses Scripture references to support his view and does not engage with tradition in the same detail as in the Baptism chapter. In regard to some special issues we find some

supplemental references to tradition, which are not repeated in the Baptism chapter, for example references to Justin and Pricillian in regard to the role of the Spirit in Baptism (1:292), or references to Melancton and Chemnitz, and to later theologians of the Protestant Orthodoxy like Hollaz, Buddeus, Quenstedt, and J.W. Baier in order to illustrate how the connection between the doctrine of justification and Baptism has been neglected after Luther (3:262-63). As in the Baptism chapter of *Systematische Theologie*, we see the prominent place of Luther's thought in Pannenberg's other baptismal writings, such as the practical contributions about Baptism and Christian spirituality. However, the references are not as detailed and except for some references to the Early Church, they are limited to his own denomination. Pannenberg's selection of tradition references, therefore, is best seen in the Baptism chapter of his *Systematische Theologie*, whereas other chapters or works do not contribute substantially different insights.

The detailed list of Pannenberg's references to tradition and church history in the Baptism chapter in the following table (Table 5.1) illustrates the massive presence of Luther and Pannenberg's thoroughness in engaging with tradition and history.⁵⁰⁶

Table 5.1 References to Tradition, Church History, and History (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

NON-CANONICAL CHRISTIAN AUTHORS & WRITINGS	<i>Date</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Func.</i>
Didache	~100	269	Itp+
Ignatius of Antioch			
Epistle to the Ephesians	107	309	Inf/III
The Shepherd of Hermas			
<i>Mandates</i>	~150	276	Aff+
<i>Similitudes</i>	~150	287	■Aff+
Irenaeus of Lyon			
<i>Adversus Haereses</i>	180	308	III
Tertullian			
<i>De baptismo</i>	193	288	Inf
<i>Aduersus Iudaeos</i>	195	309	III
<i>De paenitentia</i>	203	287, 278, 276	III+, Inf, Aff+
<i>De anima</i>	212	287	■Aff+
[Children of Christian parents are sanctified by them (1Cor 7:14)] ⁵⁰⁷	212	288, 293	Inf, Aff+

⁵⁰⁶ Format and structure of the table is introduced in connection with Table 4.1.

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. *De anima* 39:4.

Clement of Alexandria			
<i>Paidagogos</i>	200	273, 309	III+
<i>Stromata</i>	203	276	Aff+
Leucius Charinus			
Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles (Leucian Acts)	~200	287	Aff+
Hippolytus			
[First certain witness of infant Baptism] ⁵⁰⁸	215	288	Inf
Origen of Alexandria			
Commentary on John	235	309	III
Homilies on Luke	244	309	III
[Infant Baptism is ancient apostolic custom] ⁵⁰⁹	231	288	Inf
[Anticipatory meaning of Baptism with its advance relation to death and to the whole course of life of the baptised person] ⁵¹⁰	246	273	III+
Cyprian of Carthage			
[Infant Baptism is ancient apostolic custom] ⁵¹¹	253	288	Inf
Basil the Great			
<i>Adversus Eunomium</i>	364	287	III+
<i>De Spiritu Sancto</i>	374	270	■Aff+
Ambrose			
<i>Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam</i>	387	309	III
[Baptism is 'sacrament of faith'] ⁵¹²	381	287	III+
[Mystery of Baptism unites with Christ's death and resurrection] ⁵¹³	384	288	Inf
[postbaptismal rites not regarded as being part of Baptism but as consequent rites] ⁵¹⁴	387	273	III
Apostolic Constitutions	~200	270	■Aff+
Augustine			
Epistle 98	408	288	Inf
Sermon 135	417	309	III
<i>De nuptiis et concupiscentia</i>	419	284	■III+
<i>Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum</i>	420	288	Inf
[Indelible spiritual character of Baptism] ⁵¹⁵	400	268	III+
[Baptism is 'sacrament of faith'] ⁵¹⁶	408	287	III+
[Mystery of Baptism unites with Christ's death and resurrection] ⁵¹⁷	422	288	Inf

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. *traditio apostolica* 21:16.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. Homilies on Leviticus; Commentary on Romans.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Commentary on Roman 5:8.

⁵¹¹ Cf. Epistle 64:2-6.

⁵¹² Cf. *De spiritu sancto* 1:3:42.

⁵¹³ Cf. *De poenitentia* 2:2:8-9.

⁵¹⁴ Cf. *De mysteriis; de Sacramentis*.

⁵¹⁵ Cf. *De baptism; Contra litteras Petiliani*.

⁵¹⁶ Cf. Epistle 98:9-10.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. *Enchiridion* 14:52.

Jerome			
Epistle 84	400	279	Inf
Epistle 122	408	279	Inf
<i>Commentariorum in Esaiam</i>	410	279	Inf
Epistle 130	414	279	■Inf
Epistle 147	420	279	Inf
Bede			
<i>In Lucae evangelium expositio</i> ⁵¹⁸	735	309	Ill
Alcuin of York			
Letter to Odwin (epistle 134)	798	299	Inf
Scholastic Theology			
[Contrition is conversion given by God and already expression of God granted absolution] ⁵¹⁹	~1100	280	Inf
[Grace is created through supernatural reality and infused into the soul by Baptism] ⁵²⁰	1273	282	Ill-
Commentaries on the Sentences 4:17 (about confession) ⁵²¹	~1300	304	Inf
Anselm of Canterbury			
[Every sin is of infinite weight before God] ⁵²²	1098	286	Aff+
[Declarative understanding of absolution] ⁵²³	1109	281	Inf
Peter Abelard			
[Declarative understanding of absolution] ⁵²⁴	1139	281	Inf
Peter Lombard			
Sentences			
On Baptism (4:3)	1150	309	■Ill
On Penance (4:17)	1150	281	Inf
Alexander of Hales			
[Confirmation instituted by Synod of Meaux] ⁵²⁵	1245	298	Inf-
[Declarative understanding of absolution] ⁵²⁶	1245	281	Inf
Bonaventure			
[Confirmation instituted by the apostles] ⁵²⁷	1252	298	Inf

⁵¹⁸ Pannenberg claims to reference to the *glossa ordinaria* but the actual given reference CCL 120:83 is to Bede's commentary on Luke, which, however, is embedded in the *glossa ordinaria*.

⁵¹⁹ Seen e.g. in Bruno von Segni, Abelard, Roland Bandinelli, Peter Lombard, Hugo St. Victor, Odo of Lucca.

⁵²⁰ Cf. Sum 2/1:113:2,7 (*infusio gratiae*).

⁵²¹ Cf. commentaries by Magnus, Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Scotus.

⁵²² Cf. *Cur deus homo* 1:21, 2:14.

⁵²³ Cf. *Homiliae et Exhortationes* 13.

⁵²⁴ Cf. *Ethica seu scito se ipsum* 19-20.

⁵²⁵ Cf. *Summa Halensis* 4:9:1.

⁵²⁶ Cf. *Summa Halensis* 4:80:1-2.

⁵²⁷ Cf. Commentary on the Sentences 4:7:1. Bonaventure, however, said that Confirmation was instituted by the followers of the apostles.

Thomas Aquinas			
<i>Summa Theologiae</i>	1273		
On the Sacraments (3:63)		292	Aff+
On Baptism (3:66, 68)		282, 287, 292, 304, 309	■Ill- Ill+ ■Aff+ Ill+
On Confirmation (3:72)		298	Ill-
On Penance (3:84, 86)		277, 279	Inf ■Inf
[Baptism of Jesus sanctified the baptismal water] ⁵²⁸	1273	309	Inf
[Baptism is not just an ecclesiastical rite but the command and institution of God] ⁵²⁹	1273	306	Aff+
[Divine institution is necessary condition for a sacrament] ⁵³⁰	1273	298, 299	Inf(+) Aff+
Albertus Magnus			
[Declarative understanding of absolution] ⁵³¹	1280	281	Inf
Johann von Staupitz			
[View of Penance] ⁵³²	1515	280	Inf
Martin Luther			
95 Theses	1517	278, 280	Ill (■)Inf+
<i>Resolutiones de indulgentiarum virtute</i>	1518	278, 280	Ill Inf
<i>Sermon de poentia</i>	1518	280	■Inf
<i>Discussio et excusatio</i>	1519	284	Ill+
<i>Resolutiones Lutherianae super Proportionibus suis Lypsiae disputatis</i>	1519	284	Ill+
<i>De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae de sacramento baptismi</i>	1520	278, 279, 283, 285, 291, 292	■Ill+ Inf ■Aff+ Aff+ (■)Aff+ Inf-
<i>de sacramento poenitentiae</i>		280	Inf
<i>de confirmatione</i>		298, 299	Ill+ Inf
<i>de sacramento extremae unctionis</i>		301	Inf
<i>Das Tauffbüchlin</i>	1523	289	Inf
<i>Von der Wiedertaufe</i>	1528	303	■Aff+

⁵²⁸ Cf. Sum 3:66:3.

⁵²⁹ Cf. Sum 3:66:2.

⁵³⁰ Cf. Sum 3:64:2. Pannenberg also attributes this view to later Scholastics.

⁵³¹ Cf. *Commentarii in IV Sententiarum* 18:7.

⁵³² Cf. *Ein Büchlein von der Nachfolgung des willigen Sterbens Christi*, ch.9.

Small Catechism	1529		
<i>Das Sakrament der Heiligen Taufe</i>		278,	■Ill+
		285,	Aff+
		307	Ill
Large Catechism	1529		
<i>Vom ersten Gebot</i>		294	■Aff+
<i>Von der Taufe</i>		291,	■Aff+
		306,	Aff+
		307,	Ill
		303,	■Aff+
		309	Ill
<i>Von der Kindertaufe</i>		278,	■Ill+
		279,	■Inf
		282,	Aff+
		283,	■Aff+
		291,	■Aff+
		292,	■Aff+
		294	(■)Aff+
<i>Eine kurze Vermahnung zu der Beicht</i>		281	Inf+
<i>[Fides infantium not prerequisite for Baptism]</i>		294	Aff+
<i>Dritte Predigt über die Taufe</i>	1534	309	Ill
<i>Die Zirkulärdisputation de veste nuptiali</i>	1537	280	Inf
<i>Tauflied: Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam</i>	1541	310	■Ill
<i>[Concupiscence is sin in the proper sense]⁵³³</i>	1516	284	Aff+
<i>[infant faith (fides infantium)]⁵³⁴</i>	1518	293	Ill
<i>[Confession and absolution is a matter of individual conscience]⁵³⁵</i>	1519	277	Inf
<i>[Baptism is the concrete place of justification]⁵³⁶</i>	1519	303	Aff+
<i>[Connection of penitence and Baptism: daily</i>	1520	277,	Aff+
<i>appropriation of Baptism's repentance and regeneration]⁵³⁷</i>		282,	Aff+
		286,	Inf
		300,	Ill+
		304	Inf
<i>[Baptism is sacramentally complete but must be daily relived]⁵³⁸</i>	1520	283	Aff+
<i>[Rite of anointing for easing and strengthening the sick]⁵³⁹</i>	1520	302	Aff+
<i>[Necessity of Confession and Penance]⁵⁴⁰</i>	1522	280	Inf
<i>[Definition of faith as clinging to something externally given]⁵⁴¹</i>	1529	272	Aff+
<i>[Baptism is not just an ecclesiastical rite but the command and</i>	1529	306	Aff+
<i>institution of God]⁵⁴²</i>			

⁵³³ Cf. WA 56:339-354.

⁵³⁴ Cf. WA 57 Hebr. 170,10-13.

⁵³⁵ Cf. WA 2:59-65.

⁵³⁶ Cf. WA 2:728:7.

⁵³⁷ Cf. WA 6:534-535.

⁵³⁸ Cf. WA 6:534-535.

⁵³⁹ Cf. WA 6:568.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. WA 30/3:61.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. BESLK 932.

⁵⁴² Cf. BSELK 1110:25-27.

[Institution of Baptism solely founded on Matthew 28] ⁵⁴³	1529	310	Inf
[Reduction of Confession and Penance on personal relationship of believer and God] ⁵⁴⁴	1529	280	Inf-
[Identity of believer <i>extra se in Christo</i>] ⁵⁴⁵	1535	305	III+
Huldreich Zwingli			
[Renewal of Confirmation in the Protestant churches] ⁵⁴⁶	1523	299	Inf
[View of Baptism] ⁵⁴⁷	1525	289	Inf
Philipp Melanchton			
<i>Confessio Augustana</i> and <i>Apologia Confessionis Augustanae</i> (→ See Lutheran Confession Writings)			
Martin Bucer			
[Renewal of Confirmation in the Protestant churches] ⁵⁴⁸	1539	299	Inf
Matthias Flacius			
[Actualistical understanding of justification by faith (teaching of <i>poenitentia continua</i>)] ⁵⁴⁹	1555	304	Inf-
John Calvin			
<i>Institutio Christianae Religionis</i>	1559		
Of the discipline of the church (4:12)		278	■Inf
Of the sacraments (4:14)		289	Inf
Paedobaptism (4:16)		289	Inf
Of the five sacraments, falsely so called (4:19)		301	Inf
[View of Baptism] ⁵⁵⁰	1559	289	Inf
Karl Barth			
<i>Die kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe</i>	1943	289	III
<i>Kirchliche Dogmatik IV/4</i>	1967	289	III-
CREEDS, COUNCILS & OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS			
Early Creeds (DH 41, 42, 46, 48)	348	270	Aff+
<i>Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed</i> (DH 150)	381	270	■Aff+
Council of Carthage			
Canons 1-2 on Original Sin (DH 223-224)	418	288	Inf
Synod of Meaux			
Institution of the sacrament of Confirmation ⁵⁵¹	845	298	Inf

⁵⁴³ Cf. SC / LC (BSELK 882, 1110).

⁵⁴⁴ Cf. BSELK 1158-1162; WA 30/3:61f.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. WA 40/1:589:25-28; WA 56:279:22-25.

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. ZW 2:123-124.

⁵⁴⁷ Cf. ZW 4:206-337.

⁵⁴⁸ Cf. *Ziegenhainer Kirchenzuchtordnung*.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. *De voce*, 48-52.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. Inst. 4:15-16.

⁵⁵¹ Cunningham assesses, however, that this synod treated only ‘disciplinary questions as the reservation of the conferral of the sacrament and of the consecration of chrism to a bishop.’ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume 57, Baptism and Confirmation: 3a. 66-72*, ed. James J. Cunningham (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 188.

Council of Trent

Decree concerning original sin (DH 1515)	1546	284, 285	Ill+ Ill-
Decree on Justification (DH 1529)	1547	287	Ill+
Canons on Baptism (DH 1623)	1547	280	■Inf
Doctrine on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction (DH 1695-1696)	1547	301, 302	Inf ■Ill+
Canons on Extreme Unction (DH 1716-1718)	1547	301, 302	Inf Ill+
Canons on Penance (DH 1702, 1709)	1551	279, 281	Inf- Inf-
[View of justification treated along with Baptism] ⁵⁵²	1547	281	Ill+
[Rejection of Luther's connection of Baptism and Penance] ⁵⁵³	1551	279	Ill-

Lutheran Confession Writings

<i>Confessio Augustana</i>	1530		
<i>Von der Taufe</i> (CA 9)		288, 294	■Inf Ill-
<i>Von der Beichte</i> (CA 11)		280	Inf
<i>Von der Buße</i> (CA 12)		280	Inf
<i>Von der Bischöfe Gewalt</i> (CA 28)		278	■Inf
<i>Apologia Confessionis Augustanae</i>	1531		
<i>De peccato originali</i> (Apol 2)		284	Ill+
<i>Schmalkaldische Artikel</i>	1538		
<i>Von der Busse</i> (SA 3:3)		280	Inf
<i>Von der Tauffe</i> (SA 3:5)		292	Inf-
<i>Formula Concordiae</i>	1577		
[Abstract forensic understanding of justification by faith] ⁵⁵⁴		304	Inf-

Heidelberger Katechismus

<i>Was sind Sakramente?</i> (HK 66)	1563	289	Inf
<i>Soll man die kleinen Kinder taufen?</i> (HK 74)		289	Inf
[‘gehört er doch im Leben und im Sterben nicht mehr sich selbst, sondern Jesus Christus’] ⁵⁵⁵		271	Aff+

Second Vatican Council

<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> (SC 71, 73)	1963	299, 301	Inf+ Inf
<i>Lumen Gentium</i> (LG 11)	1964	277	Inf
<i>Presbyterium Ordinis</i> (PO 5)	1965	277	Inf

ECUMENICAL DOCUMENTS

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry	1982	296	■Aff+
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⁵⁵² Cf. DH 1529.

⁵⁵³ Cf. DH 1702.

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. FC 3.

⁵⁵⁵ Not indicated by Pannenberg as reference to tradition but as the wording is nearly identical this is most likely an implicit reference to HK 1.

OBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN TRADITION

<i>Confiteor</i> in traditional Roman liturgy ⁵⁵⁶	~1100	285	Aff+
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EVENTS & DEVELOPMENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

Importance of Jesus' own baptism in the history of Christian baptismal teaching ⁵⁵⁷	~100	308	Aff+
Development of crucial role of confession at Baptism ⁵⁵⁸	~150	271	Aff+
Reduction of Baptism's significance on only the beginning of the Christian life in Western Christianity	~150	273	Ill-
Development of a 'second repentance' for backsliders	~150	281, 286	Inf Inf
Catechumenate of the Early Church	~200	287	Ill
At Baptism of underaged children adults should make a confession of faith on their behalf	~200	296	Ill+
Laying on of hands and anointing originally part of the baptismal complex	~200	297, 298, 299	Inf Inf Inf
Development of usage of term sacrament to describe Baptism and Eucharist together with other actions	~200	306	Inf
Distinction of water Baptism and blood baptism	~200	313	Aff+
Development of penitential practice for readmission of excommunicated members	~250	273, 276	Ill Inf
Development of deathbed Baptism	~375	288	Inf
Rise of infant Baptism	~400	273, 276, 287, 296	Ill Inf Ill Inf
Use of Jesus blessing the children as support for infant Baptism	~400	293	Ill+
Consolidation of infant Baptism when Baptism was emphasised as a mystery that unites the baptised to Christ's death and resurrection	~400	288	Inf
Diversity of early Christian baptismal practices	~400	295	Aff+
Divine institution as distinction of sacraments from other church rites	~400	306	Inf
Laying on of hands and anointing called <i>consignatio</i> and <i>confirmatio</i>	~400	297	Inf
Doctrine of original sin becomes most important reason for infant Baptism in the West ⁵⁵⁹	412	288	Inf

⁵⁵⁶ Early mention in Bernold of Constance, *Micrologus*.

⁵⁵⁷ Cf. Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians* 18:2.

⁵⁵⁸ Apart from the Western insertion of Acts 8:37, the necessity of a confession as acceptance of Baptism is seen e.g. in Justin, *Apologia* 1:61:2.

⁵⁵⁹ Based on Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvularum* 1:16:21-39:70.

Further development of Penance into a repeatable practice open to all church members	~550	276	Inf
Transition from public penance to private confession and absolution, and consequent loss of ecclesiological dimension	~800	277, 286	Inf- Ill-
Detachment of Confirmation from Baptism because of absence of bishops, development of an individual sacrament	~800	273, 297	Ill Inf
Personal confession / adoption of baptismal confession found its expression in Confirmation, thus change of meaning of Confirmation into confirming recipients in faith and in participation in the Holy Spirit and his gifts	~800	296, 297, 299	Inf Inf Inf
Transformation of Anointing of the Sick into penance for the dying	~800	301	Inf
Detachment of Baptism and Penance: Penance becomes central theme in the life of medieval Christians	~1000	276	Inf-
Anointing of the Sick is regarded as individual sacrament	~1100	274	Inf
Extreme Unction becomes technical term for Anointing of the Sick	~1150	301	Inf
Limitation of the use of the term sacrament to Baptism and Eucharist	1520	307	Inf
Renewal of Confirmation in the Protestant churches ⁵⁶⁰	1523	299	Inf
Demand for confession Baptism (<i>Bekennntaufe</i>) by churches that practise believer's Baptism	1524	289	Ill
Penance and reconciliation of public sinners in churches of the Reformation not regulated, only seen as a matter of church discipline	1530	277	Inf-
Church discipline becomes disreputable in Protestantism as in Lutheran churches it is one-sidedly carried out by secular authorities	1538	278	Inf-
Detachment of doctrine of justification from Luther's doctrine of Baptism	~1550	304	Inf-
Appropriation of the promise of faith is a process that takes place wholly in the subjectivity of the experience of faith ⁵⁶¹	~1650	304	Inf-
Development of Confirmation into one of the most important ecclesiastical acts in Protestant churches	~1700	299	Inf
Private confession becomes an exception in the Reformation churches	~1700	286	Inf
Weakening of the plausibility and defensive power of the Reformation approach in Protestant theology against challenges of modern thought	~1780	305	Inf-
Question about the validity of the practice of infant Baptism emerges in Reformed Protestantism and far beyond	1943	289	Inf
Rediscovery of the original link of Confirmation to the rite complex of Baptism	~1950	299	Inf+

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. above references to Zwingli and Bucer.

⁵⁶¹ Esp. Pietist movement, cf. TRE 7:475.

PROFANE HISTORY

Anointing with oil as common rite to support the healing of the sick	30	301	III
Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews (Ant 18:117)	94	269	Itp+
Modern tendency to make human subjectivity independent	~1800	305	Inf-

5.4.2 *Distribution, Function and Evaluation of References to Tradition and Church History*

The overall picture of the distribution of Pannenberg's references to tradition and church history shows that there are fewer references in the biblical-theological and exegetical subchapters that frame the systematic subchapters of the Baptism chapter. In the systematic subchapters there is an overwhelming presence of references to tradition, with exception of the introductions, where Pannenberg establishes the corresponding scriptural foundations, and the conclusions, where he discusses the practical implications for the church today.

The temporal distribution (cf. Figure 5.10) shows that the biblical-theological subchapter mainly contains references to the Early Church, whereas in the systematic subchapters the references to the Scholastics and the Reformation are clearly dominating. There are also several temporal sequences: the first temporal sequence is located at the end of the biblical-theological subchapter, where he gives a first overview of historical developments related to Baptism and extracts from these developments the topics that he wants to examine in the systematic subchapters. Then we find several temporal sequences serving as introduction to the different sections in the systematic subchapters, describing the development of Penance, infant Baptism, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick. The last temporal sequence is located in the final exegetical subchapter, introducing the use of John's baptism of Jesus by historical authors to explain the origin of Baptism. We also see that most unspecific references are embedded in the temporal sequences, whereas Pannenberg in his own argument normally engages with specific references in great detail. Another interesting observation is that the temporal sequences normally go from the Early Church to modern times, but in his systematic arguments Pannenberg primarily engages with references to the Scholastics and the Reformation to establish his conclusions.

The function of the references to tradition and church history in the text (cf. Figure 5.11) shows that the references in the biblical-theological and exegetical subchapters mainly originate from the Early Church and are used as affirmation and illustration of

scriptural interpretation. The presence of only one tradition reference actually used to decide about the interpretation of Scripture shows that Pannenberg normally does not directly use tradition as interpretation tool but rather relies on scientific exegetical literature. The developments described in the temporal sequences are mainly provided as information to understand the theological positions that Pannenberg discusses afterwards. In the discussion of the systematic topics Pannenberg often uses specific references to tradition as affirmation or illustration for his own thoughts, with most of the affirmations referring to Luther, followed by a lesser number to the Early Church and Aquinas. Many of the references that Pannenberg uses as illustrations for his thoughts, or as supplemental information, are additionally referring to other Scholastics, the Council of Trent and later developments of the Reformation. Even though most of the affirmations are pointing to Luther, Pannenberg also uses thoughts from Catholic tradition or the Reformed tradition as affirmation of his thoughts and does not stop at denominational boundaries, which is also true for the illustration and information references.

Pannenberg's evaluation of the references to tradition and church history shows that he generally maintains neutrality in describing historical developments, but still can be very decisive in evaluating specific theological positions. Although Pannenberg points out that certain developments of church history encouraged the emergence of wrong theological views, he mostly does not directly criticise the historical developments, but rather the shortcomings in the resulting concrete positions. This is seen, for example, in Pannenberg's acceptance of the soundness of the developed penitential practice for the readmission of repentant sinners into the church, while he clearly criticises if this results in neglecting Baptism's central role for the Christian life (3:281). In the temporal sequences, therefore, we mainly find neutral evaluations, except for developments that clearly go against the core of Pannenberg's baptismal view, like the separation of Baptism and Penance or a defective understanding of Confirmation, which both depreciate the importance of Baptism for the whole Christian life. When Pannenberg evaluates references to tradition negatively, he does so not polemically, but by objectively pointing to the contradiction to the scriptural foundation, seen for example in the separation of water and Spirit baptism. Although we see a general appreciation of Luther in Pannenberg's thought, supported not only by the number of references but also by a sizable proportion of explicit positive evaluations, we still see some references to Luther cautiously negatively evaluated. If we examine Pannenberg's positive and negative evaluations in general, we see that they are not bound to denominational prejudices. Pannenberg equally criticises the

Scholastics and Aquinas, while also acknowledging their contributions. He also does not hesitate to criticise developments in Lutheran theology after Luther, especially the over-emphasis on human subjectivity. The positive thoughts of the Council of Trent⁵⁶² are praised as easily as he also criticises Trent's misunderstanding of Luther's position. Pannenberg, however, criticises not only Catholic doctrine but also the Lutheran confessional writings, like the *Confessio Augustana* or the *Formula of Concord*. Especially noteworthy is that he engages with the Canons of Trent, which are condemnations of the Protestant Reformers, as well as with the Protestant's condemnation of the Anabaptists, which shows his ecumenical efforts. We can conclude, therefore, that Pannenberg generally maintains a neutral attitude in evaluating tradition and church history, but also does not hesitate to point out mistakes inside and outside of his own tradition, no matter whether it is in individual authors or official church teaching. He does, however, also acknowledge the positive on all sides and normally engages in active dialogue with every position. Interesting to note, however, is that Pannenberg neither negatively nor positively evaluates the traditional Reformed baptismal view, but just presents it for the sake of completeness, whereas Orthodox baptismal theology is not considered at all.

⁵⁶² See also the appraisal of the central role of Baptism in Trent's justification decree in ST 3:262.

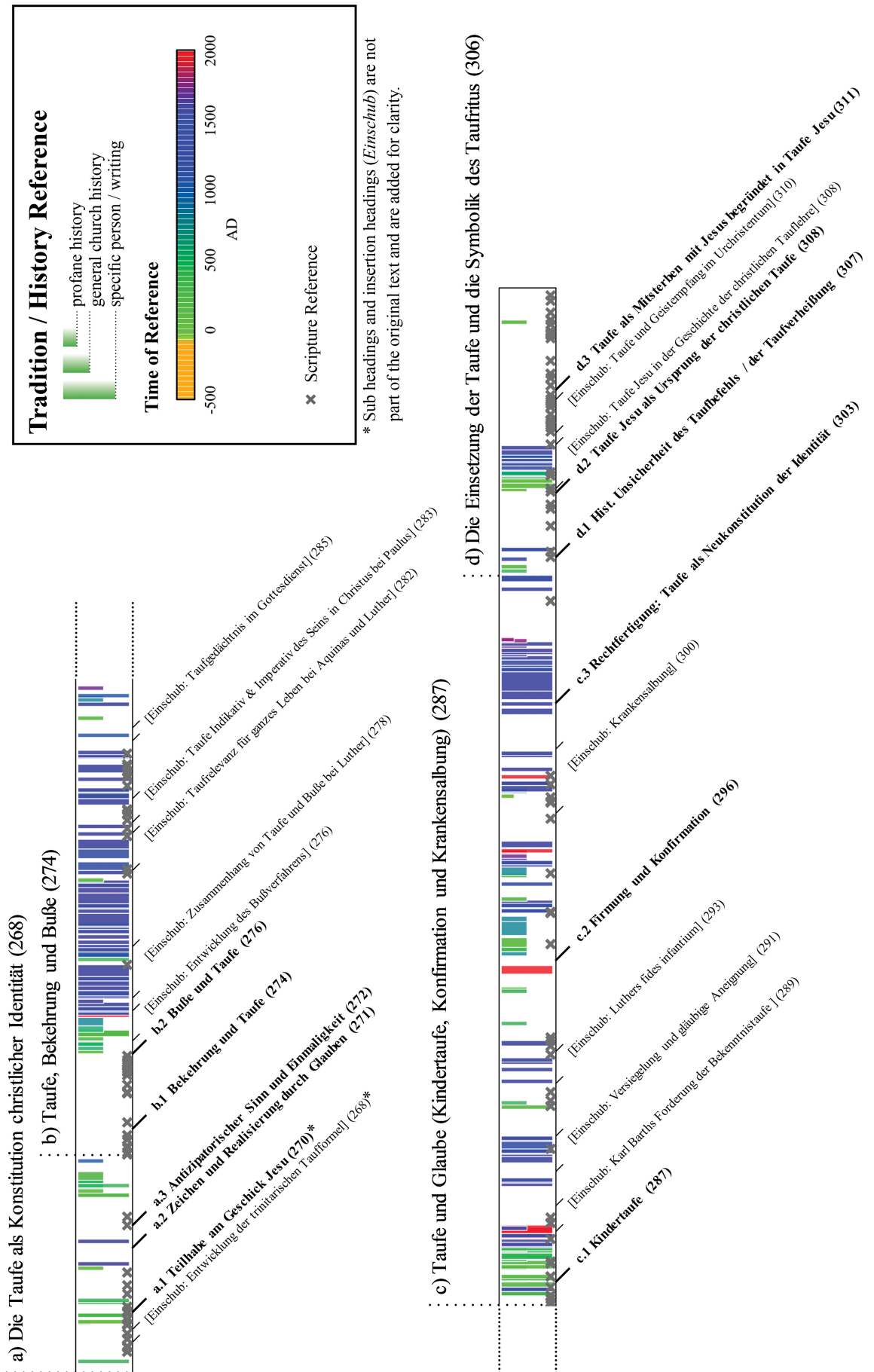


Figure 5.10 Distribution and time of tradition and history references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

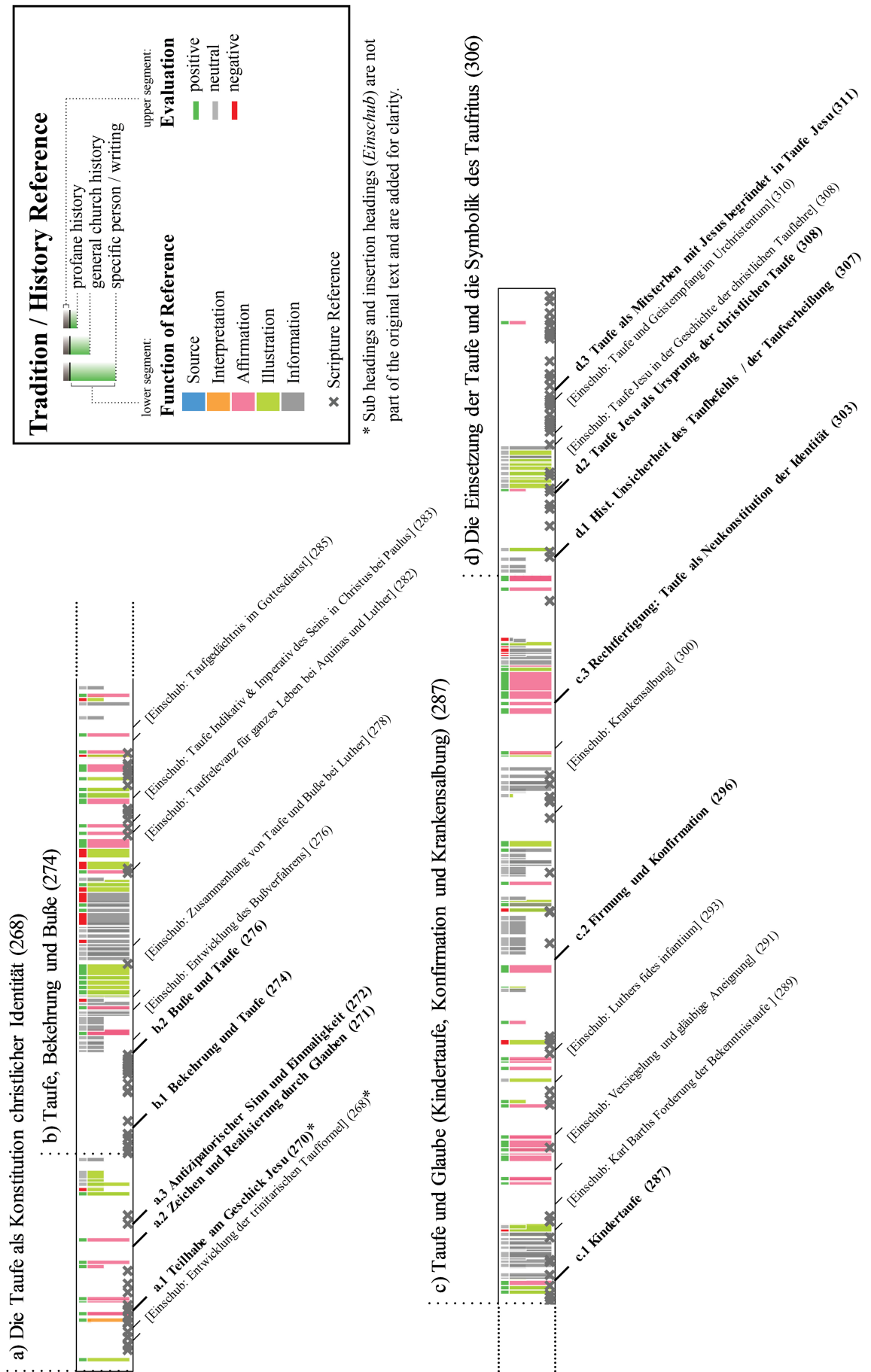


Figure 5.11 Distribution, function, and evaluation of tradition and history references (Pannenberg, ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

5.5 Implicit Reflections of Tradition and Church History

The implicit reflections of tradition and church history in Pannenberg's baptismal view are seen in theological terms, in structure and methods, and in theological frameworks. Many implicit reflections, however, are already obvious in Pannenberg's thorough explicit use of tradition. In this section, therefore, we will focus on selected implicit reflections typical for Pannenberg's denominational background.

5.5.1 Theological Terms

Several terms in Pannenberg's baptismal view display his roots in Lutheran or even Early Church and Catholic tradition, such as the liturgical terms *Sündenbekenntnis* (*Confiteor*), *Kirchenjahr*, and *Osternacht* (3:285). There is also a great number of special terms, which, however, are not necessarily a reflection of tradition but are technical terms resulting from Pannenberg's ecumenical scope and academic level. For closer examination, therefore, we select some key terms that appear regularly and represent significant base lines in Pannenberg's baptismal view, such as terms related to church and sacrament. Another important term of Lutheran theology that appears regularly is the description of the new life as 'outside oneself in Christ' (*extra se in Christo*), which points to Pannenberg's connection of Baptism, regeneration, and justification, which we will discuss in chapter 5.5.3.

Church, Churches, and Congregation

In the Baptism chapter of Pannenberg's *Systematische Theologie* the term church (*Kirche*) in its noun and adjective forms appears over 80 times whereas congregation (*Gemeinde*) is only found about 10 times. This already indicates that the focus in Pannenberg's baptismal view is not the local congregation but the church as a more comprehensive entity. Pannenberg defines church in chapter 13:1:1 'as fellowship of believers and body of Christ' that surpasses not only the local congregation but also the different denominations. When Pannenberg addresses a certain denomination in the Baptism chapter, therefore, he never uses the term church alone but speaks about the Roman (Catholic), Protestant, Reformed, Orthodox, and Baptist churches, or even more general about churches of the Lutheran Reformation, or churches that practise only believer's Baptism. These two different usages of the term church correspond with the two main linguistic usages of church in the *Confessio Augustana* where the term church is either used absolute as the universal church of all times and places,⁵⁶³ or with a specifier or in the plural form to refer to different particular churches (seen for example in the *Confessio Augustana*'s usage of

⁵⁶³ CA 7-8.

ecclesiae apud nos, referring to the emerging Protestant church bodies, in contrast to the *Ecclesia Romana*, a distinction that further developed into the later understanding of different denominations).⁵⁶⁴

Furthermore, Pannenberg defines the character of the universal church as the fellowship of believers that is based on the fellowship of every individual believer with Christ (3:314),⁵⁶⁵ which is once-for-all constituted through Baptism (3:125, 266-267).⁵⁶⁶ Baptism therefore, has a foundational role in the formation of the church, but Pannenberg also explains the foundational role of the church in mediating ‘the fellowship of individual believers with Jesus’ (3:265-266), seen in Baptism in the fact that the person who administers Baptism represents the fellowship of believers who receives a new member (3:266), or in the proclamation of the faith of the church, the Gospel, that provides the foundation for the individual believers to confess their own faith (3:129-130). When Pannenberg expresses, therefore, the church ‘is by nature a fellowship of individuals who are regenerated by faith and baptism’ (3:116), this defines what church is as well as what church does. This is similar to the *Confessio Augustana* that describes church as fellowship of saints and believers whereas the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments both are defining actions of the church as well as the basis for the existence of the church.⁵⁶⁷ We see the *Confessio Augustana*’s understanding of church, therefore, not only in Pannenberg’s linguistic usage of the term church, but also in its definition and relation to Baptism.

We need to note, however, that for Pannenberg the view of church as fellowship of believers, which is realised in the worship of every local congregation, is not only a thought of the Reformation but an understanding that is already present in Medieval theology, goes back to the Early Church, and is rooted in the NT (3:121).⁵⁶⁸ Pannenberg’s use of the term congregation in the Baptism chapter also confirms the examined use of church. The term congregation appears when Pannenberg explicitly refers to a congregation at a certain geographical location, or if the interaction with or among individual

⁵⁶⁴ Esp. seen in CA 1, 21. The different linguistic usages of church in the CA are discussed in Bernhard Lohse, *Evangelium in der Geschichte: Studien zu Luther und der Reformation*, ed. Leif Grane, Bernd Moeller, and Otto Hermann Pesch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 326–27.

⁵⁶⁵ See also ST 3:120; Pannenberg, *Spiritualität*, 36; Pannenberg, *Thesen*, 21; cf. ST 3:25, 115.

⁵⁶⁶ Pannenberg, ‘Baptism’, 86.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf. Wenz’s explanation of the function of the relative clause in CA 7, in which the means of salvation as *Lebensäußerung* und *Lebensvollzug* of the church are mutually connected to each other. Gunther Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche: eine historische und systematische Einführung in das Konkordienbuch. Bd. 2* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 258–59. Pannenberg even explicitly defines ‘when the pure gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered, there is always a manifestation of the one church.’ ST 3:126.

⁵⁶⁸ BSTh 3:11, 15.

believers in worship is described, like in the case of Confirmation or church discipline (cf. 3:136, 276). But even in these cases Pannenberg understands the local congregation and its worship always as realisation (*Erscheinungsform*) of the universal church of Christ (3:119-121, 125).⁵⁶⁹

Sign and Sacrament

Pannenberg describes Baptism foremost as enacted sign⁵⁷⁰ (*Zeichenhandlung*) that constitutes ‘the relation to Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection’ (3:272). For Pannenberg the term sign includes two meanings: first, a sign effects what it signifies (3:267). In the enacted sign of Baptism, the recipient is buried into the death of Christ and thus one’s own future death is anticipated and connected with the death of Christ. The presence of Christ’s salvation mystery in the form of a sign, therefore, also expresses the eschatological tension of the Christian existence between ‘not yet’ and future completion (3:386-387). Second, a sign does not only ‘point to the thing signified but also to set people moving in the direction in which it points’ (3:272). The new existence that is signified by Baptism, therefore, depends on its continuous appropriation in faith by the baptised person to be fully realised (3:296, 305) and to not become an ‘empty sign.’⁵⁷¹ Only in the process of its appropriation in faith, therefore, the mere sign of the rite becomes an effective sign.⁵⁷² Pannenberg’s definition of sign reflects Luther’s view, who also lined out the two functions of Baptism as *signum efficax* and *signum significans*, which, however, without faith remains unfruitful.⁵⁷³ Pannenberg is also aware, however, that the use of the term sign for Baptism can cause misunderstandings (cf. 3:285, 289) and to emphasise that Baptism has a real but not magical automatic effect apart from faith, he often combines the terms sacrament and sign and speaks of Baptism as ‘sacramental sign.’

Even though Pannenberg speaks about the symbolism of Baptism, he never speaks of Baptism as a symbol. The term sacrament, although more prominent than symbol in his thought, is not Pannenberg’s preferred choice for Baptism, as it ‘has no clear biblical foundation’⁵⁷⁴ and only later theological tradition used sacrament to refer to ‘the distinctive form of the effective sign’ (3:267). The term sacrament, therefore, is not necessary

⁵⁶⁹ Pannenberg, ‘Baptism’, 81; cf. also Dietz, ‘Kirche und Erwählung in der Theologie W. Pannenbergs’, 225–26.

⁵⁷⁰ The English translation of ST 3 inconsistently translates *Zeichenhandlung* sometimes as enacted sign, and sometimes as signifying action or act.

⁵⁷¹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 3.

⁵⁷² Pannenberg, ‘Baptism’, 83.

⁵⁷³ WA 30/1:221:6-11; cf. Wolfgang Schwab, *Entwicklung und Gestalt der Sakramententheologie bei Martin Luther* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1977), 356–57.

⁵⁷⁴ BSTh 3:330.

to understand the meaning of Baptism, but the other way round Baptism and Eucharist define the meaning of the term sacrament, which was only used later to summarise and describe the already present signficatory actions (3:370-371).⁵⁷⁵ Additionally, the term sacrament as a later development is not conclusive, which is seen in the difference of what was counted as a sacrament over the ages, also seen in the inclusion of Penance as sacrament in the *Confessio Augustana*.⁵⁷⁶ Pannenberg, therefore, acknowledges the usefulness of the term sacrament, but also without it Baptism and Eucharist are ‘visible signs of the presence of God’ and his grace (3:267).⁵⁷⁷ In his own argument in the Baptism chapter of *Systematische Theologie*, therefore, Pannenberg uses the term (sacramental) sign to refer to Baptism, and uses sacrament only in the presentation of other traditional views, especially in regard to Penance, Confirmation, or Anointing of the sick.

Pannenberg’s use of the words sign and sacrament not only reflects the struggle of Reformation theology with the term sacrament, but also Luther’s view of Baptism as a sign with real effect if appropriated in faith.⁵⁷⁸ The use of the term sign also emphasises the anticipatory character of Baptism, signifying the real future death of the baptised person, which is not only a core thought of Pannenberg’s baptismal view, but similarly found in *De captivitate*.⁵⁷⁹ A difference with Luther, however, is that for Pannenberg according to Romans 6:5 only the future death is anticipated in Baptism while the future resurrection is only warranted by the connection with Christ’s resurrection in Baptism (3:270).⁵⁸⁰ Another interesting difference to Luther is that Pannenberg rarely refers to Baptism as promise (*promissio*), the term used in Luther’s theology to express the objective effect of God’s grace in Baptism and the necessity of personal faith,⁵⁸¹ but expresses these aspects with the term sign (cf. 3:387). The reason is seen in the fact that Luther’s understanding of Baptism as promise is constituted by Mark 16:16,⁵⁸² which Pannenberg does not regard as authentic words of Jesus (3:307). Even more important, however, might be that Pannenberg has left the conventional word-of-God theology behind,⁵⁸³ and therefore, might

⁵⁷⁵ EuE 294.

⁵⁷⁶ CA 13; cf. Apol 13; BSTh 3:331.

⁵⁷⁷ Pannenberg, *Thesen*, 5, 40.

⁵⁷⁸ BSELK 1130.

⁵⁷⁹ WA 6:534.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. Pannenberg, ‘Baptism’, 83.

⁵⁸¹ Cf. Juha Pihkala, *Gnadenmittel oder Gnadenangebot? Auslegungsgeschichte des Passus ‘per baptismum offeratur gratia Dei’ im Taufartikel der Confessio Augustana im Zeitraum von 1530 - 1930*, ed. Josef Außermair (Münster: Lit, 2003), 31–35, 296.

⁵⁸² Oswald Bayer, *Promissio. Geschichte der reformatorischen Wende in Luthers Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 257–64; cf. WA 6:527-528, 533; BSELK 882.

⁵⁸³ OaG 132, 136. Cf. ‘it is in history itself that divine revelation takes place, and not in some strange Word arriving from some alien place and cutting across the fabric of history.’ Pannenberg, ‘Presence’, 262.

prefer the term sign as it relates the effectiveness of Baptism not only to a mere word or promise, but directly to the signified connection with the salvific event of Christ's death and resurrection, which for the disciples was the beginning of the fulfilment that 'has become promise once again for us.'⁵⁸⁴

5.5.2 *Structure and Methods*

The placement and structure of Pannenberg's Baptism chapter also reflect some aspects of Lutheran tradition and Pannenberg's connection to the medieval Catholic Church. Additionally, we already saw Pannenberg's reliance on Scripture as foundation and authority, as well as his highly academic approach, which on a methodical level are specific for Protestant tradition.

Discussion of Sacraments after Baptism and Eucharist

In the discussion of the terms sign and sacrament we already saw that the concept of sacrament is secondary in relation to Baptism and Eucharist. This is also reflected on a structural level by the placement of the discussion of the theological concept of the sacraments in a chapter after Baptism and Eucharist. This structure and line of argument, according to Pannenberg, reflects the development of the Early Church, where the term sacrament was only used later to describe the common features of Baptism, Eucharist and other acts in the worship of the church (3:267, 370).⁵⁸⁵ For Pannenberg, however, the subordinate treatment of the term sacrament after Baptism and Eucharist, not only reflects Early Church development. It also reflects the Reformation's priority of using the scriptural foundation to evaluate later developed traditions, like the theological term sacrament, which in his Greek equivalent *μυστήριον* is never applied to Baptism in Scripture (3:267).⁵⁸⁶ Pannenberg, therefore, sees himself in line with Protestant tradition where the concept of the sacraments is often discussed after Baptism and Eucharist.⁵⁸⁷

Inclusion of Penance, Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick

Pannenberg's general discussion of Penance, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick, which are regarded as sacraments in the Catholic tradition, is not surprising for a Lutheran

In ST 1:248-281 Pannenberg shows a greater appreciation of the concept of revelation as Word of God, however, as Whapham points out, not in the conventional way as constricted to scriptural propositions but focusing on divine action, which ultimately means that 'Jesus Christ, then, is the Word of God as the quintessence of the divine plan for creation and history' (ST 1:281). Whapham, *Unity*, 147-48.

⁵⁸⁴ Pannenberg, *Christologie*, 105.

⁵⁸⁵ Cf. EuE 294.

⁵⁸⁶ EuE 295.

⁵⁸⁷ Cf. CA 9-13 and Pannenberg's references to Thomasius, Schleiermacher, Luthardt, and Schlatter.

theologian, as this indicates the value placed on tradition and the connection to the Medieval church. The same is seen in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession or *De captivitate*, where these rites are also discussed alongside with Baptism and Eucharist, including Penance's relationship to Baptism and the insecurity about its sacramental character.⁵⁸⁸ At first sight, however, we might find it rather peculiar that Pannenberg includes these rites in his baptismal view, in contrast to Matrimony or Ordination that are discussed in later chapters (3:391-398, 428-435).

Pannenberg provides two important reasons for this special structure: first, he states that Baptism, anointing, and laying hands, belonged together in the accounts of Acts, and that in the Early Church these rites were all part of the baptismal complex (*Ritengefüge der Taufe*) and only later became independent rites, which means that Confirmation belongs to Baptism (3:273, 296-297, 401). A similar argument is made by Pannenberg for Penance when he first describes the close connection of Baptism, penitence, and conversion in Scripture that is still seen in the Early Church where Baptism was regarded as 'truly basic event of conversion and forgiveness,' and which was loosened in later penitential practice of the church (3:275-277). Pannenberg's integration of Confirmation and Penance (penitence) as rites belonging to Baptism then also provides the simple starting point for the inclusion of Anointing of the Sick, which is both, an anointing rite and a rite that stands for forgiveness of sin. Pannenberg admits however, that the rite is only in the proximity of Baptism and that its inclusion is also due to ecumenical considerations (3:273-274).

The second and even more important reason for Pannenberg's integration of the additional rites in his baptismal view is Luther's understanding of the relevance of Baptism for the whole Christian life,⁵⁸⁹ which finds its expression in Pannenberg's understanding of the anticipatory character of Baptism⁵⁹⁰ and provides the theological framework for the integration of the other rites in his baptismal view. Pannenberg explicitly explains that the relevance of Baptism for the whole life 'takes concrete shape in confirmation, penitence, and pastoral care for the sick and dying' (3:373, cf. 391) and that all these rites are in their core baptismal remembrance and actualisation, while Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick additionally include strengthening and blessing through the Holy Spirit who

⁵⁸⁸ Cf. Apol 8; BSELK 512:25-30; WA 6:543-550, 567-570.

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. BSLK 516:30-517:7; also 699:27-34; 704:27-706:26; 707:14-37; WA 6:535, 572.

⁵⁹⁰ The anticipatory character of Baptism as expression of Luther's theology is also described by Wainwright stating 'Our repeated *reditus ad baptismum* (Luther) is a 'return' only because the end was already signified in the beginning.' Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life. A Systematic Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 412.

already has been received in Baptism (3:302). Pannenberg, therefore, on the one hand affirms the Reformation's constriction of the term sacrament to Baptism and Eucharist (3:399), but on the other hand sees Penance, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick as participating in the sacramentality of Baptism (3:391), which, he assumes, might also have allowed Luther to acknowledge the sacramental character of Confirmation (3:298).

In the structure of Pannenberg's Baptism chapter, therefore, we see Pannenberg's acceptance of Early Church and Reformation tradition, but also his ecumenical interest. Especially his thoughts on Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick are very close to the ecumenical study document on the mutual condemnations of the Reformation, in which, however, only the connection between Baptism, Penance and Confirmation is explicitly expressed.⁵⁹¹ The connection of the lifelong relevance of Baptism and Anointing of the Sick as possibility for ecumenical agreement compatible to Lutheran theology, however, is also already expressed by Pannenberg's student Gunther Wenz, who similarly includes Penance, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick in his book on the sacraments in the chapter on Baptism.⁵⁹²

Highly Academic Approach based on Scripture

We have already seen that Pannenberg's baptismal view is based on Scripture, using it as starting point and foundation of his arguments, and also as critical corrective for thoughts from tradition and official church teaching, and in this reflects the Reformation principle *sola scriptura*. We have also seen that Pannenberg works on a highly academic level, seen in the use of historical-critical exegesis and in his interaction with literature of contemporary exegetical research and tradition. This highly academic approach combined with Pannenberg's understanding that the ordinary Christian must trust academic theology in providing trustworthy knowledge as foundation for personal faith,⁵⁹³ might be a reflection of what is sometimes criticised about Protestant tradition: while Luther sought to reclaim the authority of interpreting Scripture from the magisterium of the Catholic Church, in fact, he handed it to the theologians of the Protestant faculties, which in a certain sense gives Protestant academic theology magisterial qualities.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹¹ LV 1:127-32, esp. 129.

⁵⁹² Gunther Wenz, *Einführung in die evangelische Sakramentenlehre* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 128, 132.

⁵⁹³ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Einsicht und Glaube', *ThLZ* 88, no. 2 (1963): 84–85.

⁵⁹⁴ Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Bruchstücke radikaler Theologie heute: eine Rechenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 50; Beate Großklaus, *Erfahrungsraum: Gemeinde als Kommunikations-geschehen* (Münster: LIT, 2003), 86; Ernst-Lüder Solte, *Theologie an der Universität: Staats- und kirchen-rechtliche Probleme der theologischen Fakultäten* (Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 280–81; Thomas Söding, ed., *Die Rolle der Theologie in der Kirche: Die Debatte über das Dokument der Theologenkommission*

Especially in Pannenberg's argument for the use of Jesus' baptism as historical and theological foundation for Baptism, however, we see that Pannenberg considers the use of the historical-critical method as way to give the authority to Scripture and not to dogmatic preconditions of academic theology. For Pannenberg the use of the historical-critical method is a logical consequence of Luther's teaching of the clarity of Scripture and the Reformation's scripture principle.⁵⁹⁵ When the historical-critical findings, therefore, question whether Mark 16:16 and Matthew 28:19 are authentic words of Jesus (cf. 3:307-08),⁵⁹⁶ but the efficacy of Baptism depends on the divine institution by Christ, Pannenberg demands that a church, which is based on the 'Scripture principle,' should find another foundation for the institution of Baptism, which he sees in Jesus' baptism by John (3:310). Furthermore, Pannenberg explicitly expresses in this context that if there are changes in the understanding of scriptural words, dogmatic changes must be allowed in order to give the authority to Scripture and not to the teaching of the church represented by the theological authority of a dogmatics professor.⁵⁹⁷ Not only does Pannenberg understand his use of the academic historical-critical method as valid expression of Protestant tradition, but also in its application in his baptismal view we see his endeavour to uphold the protestant 'Scripture principle' and to maintain Luther's demand of the divine institution of Baptism (3:306).

5.5.3 *Theological Frameworks*

Finally, we will examine some of the major theological frameworks and distinctives of Lutheran tradition reflected in Pannenberg's baptismal theology. The relevance of Baptism for the whole Christian life, which is a key aspect of Pannenberg's baptismal theology, we already saw as important reflection of Luther's theology in the structure of the Baptism chapter.

Baptism, Regeneration, and Justification

Pannenberg regards Baptism as foundational event of regeneration and justification, which, however, must be ratified by faith (3:296). Pannenberg refers many times to

(Freiburg: Herder, 2015), 241; cf. Kirchenamt der EKD, ed., *Die Bedeutung der wissenschaftlichen Theologie in Gesellschaft, Universität und Kirche. Ein Beitrag der Kammer der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland für Theologie* (Hannover, 2009), 22–23.

⁵⁹⁵ GSTh 1:14, 128, 166; BSTh 3:187.

⁵⁹⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Lima - pro und contra (1986)', in *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 3. Kirche und Ökumene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 222; Pannenberg, 'Grundsatzentscheidungen', 95.

⁵⁹⁷ Pannenberg, 'Grundsatzentscheidungen', 96; EuE 249. Pannenberg generally sees the teaching office in the Protestant church given to the individual pastors, however, the prerequisite of academic-theological education practically transfers the teaching authority to the Protestant faculties. BSTh 3:164.

Baptism as event of regeneration or rebirth (3:116, 263-264, 266, 268, 275-277, 282, 284-285, 386),⁵⁹⁸ an understanding he sees as given by the NT testimony, especially in John 3:5 and Titus 3:5 (3:261, 266, 275). Regeneration as effect of the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism (3:261), happens through the definitive connection with the death of Christ in Baptism (3:386) that constitutes the relationship of the baptised person with the triune God (3:268). Pannenberg, therefore, also speaks of the new identity of the baptised person, or the reconstitution of the person, which, however, ‘has no empirical quality’ and ‘belongs to another level of being than the old man,’ as it happens outside of ourselves in Christ (*extra nos in Christo*).⁵⁹⁹ This new identity is already free from egoism, the bondage of sin, and also enables to believe (3:268, 284, 306).⁶⁰⁰ The understanding of Baptism as regeneration also provides for Pannenberg the rationale for the unrepeatability of Baptism (3:268, 285, 296), as the new identity outside of ourselves in Christ cannot be lost.⁶⁰¹ The new identity as work of God independent of the recipients faith, finally, for Pannenberg also provides the rationale for the validity of infant Baptism (3:290-292). This understanding clearly reflects Luther’s thoughts, who also sees Baptism as bath of regeneration and as new creation, and thus as ‘real and effective means of grace.’⁶⁰²

Furthermore, the understanding of Baptism as foundational event of justification is also seen by Pannenberg in Scripture, where the effects of Baptism and faith are both described similarly as ‘incorporation into fellowship with Christ in his destiny of death and resurrection’ (Romans 6:3-11; Philippians 3:9-11; Galatians 3:23-27). As the foundation for justification is the forgiveness of sin, which is received by faith (Romans 3:25) but also connected to Baptism, Pannenberg concludes that Baptism has its definitive place in the rationale of justification (3:261). Pannenberg further describes the relationship of Baptism and faith in regard to justification as Baptism as the concrete place of justification in the Christian life, and faith as reason for justification only insofar, as through faith the new identity that was established in Baptism outside of oneself is appropriated (3:304).

In Pannenberg’s theology, therefore, we see the central themes of regeneration and justification linked together in Baptism. This is no coincidence as Pannenberg himself describes Baptism as the common reference point that brings together different theological interpretations ‘of the way believers partake of salvation,’ such as regeneration by the

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. Pannenberg, *Anthropologie*, 508.

⁵⁹⁹ Pannenberg, ‘Outside’, 68–69.

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. Pannenberg, ‘Identität’, 172; Pannenberg, *Anthropologie*, 512.

⁶⁰¹ Pannenberg, ‘Outside’, 73.

⁶⁰² Pihkala, *Gnadenmittel*, 24–25, 308; cf. WA 37:264-266, 270, 278; 50:630; BSELK 882-885, 1116.

Spirit, adoption as God's children, or being declared righteous (3:264). The participation in the sonship of Jesus to the father, which is the participation in the inner trinitarian life, however, is seen by Pannenberg at the core and the declaration of righteousness is only one element that expresses the reconciliation with God as prerequisite for the believer's fellowship with God. The special function of the doctrine of justification, finally, is seen by Pannenberg in reassuring the baptised Christians 'as believers but not yet perfect, that they can already be sure of participation in eschatological salvation,' which happens by ecstatic faith that lifts them above themselves to fellowship with Christ (3:264-265). This fellowship with Christ above themselves is the new identity *extra nos in Christo*, established in Baptism, but that only becomes effective in faith (3:324, 518), and must be continually embraced in faith every day of the Christian life.

The connection of Baptism and justification is also found in Luther's thought, who understands justification as declaration of righteousness by God, which is appropriated in faith in reference to Baptism.⁶⁰³ In *De captivitate* Luther even brings the different aspects closely together when he first describes Baptism both as justification and regeneration, and then as a consequence emphasises the relevancy of Baptism for the whole Christian life.⁶⁰⁴ Pannenberg's understanding of faith as ecstatic movement that connects us with this new identity that has been established in Baptism outside of ourselves also reflects Luther's mystical understanding of faith,⁶⁰⁵ as well as his understanding that faith needs something outside of us to cling to.⁶⁰⁶ Pannenberg not only closely follows Luther's insights about faith and the lifelong relevancy of Baptism, but he also explicitly praises Luther for them, and often quotes Althaus' evaluation that 'Luther's theology of baptism was the concrete form of his doctrine on justification by faith.'⁶⁰⁷ Pannenberg, however, also criticises that Luther and the *Confessio Augustana* did not express the connection of Baptism and justification clear enough, which led to the transformation of justification into a mere forensic declaration with no relation to Baptism in later Lutheran theology and contributed to the devaluation of Baptism for the Christian life (3:261-263, 303-305).⁶⁰⁸ Consequently, Pannenberg praises Trent's decree about justification for

⁶⁰³ Friederike Nüssel, *Allein aus Glauben: zur Entwicklung der Rechtfertigungslehre in der konkordistischen und frühen nachkonkordistischen Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 49; cf. WA 2:728.

⁶⁰⁴ WA 6:534; cf. also WA 2:728.

⁶⁰⁵ WA 40/1:589:25-30; cf. Erwin Iserloh, 'Luther und die Mystik', in *Kirche, Mystik, Heiligung und das Natürliche bei Luther*, by Ivar Asheim (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 68-70.

⁶⁰⁶ BSELK 1116.

⁶⁰⁷ Cf. Paul Althaus, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1962), 305.

⁶⁰⁸ BSTh 3:362; Pannenberg, 'Baptism', 82.

emphasising the connection of Baptism and justification, while also criticising the council for neglecting the role of faith in justification (3:262-263, 281). Baptism, in Pannenberg's theology, therefore, has a vital role for the Christian life, as it provides the foundation for the new identity of the Christian that must be appropriated by faith, and he sees himself following the traditions of Luther, the medieval church, and Trent, however, not without critically evaluating all of them.

Pannenberg's understanding of Baptism as the concrete event of regeneration and justification also contributes to the already observed neglect of Luther's understanding of Baptism as promise (*promissio*). Pannenberg explicitly expresses that Eucharist and Baptism cannot be adequately described 'merely as promise,' as God's promise in these two signficatory actions is already partially fulfilled (3:386). So instead of calling Baptism a promise, Pannenberg emphasises the objective character of Baptism, which becomes the foundation that 'gives Christians the right and assurance to regard themselves as those to whom God's promises are addressed' (3:304). Pannenberg's emphasis of the objective character of Baptism, finally, also leads to the loosening of the traditional connection of word and sacrament, central to Lutheran theology. While the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, for example, says that the effect of word and rite is the same, illustrated by Augustine's expression of the *verbum visibile*,⁶⁰⁹ Pannenberg not only neglects the role of the word in his baptismal theology, but explicitly criticises the understanding of sacrament as a visible word for intensifying the separation of thing and sign, and states that if the 'sacramental action is to be efficacious and not just signficatory' it has to lead out of the realm of the word (3:383-384). Consequently, Pannenberg finally expresses that Baptism 'adds something to oral proclamation and the hearing of it,' as the incorporation into Christ happens only in Baptism (3:385), which makes Baptism the concrete place of justification. This line of thought brings him close to Trent's understanding that the hearing of the word does not impart justification but only prepares the justification that is imparted in Baptism,⁶¹⁰ however, without neglecting the role of faith for the appropriation of justification.

Individualisation of Baptism

Hans-Martin Barth observed that in the baptismal views of the churches of the Reformation often the individual life and fate of the baptised person is emphasised, which he

⁶⁰⁹ Apol 13 (BSELK 512).

⁶¹⁰ DH 1526-1529; Horst Georg Pöhlmann, *Rechtfertigung: die gegenwärtige kontroverstheologische Problematik der Rechtfertigungslehre zwischen der evangelisch-lutherischen und der römisch-katholischen Kirche* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971), 237.

calls the ‘individualisation of Baptism.’ This ‘anthropological and christological con-
striction’ is already visible in Luther’s small catechism, where the individual’s relation to
Christ is emphasised in Baptism.⁶¹¹ Pannenberg does not entirely neglect the ecclesiolog-
ical dimension of Baptism, but he explicitly labels it as side-effect of the incorporation of
the individual in Christ (3:266), and in the Baptism chapter the ecclesiological dimension
is only addressed on the last page (3:314), while the foundational Scripture passages
Ephesians 4:4-6 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 are either not used or with different focus. Sim-
ilarly, in his discussion of infant Baptism Pannenberg speaks about fellowship and the
inclusion of the child, but in this he addresses parents and family and not the church
(3:295-296). Outside of the Baptism chapter Pannenberg is more balanced and frequently
acknowledges the foundational role of Baptism for church membership and the inclusion
in the elected people of God, also using 1 Corinthians 12:13 (3:518, 595; cf. 475). He is
consistent, however, in regarding Baptism first of all as participation of the individual
with Christ, whereas the ‘eucharistic communion expresses the communal character of
such participation in Christ’ (cf. 3:266, 385).⁶¹²

This has also consequences for the meaning of Baptism regarding the common priest-
hood of all believers and the ecumenical dimension of Baptism. In the Baptism chapter
Pannenberg refers only in the two final paragraphs to the special vocation of each baptised
Christian and explicitly states that ‘each Christian is summoned by the baptism of Jesus
to make a special contribution to witness to God’s reign in the fellowship of the church’
(3:314). In other places Pannenberg only briefly mentions that faith and Baptism are the
foundation for the participation in Christ’s priesthood (3:407, 433), however, mostly in
quoting others like Luther or Vatican II, but in his own words he generally does not speak
about the priesthood of all baptised, but only about the priesthood of all believers.⁶¹³ It is
surprising, however, that Pannenberg theologically does not reflect more on the function
of Baptism as calling into ministry, especially as he describes from his personal experi-
ence: ‘God had been there in my life all along claiming it for his service in the event of
my baptism.’⁶¹⁴ While the ecclesiological aspect of Baptism in regard to the calling into
ministry still is present, the individualisation of Baptism seems to cloud Pannenberg’s

⁶¹¹ Hans-Martin Barth, *Einander Priester sein: allgemeines Priestertum in ökumenischer Perspektive* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 195–96; cf. BSELK 882-884.

⁶¹² Pannenberg, ‘Baptism’, 87; cf. ST 3:469, 476.

⁶¹³ In ST 3:145-146, fn.83 Pannenberg even describes Luther’s view of Baptism as consecration into
priesthood but does not pick up this aspect in his own thought (cf. WA 6:407-408). Cf. also Pannenberg,
‘Lima’, 2000, 227–31; LV 3:286–305; EuE 272–79, 291.

⁶¹⁴ Pannenberg, ‘Baptism’, 83.

perception of the ecumenical implications of Baptism. Apart from very few exceptions⁶¹⁵ Pannenberg does not describe Baptism as foundation or reason for ecumenical unity⁶¹⁶ but sees the ecumenical implications exclusively in the Eucharist, which signifies the eschatological fellowship of all believers.⁶¹⁷

5.6 Evaluation of the Use and Understanding of Tradition and Church History

In a first step we analysed the individual explicit references and important implicit reflections of tradition and church history in Pannenberg's view of Baptism and now we will bring everything together to evaluate the general understanding and use of tradition and church history. We first will deduce and evaluate Pannenberg's views of tradition and church history, also considering his explicit explanations in *Systematische Theologie* and other relevant works. Finally, we will evaluate the general use of tradition and church history in Pannenberg's baptismal theology, in order to understand how his baptismal view is influenced by them.

5.6.1 View of Tradition

In the large number of Pannenberg's explicit references to tradition and church history we have already seen the importance of tradition in his baptismal view, which is also confirmed by the implicit reflections of tradition in Pannenberg's own thoughts, often also extensively backed by or deduced from explicit references. This corresponds with Pannenberg's explanation that 'the purpose of the historical and factual analysis is to support the development of the systematic argument' (1:8).

We have also seen, that in Pannenberg's argument Scripture is the foundation and the norm for evaluating traditional views and historical developments. Especially in the first subchapter where Pannenberg develops the biblical-theological foundation of his baptismal view he only refers to tradition to clarify or support his interpretation of Scripture. Here we also saw, however, that for Pannenberg the testimony of Scripture is not identical with the historical event of Jesus, but that he is aware that Scripture is already a reflection of theological developments and thus of the tradition of the Early Church. If there are ambiguities in the scriptural testimony about Baptism, therefore, Pannenberg tries to close the gap between the actual event in Jesus life and ministry and 'the testimony that early

⁶¹⁵ E.g. EuE 200; BStH 3:14.

⁶¹⁶ Expressed, for example, in BEM B:6; LG 15; UR22.

⁶¹⁷ Pannenberg, 'Baptism', 81, 87; Pannenberg, 'Grundsatzentscheidungen', 99; EuE 286–88.

Christian proclamation gives to this figure' (1:7), by using recent exegetical research to decide about the right interpretation of Scripture, using tradition only to affirm and illustrate this interpretation.

We see, however, that Pannenberg in his biblical-theological introduction to Baptism does not yet address how Baptism should be understood and practised in the church today. Instead of directly applying his scriptural foundation to the contemporary church, he first lines out how the understanding of Baptism was influenced by historical developments (3:273). He especially emphasises that the anticipatory character of Baptism, which represents the core of his baptismal view, was neglected in Christian theology after the Early Church and, therefore, 'for reflection on the relevance of baptism to the whole earthly life of Christians we thus need to consider more closely the relation of baptism to penance and also to confirmation,' which is also closely related to infant Baptism. As this defines the topics of Pannenberg's systematic discussion that precedes the systematic and practical conclusions, we clearly see that Pannenberg regards the historically developed positions as essential to define the meaning and practice of Baptism for the contemporary church.

In Pannenberg's systematic arguments we see how he uses tradition to bridge the gap between Scripture and the church today. In the explicit references to tradition we already observed that he generally informatively and neutrally describes the historical developments in temporal sequences. After outlining the historical developments, Pannenberg either shows how these developments led to a concrete theological position of an author or a church, seen for example in the discussion of Luther's *fides infantium* (3:293-294); or he brings two historical positions into dialogue and points out where they expressed the same with different emphases or words; or how they misunderstood each other; or where there were real differences. This is seen, for example, in Pannenberg bringing Luther into dialogue with the Early Church and the Scholastics in regard to the possibility of losing baptismal grace (3:279); or in showing how Luther and Trent misunderstood each other in regard to the unity of Baptism and Penance (3:279-281), and regarding their understanding of sin (3:284-285); or in bringing Luther and Aquinas into dialogue in regard to the non-repeatability of Baptism (3:282), regarding the effectiveness of Baptism and the importance of faith (3:291-292), and regarding the institution of Baptism (3:306). In this regard, we already observed that Pannenberg freely affirms, criticises and corrects historical positions, disregarding their denominational origin or their acceptance as official and authoritative teaching in any church. The same we have observed in the implicit

reflections of tradition, where Pannenberg's view in many aspects reflects Luther's and Lutheran theology, but in core aspects, such as the institution of Baptism or the word character of Baptism, deviates from the traditional Lutheran view and also includes understandings that are close to a Catholic view, like Trent's understanding that the proclaimed word only prepares for the justification that happens in Baptism. In the implicit reflections of tradition, we have also seen that Pannenberg considers the origin and development of theological terms, such as sacrament, to decide about their usefulness for his systematic argument. Pannenberg's inclusion of tradition in the process of defining and reformulating the meaning of Baptism for the contemporary church, therefore, is an expression of his ultimate purpose to express the universal significance of Christ for the church today, which can only be achieved by 'Reflection upon the historical place of dogmatic concepts and the related identifying and relative weighting of the essential themes of Christian doctrine' (1:8). In any case, however, Pannenberg uses Scripture to evaluate and where necessary to correct tradition, as Scripture, although also product of tradition itself, contains the testimony about the normative revelation of God in the history of Christ.

In Pannenberg's baptismal view, therefore, we see the key points of his view of tradition, which could be described as the revelation of God in the history of Christ found its expression in the testimony of Scripture, which itself is the result of the tradition of the Early Church. In order to understand, therefore, the meaning of Scripture, the gap between historical event of Christ and its testimony must be bridged, which is best achieved by academic exegesis, namely the historical-critical method. To understand the meaning and universal relevance of the historical revelation of God in Christ for the contemporary church, the historical developments and the tradition of the church must be considered. As tradition, no matter whether in the form of a theologian's view or an official teaching of a church, is neither revelation itself, nor a direct testimony of the revelation, but only an expression of how this revelation was understood at a certain time and place, it must be open for revision according to Scripture, which as testimony of the original revelation is the norm for all later understanding.

Tradition before and after Scripture: The Double Crisis of the Scripture Principle

At the core of Pannenberg's view of tradition is his awareness and acceptance of the impact of Enlightenment thought on Christian theology. Until the Protestant Orthodoxy Scripture was perceived as direct revelation, and thus as word of God, and its content was understood as being identical with the historical event of Jesus as well as with the later

teaching and tradition of the church. This identity of Scripture, history and doctrine already began to dissolve during the Reformation, when the Protestant side criticised the teaching of the church using Scripture, while the Catholic side insisted on the necessity of the teaching of the church to resolve differences in scriptural teaching. The historical criticism of the Enlightenment then combined both aspects, showing that also the Protestant teaching cannot be understood as identical representation of scriptural content, as well as critically analysing the differences and contradictions in Scripture. The historical criticism of the Enlightenment, therefore, made it impossible to rely either on Scripture or the teaching of the church as guarantee of divine revelation, thus effectively undermining all authorities in Christian teaching (1:36).⁶¹⁸

Pannenberg calls this development the ‘double crisis of the Scripture principle,’ as it became evident that there is a historical gap between the actual event of Jesus and its presentation in Scripture, the historical problem, and also a historical gap between Scripture and the teaching of the church, the hermeneutical problem.⁶¹⁹ The historical problem basically refers to the acknowledgement of the differences between different biblical writings, which show that there were different traditions before Scripture, which had their own understanding and interpretation of the events of Christ. The realisation of the historical problem, according to Pannenberg, was even a natural consequence of Protestant exegesis with its focus on the literal sense and the clarity of Scripture.⁶²⁰ The hermeneutical problem basically refers to the acknowledgement of the tradition process after Scripture, which renders it impossible to assume that the words of Scripture can be understood exactly the same as when they were written at their time, resulting from changes in language and ways of thinking.⁶²¹

The dissolution of the traditional Scripture principle and thus the apprehension of tradition before and after Scripture also becomes manifest in Pannenberg’s use of the word transmission (*Überlieferung*). When he speaks about the Christian transmission, it is somewhat undefined whether he refers to Scripture or tradition or to both of them.⁶²² This is explicable as for Pannenberg Scripture and tradition are both part of the transmission process of the message of Christ, which by authors like Paul, John or Luther has been

⁶¹⁸ GSTh 1:15, 63, 91; Pannenberg, *Introduction*, 15; Pannenberg, ‘Schriftautorität’, 8.

⁶¹⁹ GSTh 1:19–20, 91–92.

⁶²⁰ GSTh 1:166–67.

⁶²¹ GSTh 1:16–17.

⁶²² Cf. ST 1:33–35; 3:143. Also seen in practical application in his sermons, Pannenberg, *Gegenwart*, 64–65, 72–73, 82–83, 100–101, 120; Pannenberg, *Freude*, 16, 86, 102–5, 107, 113, 117–18, 127.

brought to their respective contexts.⁶²³ As a consequence Scripture and tradition both are perceived as human products and not revelation in themselves and, therefore, are subject to criticism in order to find the core of the Christian message.⁶²⁴

God's Revelation in History and its Testimony in Scripture

Pannenberg accepts the challenge of modern thought, resulting in the dissolution of the Scripture principle in its traditional form, and he calls for 'a new answer to the question of a reliable access to the reality and authority of Jesus,'⁶²⁵ not depending on an understanding of Scripture as word of God or direct divine revelation. According to Pannenberg God's revelation happens indirectly in history, and as a consequence of the definitions of God as 'all-determining reality' and revelation as 'self-revelation of God,' this revelation is only complete when history comes to its end.⁶²⁶ In the person of Jesus, especially in his resurrection, however, the end of history is already anticipated, as the resurrection of the dead in Jewish apocalyptic thinking is only happening at the end of the world (1:249, 251).⁶²⁷ In the history of Jesus, therefore, God's revelation is already complete, and from there Scripture as preparation and testimony of this revelation gains its special place in Christian theology.⁶²⁸

As Scripture, however, is to be understood as the result of a tradition process that began with the event of Christ's life, death and resurrection, Pannenberg emphasises that not only the result but also the process of transmission needs to be considered.⁶²⁹ As a consequence Pannenberg distinguishes clearly between Scripture and the Gospel and insists that the statements of Scripture need to be evaluated by the content of the Gospel that is accessible through them as well as distinguishable from them (2:511). The indirectness of revelation, therefore, becomes the key to criticise Scripture, which is only testimony about God's revelation and part of its transmission. Pannenberg still insists, however, that the historical event and its transmission must not be separated, and that the event of Christ is the unifying factor of both, the tradition process and the resulting NT, although different writings testify in different ways about Jesus.⁶³⁰ The understanding of the Gospel of Christ as centre of Scripture is also the basis of Pannenberg's reinterpretation of scriptural

⁶²³ GSTh 1:17.

⁶²⁴ Pannenberg, *Introduction*, 6–8.

⁶²⁵ Pannenberg, 'Schriftautorität', 8.

⁶²⁶ OaG XII, 95–98; cf. GSTh 2:117–18; ST 1:64.

⁶²⁷ OaG 103–6, 142–3.

⁶²⁸ Pannenberg, 'Einsicht', 90; BSTh 1:231–32, 237.

⁶²⁹ GSTh 1:170.

⁶³⁰ GSTh 1:169–71.

inspiration. As the Gospel of Christ and its transmission is filled with the Spirit, and as the writings of the NT are the most original testimonies of the apostolic message, we can speak of the inspiration of Scripture insofar it testifies about the Gospel of Christ. This understanding of inspiration, however, is not based on the authority of the letter but of the content; is not based on the truth of every single statement, but on the truth of God's revelation in the person and history of Jesus (2:510-511).⁶³¹

This finally means the authority of Scripture is not based on an understanding of an authoritative word of God and thus as prerequisite to understand the Gospel, but the other way around in that the authority is found in the Gospel and Scripture has only authority insofar it represents the content of the Gospel. Pannenberg, therefore, concludes that 'Scripture changed from a principle of immediate divine authority into the principle of the binding of Christianity to its historical origin as abiding norm,' and, therefore, the scripture principle, although in changed form, remains the foundation of Protestant theology (1:60; 2:510).⁶³²

The Proleptical and Hypothetical Character of Theological Statements

However scriptural authority is understood, according to Pannenberg, 'such spiritual authority must not be mistaken for a basis of argument' but should rather motivate to examine its truth claims.⁶³³ Although in the event of Christ God's revelation is already complete and 'the truth of God's revelation is indeed ultimate,' as long as history is incomplete our understanding of God's truth is provisional and awaits its final confirmation at the end of history. Pannenberg calls this the 'proleptical character' of theological statements, or with the words of Barth the 'eschatological character,' which he also sees confirmed by Paul's description of the fragmentary character of all human knowledge in 1 Corinthians 13:12 (1:26, 65; 3:137).⁶³⁴

The provisional character of theological knowledge is also required from a rational and scientific point of view if theological statements are to be taken seriously as propositions about reality as a whole and not as mere subjective attitudes.⁶³⁵ Pannenberg, therefore, talks about the hypothetical character of theological statements, which as hypotheses must be open for verification (1:66, 68-69).⁶³⁶ Even though this verification is possible in

⁶³¹ BSTh 1:246-48.

⁶³² BSTh 3:187.

⁶³³ Pannenberg, *Introduction*, 17.

⁶³⁴ GSTh 1:175-76, 180; BSTh 3:57.

⁶³⁵ WuT 333; cf. Pannenberg, 'Presence', 263; Pannenberg, *Introduction*, 18.

⁶³⁶ WuT 335-48; cf. Pannenberg, *Christologie*, 415; Wenz, *Wolfhart Pannenberg's Systematische Theologie*, 164.

principle, the universal scope of theological statements allows this verification only when history is complete. Pannenberg still defines criteria to decide whether theological hypotheses can be regarded as established or not, so basically even though they cannot be finally verified before the end of history, there is the possibility of falsifying them if they do not meet certain criteria.⁶³⁷ These basic criteria to evaluate theological statements are defined by Pannenberg as 1) they must be implications of Scripture if they are meant to be statements about Jewish-Christian faith; 2) they must refer to reality as a whole and thus must be applicable to present experience and the state of philosophical discussion in order not to become mythological or ideological; 3) it must be possible to integrate them into the corresponding field of experience; and finally 4) they must exceed previous hypotheses and must not remain behind the already achieved state of theological discussion.⁶³⁸ In the first criterion demanding a theological statement to be an implication of Scripture we see again the reinterpreted Scripture principle, as this criterion ensures the binding of a theological statement to the norm of the historical origin.⁶³⁹ The second and forth criteria address the hermeneutical problem, demanding the consideration of the present situation as well as the process of historical and theological development, the ‘cumulative process of the Christian tradition’, which is important in order to formulate a theological statement representing the original and universal revelation of God.⁶⁴⁰

The proleptical and hypothetical character of theological statements demands that they can and must be revised as history proceeds, because contexts change, and theological knowledge grows. As for Pannenberg tradition and the teaching of the church, such as dogma, confessions, and creeds are special forms of theological statements, the demand for verification and revision according to Scripture also applies to them (1:20; 3:463).⁶⁴¹ He sees this also confirmed ‘throughout the history of Christian doctrinal proclamation’ where ‘tradition and reception go hand in hand,’ while the Gospel of Christ functions as testing criteria for the church’s reception or rejection of the teaching of bishops, councils, or pastors’ sermons (3:463-464).⁶⁴² Pannenberg, therefore, also speaks about Trent and the Lutheran confession writings as ‘theological schools’ that ‘both stand in need of

⁶³⁷ WuT 346–48.

⁶³⁸ WuT 348.

⁶³⁹ Cf. Hans-Jürgen Detjen, *Geltungsbegründung traditionsabhängiger Weltdeutungen im Dilemma: Theologie, Philosophie, Wissenschaftstheorie und Konstruktivismus* (Münster: LIT, 2010), 334.

⁶⁴⁰ Braaten and Clayton, *Pannenberg*, 18.

⁶⁴¹ GSTh 1:162; VZ 2:130–31; BSTh 3:326, 359; EuE 239.

⁶⁴² Pannenberg critically remarks here that even though DV 10 might imply the role of God’s word as criteria for the teaching of the church, the Catholic teaching so far does not explicitly emphasise it, but at least it also has not been rejected.

correction by the witness of Scripture' (3:263). While Malloy criticises the wording of 'theological schools' as an expression of the devaluation of both sides' authority,⁶⁴³ Pannenberg's wording actually originates from the ecumenical discussion about the condemnations of the Reformation era and is a positive acknowledgment that both sides are valuable attempts to represent the truth of the Gospel.⁶⁴⁴

Regarding the *Nicene Creed*, however, we see some inconsistency in Pannenberg's thought. He argues that the creed arose from the baptismal catechesis of the church and refers to the person of Christ, representing the whole of the Christian faith, and thus although it needs to be interpreted, it cannot be altered, and all later doctrine must be subordinated to it.⁶⁴⁵ This understanding seems to give the creed characteristics and authority similar to Scripture, which, however, is alleviated in the later *Systematische Theologie*. There Pannenberg clarifies that the creed's unique status is of ecumenical nature, as its acceptance by all Christian churches gives it a special representative function that could not be achieved by a new or altered creed, and, therefore, it must not be changed, but can only be reinterpreted in the light of the scriptural testimony (3:139-141).

Evaluation

In Pannenberg's view of Baptism we have seen the main characteristics of his view of tradition, which we also matched with his theoretical considerations about tradition in his other works. From a practical point of view, in Pannenberg's use of tradition and Scripture in the Baptism chapter of *Systematische Theologie*, as well as in many other works, we see the basic features of the Ancillary view (cf. 2.4.1): tradition must be considered, but Scripture is the foundation and the norm to evaluate tradition and the teaching of the church.⁶⁴⁶ From a theoretical point of view, however, we could speak of a second-order

⁶⁴³ Malloy, *Engrafted into Christ*, 183. Malloy's negative assessment of Pannenberg's description of Trent and the Lutheran Confession writings as theological schools also seems exaggerated as even the German bishops accept the wording in Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, 'Stellungnahme der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz zur Studie "Lehrverurteilungen – kirchentrennend?"', 1994, 23.

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. BSTh 3: 255, 305–6, 318, 325, 336; also, ST 3:462; EuE 250.

⁶⁴⁵ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Die Bedeutung des Bekenntnisses von Nicaea-Konstantinopel für den ökumenischen Dialog heute (1982)', in *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie / Band 3. Kirche und Ökumene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 195–97; Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Foundation Documents of the Faith: XI. The Place of Creeds in Christianity Today', *The Expository Times* 91 (August 1980): 328–29.

⁶⁴⁶ Hasel, on the contrary, evaluates 'it is obvious, that Pannenberg does not use Scripture as final norm and authority.' This evaluation is questionable, as although Pannenberg does not perceive Scripture as final authority, he still uses it as such. Hasel himself also observed this as a 'subtle commitment to the Christian Scriptures and the adequacy of their thought,' and ascribes it to Pannenberg's understanding of Scripture as 'the norm of Christian identity.' Frank Hasel, *Scripture in the Theologies of W. Pannenberg and D.G. Bloesch: An Investigation and Assessment of Its Origin, Nature, and Use* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 120, 124, 126; cf. ST 1:60.

Ancillary view, as the authority of Scripture is not considered to be inherent but derived from the authority of the history of Jesus. Tradition, therefore, is subordinate to the authority of Scripture, which itself as product of Early Church tradition is subordinate to the authority of the event of Christ (the Gospel), and thus open for historical criticism. This understanding naturally brings in the challenges of the historical-critical method in deciding what the event of Christ really is, compromising the power of Scripture and the endangerment of the lasting and unique place of Scripture among other testimonies of tradition, which we have seen surfacing in Pannenberg's thoughts on the Nicene creed.⁶⁴⁷ Generally, we still can conclude, that Pannenberg's view of tradition resembles the basics of the Ancillary view, or in other words, the protestant Scripture principle, however, adjusted to work within the perimeter of modern historical and rational consciousness and, as such, it should be appraised.⁶⁴⁸ Pannenberg's view in many parts reflects the common position on Scripture and tradition of the ecumenical working group of Catholic and Protestant theologians, which is not surprising given the fact that Pannenberg himself was a member of the working group.⁶⁴⁹

5.6.2 *View of Church History*

We have already seen the important place of church history in Pannenberg's baptismal view in the large number of his references to historical developments and in his interaction with historical views. This is understandable in the light of Pannenberg's emphasis of God's revelation in history, which also implies that 'Christian doctrine is from first to last a historical construct' (1:7). In his baptismal view Pannenberg evaluates church history generally neutrally as he describes how the church under new circumstances had to adjust, seen for example in the development of separate rites of Confirmation and infant Baptism in the Western church (3:297). Pannenberg, therefore, does not directly criticise the historical developments, which are often gradual over time and are even required reactions to keep the Gospel relevant, but criticises the resulting theological positions,

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 127.

⁶⁴⁸ Lauster acknowledges Pannenberg's adjustment of the protestant Scripture principle to modern thought, using an alternative rationale for the authority of Scripture, as Pannenberg's special contribution. Lauster also points out, however, that if the Scripture principle is understood to be based on direct supernatural revelation, as seen in Hasel's work, Pannenberg's adjustment inevitably must be perceived as dissolution of the protestant Scripture principle. Jörg Lauster, *Prinzip und Methode: die Transformation des protestantischen Schriftprinzips durch die historische Kritik von Schleiermacher bis zur Gegenwart* (Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 343–45; cf. Hasel, *Scripture*, 114–15.

⁶⁴⁹ In the concluding report, however, the role of the Holy Spirit is emphasised much clearer as in Pannenberg's view and Scripture is still referred to as 'God's word,' which Pannenberg largely avoids. See esp. VZ.E 33–39, 45–47, 57–64, 116–120, 130–150, 167–173.

especially if they are not in line with Scripture, or if they caused disputes, misunderstandings, and divisions in the church.

Although in the Baptism chapter Pannenberg does not limit the history of the church to a single denomination, also implied by his understanding of church (cf. 5.5.1), he clearly concentrates on the mainstream churches of the West. The Catholic Church and the Protestant state churches, therefore, are mostly in his focus, and he only marginally considers the Eastern Orthodox churches or the minor streams of the Reformation, like the Anabaptists and modern free churches. This does not mean, however, that Pannenberg categorically neglects these streams, but is rather an expression of his own origins in the Lutheran church and Western theology. Pannenberg freely acknowledges this bias, however, not without expressing his desire to seek the universal truth of Christian doctrine and the unity of all Christians (1:10). This universal and ecumenical interest is also seen in the Baptism chapter, where he tries to show the common ground between the divided churches, especially seen in the inclusion of the discussion of Penance, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick, and in trying to solve the misunderstandings and mutual condemnations of the Reformation that contributed to the development of the different streams of church history.

The basic features of Pannenberg's view of church history, which we observed in his baptismal view, are present in his whole *Systematische Theologie* and other works. His understanding of the historicity of the Christian faith and teaching, resulting from God revealing himself in and through history, obliges Pannenberg to thoroughly interact with the history of the church, but not without evaluating and judging the church's reaction to changed historical contexts. The critical acknowledgement of the historical developments also shows that Pannenberg does not idealise the Early Church, but that he works towards a future where all churches, already united in their common origin and destiny, will be one.

The Church as Provisional Shape of the Eschatological People of God: Church History between Election and Judgement

God's work in history is vital to Pannenberg's theology, as 'a God who does not act is no God at all'⁶⁵⁰ and we 'know about God's nature only through God's action in history.'⁶⁵¹ As in the fate of Jesus Christ, however, the end of history is already anticipated, no new or further revelation can happen afterwards, and God's work in church history cannot

⁶⁵⁰ Pannenberg, *Glaubensbekenntnis*, 41.

⁶⁵¹ Oord, 'Interview', 3.

show him in a ‘fundamentally new way, but rather as the one who has already been revealed in the fate of Jesus.’⁶⁵² Pannenberg expresses this qualitative difference between God’s work through Christ and his work through the church by the distinction of incarnation and election, as even though the church as the body of Christ is connected to God, the fellowship of God and the church will only be completed in the eschatological future (3:543-544).

The concept of election provides for Pannenberg the basic rationale to talk about God’s work in history, as it allows him to relate all following historical experiences to the foundational event of God’s election (3:528-29).⁶⁵³ The election of Israel then is expanded to all nations through the history of Christ, which is the foundation of the election of the church (3:530).⁶⁵⁴ The election of the church also implies the aspects of covenantal obligation and its mission to the world, as well as the related actions of God in preservation or judgement depending on whether or not the church fulfils its obligation and mission (3:528, 535, 537-538).⁶⁵⁵ Election and judgement, therefore, are used by Pannenberg as basic categories to describe God’s work in church history, providing the rationale for the interpretation of its positive and negative experiences and developments.⁶⁵⁶

For Pannenberg it is essential to keep in mind the provisional shape of the church. When the church assumes to be identical with the eschatological people of God, the consequences are often dogmatic intolerance and exclusivity, which in church history led to numerous divisions of the church and following judgement of God (3:516).⁶⁵⁷ Pannenberg sees this especially in the fall of the Roman empire as consequence of the early dogmatic controversies, or in the wars of religion and the secularisation as consequences of the confessional divisions of the Reformation (3:557). The realisation that the church is only a provisional shape of the eschatological people of God, therefore, provides the rationale to acknowledge the reality of the church in different Christian streams, and thus is essential for ecumenical understanding as well as for the critical reflection on the history of one’s own church and its shortcomings (3:502-503, 556-559).

⁶⁵² OaG 106; cf. Pannenberg, ‘Einsicht’, 90.

⁶⁵³ Pannenberg, *Bestimmung*, 95–96.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26, 84, 102–4.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁵⁶ For a detailed description of the use of election and judgement see Volker Leppin, ‘Pannbergs Theologie der Kirchengeschichte. Voraussetzungen, Entfaltung, Probleme aus Sicht eines Kirchenhistorikers’, in *Kirche und Reich Gottes: zur Ekklesiologie Wolfhart Pannbergs*, ed. Gunther Wenz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 203–18. For Pannenberg’s theoretical understanding of church history, also as academic subject, see WuT 393–406.

⁶⁵⁷ Cf. OaG 106; BSTh 3:56-57; Pannenberg, *Bestimmung*, 57.

Focal Points of Church History: Moving towards Eschatological Completion

Pannenberg heavily interacts in his theology with views and developments of church history, especially of the Early Church. The Early Church focus is understandable, as for Pannenberg ‘there can be no Christian unity without reception of the Christian past as a common heritage,’⁶⁵⁸ and, therefore, it is important to understand how different streams of Christianity all are connected to the original revelation in Christ. This does not mean, however, that for Pannenberg Christian unity can be achieved by the restoration of such a common apostolic past.⁶⁵⁹ In fact, Pannenberg defines truly apostolic not as conserving the Early Church but as obligation to follow its apostolic mission in constantly adapting to new historical horizons (3:443).⁶⁶⁰ Given the understanding of the provisional shape of the church as eschatological people of God, Pannenberg also warns against understanding the Early Church as an idealistic and romanticised unity, supported by the fact that the beginning divisions are visible as early as in the NT.⁶⁶¹

The truly unified origin of the church, therefore, can only be found in Jesus Christ, who is at the same time the origin and also the destiny of the church and all humanity.⁶⁶² This common eschatological future, therefore, calls all churches to unity, however, not by restoring an original shape of the Early Church, but by moving towards the eschatological completion that is already present in Christ. This explains Pannenberg’s regular focus on the Medieval age and the Reformation, reflecting his attempts to resolve the misunderstandings and different views of this formative age in order to overcome the divisions of the Western churches and work towards the future unity of the church in Christ, which for him represents true catholicity (3:444).

Evaluation

Pannenberg’s view of church history clearly is a view of Critical Reverence. He acknowledges God’s work in history and in the church but acknowledges the provisional shape of every denomination and does not equate any church with the eschatological people of God. This also provides the rationale to critically evaluate the shortcomings of church history, while at the same time still insisting on its importance. The result is an ecumenical focus, motivated by the eschatological perspective of future unity in Christ, which we

⁶⁵⁸ Pannenberg, ‘Creeds’, 332.

⁶⁵⁹ EuE 211, 222; BSTh 3:198.

⁶⁶⁰ EuE 227.

⁶⁶¹ EuE 211, 214–15, 217.

⁶⁶² EuE 200, 216, 218.

also have seen in Pannenberg's attempts to overcome the differences in baptismal understandings.

5.6.3 *General Evaluation*

We observed that Pannenberg's baptismal view reflects his views of tradition and church history, and that interaction with tradition is a significant part of his systematic argument. We have especially seen how he relates the historical views and developments to Scripture and to the Early Church, showing their justification and their comprehensibility, but not without critically evaluating them with Scripture. Tradition, therefore, in his baptismal view has a place of importance and cannot be skipped, however, it can be criticised and is clearly subordinated to Scripture. In both the explicit references and implicit reflections of tradition we have seen a strong influence of Lutheran theology and the Western church in general, which is not only a reflection of his own background and ecumenical orientation, but also fits in well with his theology.⁶⁶³

Especially Luther's baptismal theology with its focus on Baptism as a sign, signifying regeneration and justification, and thus the reality of the new man that is already present in Christ but needs to be embraced daily in faith, connects well to the core of Pannenberg's own theology. The core aspect of his theology is the anticipation of the end of the world in Christ's death and resurrection, a future that already began but awaits its eschatological completion. The same happens for Pannenberg on an individual level in Baptism. In Baptism the recipient is connected with Christ's death and thus one's own future death is anticipated and the new identity in Christ is established that needs to be daily appropriated in faith while awaiting its future completion. In Baptism, therefore, 'the same eschatological turn that came into human history through Jesus Christ' happens in the life of the recipient (3:100-101), and, similar to how the 'anticipation of the future of God in the work and history of Jesus becomes the basis of the church's sense of election' (3:530), 'election meets individuals in a signficatory action that anticipates their earthly life and its end in death, linking them to the future of God and his salvation that has been manifested already in Jesus Christ' (3:475).⁶⁶⁴ Similarly as Althaus stated 'Luther's theology of baptism was the concrete form of his doctrine on justification by faith,' we could therefore conclude: Pannenberg's theology of Baptism was the individualised form of his anticipatory theology.

⁶⁶³ Cf. Braaten and Clayton, *Pannenberg*, 18.

⁶⁶⁴ This close connection of Baptism and salvation history is also found in Althaus, who parallels the meaning of Baptism for the individual with the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection for humanity as a whole. Pihkala, *Gnadenmittel*, 304.

Pannenberg, however, does not follow Luther in all aspects, which is most clearly seen in his neglect of Luther's view of Baptism as word and promise, concepts that for him do not clearly enough express the real and unique effect that definitively happens in Baptism, although not effective without its appropriation by faith. As the tendency to strip the word character of the sacraments is often found in Catholic theology,⁶⁶⁵ it is no surprise to find Trent's understanding that Baptism gives more than the preached word also in Pannenberg's view. Similarly, as the promise character of the sacraments can be regarded as separating element between Luther's thought and the sacramental theology of High Scholasticism,⁶⁶⁶ and as this obstacle is removed in Pannenberg's view, his appraisal of Aquinas and Trent might just be a natural consequence. He explicitly praises Aquinas and Trent for maintaining the connection of Baptism and justification, a connection he misses in later Lutheran baptismal theology. Pannenberg also praises Aquinas like Luther for emphasising the necessity of faith for the reception of Baptism's saving effect and for the thought that the effectiveness of Baptism depends on its divine institution.

Pannenberg, however, also criticises aspects in Aquina's theology, especially the neglect of the relevancy of Baptism for the whole Christian life. Pannenberg sees this as a result of Aquinas' understanding of the infused baptismal grace (*gratia-qualitas*) that can be lost and needs to be restored by Penance, which contradicts Luther's understanding of the new identity *extra nos in Christo* that is established in Baptism, a core aspect of Pannenberg's view. This fundamental difference between Luther and Aquinas in regard to the *gratia-qualitas* teaching and its consequence for the understanding of the lifelong relevancy of Baptism is also identified by Pesch.⁶⁶⁷ Finally, the appreciation of Luther and Aquinas in Pannenberg's baptismal view resembles Pesch's positive evaluation that in 'the theological work of both men an infinite amount of Christian wisdom can be found that has lasting validity,' and exemplifies his observation that whenever on the Protestant side the anti-Scholastic tendency has been left behind, many prejudices against the Scholastics in general and specifically against Aquinas have been overcome.⁶⁶⁸

Finally, Pannenberg does not confine himself to the Lutheran tradition, but interacts with the wider Western tradition, seen for example the in the discussion of Penance,

⁶⁶⁵ Martin Abraham, *Evangelium und Kirchengestalt: Reformatorisches Kirchenverständnis heute* (de Gruyter, 2012), 54.

⁶⁶⁶ Ulrich Asendorf, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers nach seinen Predigten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 283.

⁶⁶⁷ Otto Hermann Pesch, *Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), 699–701, 810–11, 820–22.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 952, 955.

Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick; or the appreciation that Luther and Trent both had good reasons for their views about sin and concupiscence but misunderstood each other; or in the call for the removal of the Anabaptists' condemnation in the Lutheran confessions. This interaction with the wider Western tradition is not only an expression of academic interest or methodical demand, but also shows Pannenberg's genuine ecumenical interest to overcome the divisions in Western Christianity, which is also seen in the appearance of thoughts from the ecumenical study project on the mutual condemnations of the Reformation in his baptismal view.⁶⁶⁹

5.7 Conclusions

Pannenberg's baptismal view is a truly Lutheran view in the sense that Baptism is not somewhere at the margins but right in the centre of his theology. Baptism is an event that establishes the recipient's new identity in Christ, and, therefore, is important for the whole of the Christian life and must be constantly appropriated by faith. These thoughts not only reflect Luther's theology, but are also supported by numerous references to Luther's works. The focus on the individual Christian, however, also results in the typical tendency of Reformation theology to neglect the ecclesiological dimension of Baptism, described by Pannenberg only as 'side-effect' of the incorporation in Christ. Pannenberg, however, also goes beyond the Lutheran tradition in neglecting the word and promise character of Baptism, resulting from his acceptance of critical exegetical findings. The use of the historical-critical method, however, is understood by Pannenberg as consequence of Luther's view of the clarity of Scripture and as way to liberate biblical exegesis from the control of dogmatic prejudices, allowing Scripture to criticise dogmatic frameworks. So even though Pannenberg embraces critical thought, which also leads to the redefinition of the protestant Scripture principle compatible to modern thought, the resulting use of Scripture in his baptismal theology still shows the authority of Scripture relative to tradition.

An interesting feature of Pannenberg's baptismal view is his close interaction with Scholastic and Catholic thought, seen in the inclusion of Penance, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick as expressions of the lifelong relevancy of Baptism, which shows his appreciation of the broader Christian tradition and his ecumenical interest. Granted this, it is surprising that he only marginally refers to Calvin and the Reformed understanding of Baptism, and nearly completely ignores Zwingli, the Anabaptists, and the Baptists,

⁶⁶⁹ Esp. LV 1.

as seen in tradition and literature references. As Pannenberg focuses on the meaning of Baptism, the briefness regarding practical aspects of Baptism is understandable. Interestingly, however, Pannenberg reflects more about the liturgical practice of baptismal remembrance than about Baptism itself, where he only describes that the water of Baptism symbolises the death of the recipient, which is especially clear in the rite of immersion.

In general, we can conclude that Pannenberg's baptismal view is a good example for the use of tradition and church history in a recent Lutheran view. Pannenberg's view is thoroughly based on and influenced by Luther, but at the same time he also values the Scholastic and Catholic view. His appreciation of the different traditions, however, does not come without critically evaluating the shortcomings in each of them while aligning all of them to Scripture. The result is a baptismal view that in its core is Lutheran but also drops parts of the Lutheran heritage while at the same time embracing Catholic features, such as differentiation of the effects of word and Baptism, and also the real effect of Baptism apart from faith (in a sense *ex opere operato*), however, not effective without faith, an aspect also present in Luther's thought.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. Schwab, *Entwicklung*, 387; Gottfried Martens, 'Ex opere operato – Eine Klarstellung', in *Einträchtig lehren: Festschrift für Bischof Dr. Jobst Schöne*, ed. Jürgen Diestelmann and Wolfgang Schillhahn (Groß Oesingen: Verlag der Lutherischen Buchhandlung, 1997), 311–23.

‘It would be better to speak of a double confession: in baptism God confesses himself to this man, by taking him into a new life, and in baptism man confesses himself to God, by asking for this work of God and accepting it.’⁶⁷¹

– André Heinze –

Chapter 6

André Heinze – A Baptist View of Baptism

André Heinze was born in 1961 in West-Berlin and grew up in Celle.⁶⁷² During his adolescence he attended a Baptist church (*Evangelisch-Freikirchliche Gemeinde*) where he was baptised and participated in youth ministry and adult education, which contributed to his decision to study theology.⁶⁷³

From 1983 to 1991 Heinze studied Protestant theology in Marburg and Göttingen, and then completed a year of candidacy at the Baptist seminary in Hamburg, which is required to become a pastor in the *Union of Evangelical Free Church Congregations (Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden, BEFG)*. After his candidacy he served as a pastor in Baptist churches in Göttingen (1992-1996) and Ludwigshafen (1996-2002). While pastoring in Göttingen Heinze obtained his doctorate in 1996 with a thesis on the relation of the Apocalypse of John to the Johannine writings over the course of church history, also

⁶⁷¹ ‘Besser wäre es wohl, von einem doppelten Bekenntnis zu sprechen: Gott bekennt sich in der Taufe zu diesem Menschen, indem er ihn in ein neues Leben hineinnimmt, und der Mensch bekennt sich in ihr zu Gott, indem er nach diesem Wirken Gottes fragt und es sich gefallen lässt.’ TuG 128.

⁶⁷² If not referenced otherwise all data on Heinze’s life is obtained from Heinze’s obituaries and EST 8-10. EST 269-272 also provides a complete list of Heinze’s publications. Volker Spangenberg, ‘Nachruf zum Tod von Prof. Dr. André Heinze am 1. März 2013’, Theologisches Seminar Elstal, 2013, <http://www.theologisches-seminar-elstal.de/index.php?id=1394>; Hartmut Riemenschneider, Regina Claas, and Volker Spangenberg, ‘Nachruf zum Tod von Prof. Dr. André Heinze’, 5 March 2013, http://www.baptisten.de/fileadmin/user_upload/bgs/bilder/Fotos/Newsletter_2013_03/Nachruf_zum_Tod_von_Prof._Dr._Andr%C3%A9_Heinze.pdf.

⁶⁷³ It was not possible to determine the religious background of Heinze’s family and whether he was already baptised as an infant. A personal meeting with Heinze’s former assistant Christian Wehde on 2017-09-01 did also not contribute any substantial new insight regarding this and other issues.

including tradition-historical examinations on John's Apocalypse.⁶⁷⁴ From 2002 onward Heinze worked as lecturer and later as professor for NT at the Baptist seminary in Elstal. In 2006 he also became the prorector of the seminary and contributed significantly to its academic accreditation. Heinze also acted as editor of the book series *Baptismusstudien* and was involved in several research projects, with a special interest in the Johannine writings, the development of early Christian theology, and in hermeneutical questions about the use of Scripture in the German Baptist movement.⁶⁷⁵ Heinze also worked on an habilitation project about the use of the Greek terms αἰών und αἰώνας in Pauline writings, however, he was not able to finish due to his health condition. In 2009 Heinze fell ill with cancer and after long and serious illness he died in 2013.

Heinze was highly respected in the Baptist academic community in Germany and in the *Union of Evangelical Free Church Congregations*, expressed in the obituaries of both the seminary and the union. His legacy is also seen in the posthumously published collective volume of some of his works.⁶⁷⁶ Internationally he is rather unknown as he only published and worked in Germany, except for an assignment as guest teacher at the theological institute of the Russian Baptists in Moscow between 1996 and 1999.⁶⁷⁷

André Heinze understood theological work always in the context of the actual life of the church and the proclamation of the Gospel. Theology was for him a counterpart to the church, mandated by the church and at the same time critically accompanied by her, but in a way that theology still can be free and independent. Heinze, therefore, brought actual topics of the churches into the theological discourse, while also making the theological findings usable for the church and spiritual life, seen in his many practical publications in church magazines. His practical orientation is also seen in his involvement in lay education, pastoral care, and regular preaching and teaching assignments in churches and at congresses. From 1992 to 2002, for example, Heinze was a teacher in a theological education program for lay people (*Theologischer Grundkurs der Vereinigung Evangelischer*

⁶⁷⁴ André Heinze, *Johannesapokalypse und johanneische Schriften: Forschungs- und traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1998).

⁶⁷⁵ Cf. Rektorat des Theologischen Seminars Elstal, ed., 'Forschungs- und Transferbericht 2007-2011', 2012, <https://www.th-elstal.de/fileadmin/the/media/dokumente/Forschungs-und-Transferbericht-2007-2011.pdf>.

⁶⁷⁶ André Heinze, *Exegese - Spiritualität - Theologie: Beiträge zu einer Theologie im Hier und Jetzt*, ed. Christian Wehde and Simon Werner (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016).

⁶⁷⁷ Cf. 'Die Autoren: André Heinze', *Theologisches Gespräch*, no. Beiheft 5 (2003): 65.

Freikirchen),⁶⁷⁸ and while being at the seminary in Elstal he supported spiritual care for pastors, especially during their career entry process.

André Heinze was also involved in ecumenical dialogue and encouraged the ecumenical participation of his church. He himself participated in several ecumenical symposiums at the Catholic Johann-Adam-Möhlner institute, also involving the topic of Baptism. As prorector of the Baptist seminary in Elstal he emphasised the role of the seminary in presenting the theology and practice of the free churches in the ecumenical dialogue, also by actively participating in ecumenical exchanges with the Protestant state churches (EKD), the Catholic Church, and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE).⁶⁷⁹

Heinze's relationship to his church (the BEFG) can be characterised as devoted critical attitude ('zugewandt kritische Haltung'), as he was always faithful to his church and the Baptist heritage in practice and theology but when he realised that the Christian message was hindered through fear or inflexibility, he was also able to formulate the necessary criticism. As Heinze died early many of his major projects remain unfinished (for example an extensive analysis of the use of Scripture in the history of the German Baptist churches), but still his contributions are acknowledged and especially his book on Baptism, *Taufe und Gemeinde*, is regarded as a reference to understand the German Baptists view of Baptism.⁶⁸⁰

6.1 Baptism in the Thought of Heinze

Baptism was an important part of Heinze's theological work, and he was constantly confronted with the question about the relation of believer's Baptism and church membership. He published a monograph on Baptism, *Taufe und Gemeinde* (TuG), wrote several practical contributions regarding the membership discussion in the Baptist union (BEFG), published articles on Baptism, contributed to Baptism instruction material, and also preached at Baptisms as part of his pastoral work. Interestingly, there is hardly any reference to Baptism in Heinze's works that are not concerned with the topic of Baptism. Heinze's view of Baptism is described most comprehensive in *Taufe und Gemeinde*, which, therefore, will be the focus of this investigation,⁶⁸¹ but there are also important developments observable in other works that must be considered.

⁶⁷⁸ Cf. 'Der Theologische Grundkurs – ein geschichtlicher Abriss', Theologischer Grundkurs der Vereinigung Evangelischer Freikirchen, accessed 6 October 2016, <http://www.thgk.de/infos4.htm>.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. Rektorat des Theologischen Seminars Elstal, 'Forschungsbericht 2007', 9–10.

⁶⁸⁰ Cf. Swarat, *Texte*, 6–7.

⁶⁸¹ In this chapter page references in brackets are referring to TuG.

6.1.1 Main Focus: Baptism in 'Taufe und Gemeinde'

The book *Taufe und Gemeinde* focuses on the meaning of Baptism and Heinze's approach is mainly exegetical and systematical. In a general introduction chapter Heinze begins with some practical and ecumenical considerations and states his main purpose as helping the reader to find an answer to the 'question about the meaning of Baptism' (7). The meaning of Baptism then is discussed by Heinze in three main chapters, each focusing on a different aspect: first in an exegetical chapter Heinze examines all the major scriptural passages on Baptism, then in a historical chapter he shows the main issues that became manifest over the course of history in the discussion about the meaning of Baptism and how they are represented by contemporary denominations, and finally in a systematic chapter he develops the meaning of Baptism for the church today where he also returns to practical questions. The general outline of the book resembles Heinze's four steps of theological work, which are the perception of actual topics, the study of Scripture, the study of historical answers including their evaluation in the light of Scripture and the actual situation, and, finally, the formulation of answers.⁶⁸² Along the way, Heinze also adds some excursuses, describing special questions that often appear in the contemporary discussion about Baptism, such as infant Baptism or the relationship of water and spirit Baptism. He also adds some insertions that give background knowledge about scriptural, historical, or actual topics, such as the church in Corinth, the struggle of the Anabaptist movement in the Reformation, or the ecumenical challenge of the Baptist churches. The excursuses and insertions both show that Heinze does not lose focus of the actual discussion about Baptism and wants to assist the reader to understand some important aspects and details.

The exegetical chapter, 'II. Die Taufe im Neuen Testament,' is most extensive and divided into several subchapters. In a first subchapter Heinze examines the actual words of Jesus regarding Baptism (11), then in the following two subchapters he shows that Baptism was for the first Christians a natural practice (13) that was rooted in the baptism of John the Baptist (16), and while being similar in its meaning of repentance and forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Spirit clearly distinguishes Christian Baptism from John. The massive core subchapter, however, is an examination of Paul's understanding of the meaning of Baptism (34), described by Romans 6:1-14 as existence changing event, by Galatians 3:26-28 as realisation of the in faith already accepted gift of God, and by 1

⁶⁸² André Heinze, 'Glauben entdecken, verstehen und verkündigen. Geistliches Wachstum in theologischer Ausbildung', *Die Gemeinde* 1998, no. 12 (1998): 38.

Corinthians 12:13 as incorporation into the body of Christ, which is the church. The first two passages are seen by Heinze as God's offer of a new foundation for the individual's life, and the third passage outlines the meaning of Baptism for the congregation and its communal life. In the Pauline subchapter we also find an excursus on infant Baptism, where Heinze concedes that it might have been practised at NT times, but only due to the social structures of this time and without a spiritual or theological basis. The fundamental and only theologically established practice in the NT, however, is for Heinze the Baptism of responsible believers. Another excursus regarding water and spirit baptism is also inserted in the Pauline subchapter, where Heinze concludes that the NT testifies the special work of the Holy Spirit but does not teach a special baptism with the Holy Spirit separated from the foundational change of existence in Baptism. After the Pauline main subchapter, Heinze discusses additional statements on Baptism in the NT (73) and then closes with scriptural conclusions about Baptism. The conclusions represent the theological core of Heinze's baptismal view (89-93) and are: 1) the meaning of John's baptism is different from Christian Baptism, as the former was preparation, but Baptism is realisation of the new life and relates to the gift of the Holy Spirit. 2) The practice of Baptism is not only outward but is a spiritual event in which the baptised person receives a new foundation for life and participates in the reality of Christ's resurrection. 3) Generally, the NT only knows Baptism of believers, whereas Baptism is a step of faith in which the recipient delivers himself to God and accepts the grace of God. Baptism without faith, therefore, is unimaginable as well as faith that does not ask for Baptism. 4) Baptism is not necessary for salvation as the gift of God's grace is not bound to the practice of Baptism but to faith. Baptism, however, is an affirmation of the grace of God to the believer. 5) In Baptism God establishes the foundation of the new life of the believer, it has lifechanging and life determining meaning for the receiver. 6) Baptism is God's work and man is only recipient but must allow God's initiative. Baptism, therefore, is described by Heinze as 'double confession:' a confession of grace on God's side and a confession of faith on man's side. 7) Baptism is unrepeatable as the participation in Christ's new life is a gift of God's grace and cannot be bound to human piety or a level of development. 8) In Baptism, the Holy Spirit is given, in whom the baptised person receives the new foundation for his or her life. 9) Baptism moves the believer from his old life and into the body of Christ, which is the congregation. The congregation is not only a sociological reality, but primarily a spiritual gift for the believer, which for Heinze represents the climax of NT baptismal teaching.

After the massive exegetical chapter and its conclusions, in the historical chapter ‘III. Die Entwicklung der Taufe in der Geschichte der Kirche,’ Heinze describes the development of baptismal understandings in church history. He focuses on the Early Church with its development of sacramentalism and infant Baptism (95), on the Reformation, where in the Anabaptist movement and Zwingli the view of Baptism as mere symbol of human confession emerged and describes the views of Luther and Calvin as two middle positions between sacramentalism and a mere symbolic understanding (102). Finally, Heinze shows how these 4 main lines of baptismal understanding are still alive in the contemporary denominations in Germany (113), exemplified by the views of the Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, and free evangelical churches (FeG). The Baptist churches are described as influenced by both the Anabaptists and the Reformed tradition, and, therefore, their understanding of the meaning of Baptism varies between the two extremes of Baptism as mere confession of faith, and Baptism as sign or symbol for God’s work. In general, Heinze observes that each denomination differently weights the three main factors of Baptism: the work of God, the function of the church, and the importance of individual faith.

In the systematic chapter, ‘IV. Die Taufe, der Christ und die Gemeinde,’ Heinze addresses the question about an adequate understanding of the meaning and practice of Baptism in the contemporary church. In a first step he discusses the meaning of Baptism for the individual believer (123), especially emphasising God’s active role in Baptism, which, however, also requires the openness of man as ‘God does not force.’ For Heinze, God is not only able to work in Baptism, but also wants to work in Baptism, which however does not mean he is forced to work because of a special practice. Because of this active work of God, which gives the life of the recipient a new foundation, Baptism must only be practised if the recipient is open for this gift of God, and infant Baptism, therefore, must be rejected. Heinze, therefore, regards Baptism as the third step in the Christian life, preceded by the address of God in the preaching of the Gospel and man’s acceptance in faith, a view Heinze adjusted later. Because of the active role of God in Baptism it is possible to speak of Baptism as a sacrament, but it is also possible to see a human confession in it, which is expressed by Heinze in the term double confession (*doppeltes Bekenntnis*). The consequences of Baptism are described by Heinze as partaking in the resurrection life of Christ that has effect not only regarding the past, but also for the present and the future, which is also the reason for its unrepeatability. Regarding the necessity for salvation, Heinze clearly states that it is only faith that saves, and that Baptism is only an addition,

an anchor point, to give assurance of the new foundation of life. Heinze also emphasises that Baptism becomes the starting point of a life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which is a growth process, and therefore the term regeneration regarding Baptism should only be used cautiously.

In a second subchapter Heinze then discusses the meaning of Baptism for the congregation, which is the living space of the baptised persons (131). As double confession of God and man, Baptism marks the beginning of a Christian life, and, therefore, it is the conviction of all Christian churches that Baptism is the prerequisite to become a member of a church or congregation. As Baptism provides the foundation of the new common life of the congregation it is more than an act of admittance into membership, as the membership in the worldly organisation is only a reflection of the spiritual membership in the body of Christ. Here Heinze also discusses the ecumenical problem of baptismal recognition among different denominations, which presents a special problem in the Baptist churches as infant Baptism is not accepted as biblical baptismal practice.

In a last subchapter Heinze examines the practice of Baptism in Baptist congregations (137). He criticises the way Baptism in the past often was regarded as mere sign of a believer's confession and an act of obedience. This led to the reduction of the meaning of Baptism to the beginning of Christian life only and consequently the disappearance of Baptism from the life of the church and a general devaluation. Heinze urges, therefore, that Baptism should be a regular topic in preaching and teaching. Regarding the Baptism of children Heinze recommends waiting with Baptism until after adolescence to avoid unnecessary insecurity regarding its validity, but for adults he teaches that Baptism does not require a fully developed faith and should not be delayed. In a final section Heinze addresses the actual practice of Baptism in the congregation (139), which should be preceded and accompanied by baptismal instruction. The baptismal service itself should include the recipient's confession of faith, a sermon that explains the meaning of Baptism to the recipient and the congregation, and the actual Baptism. Regarding the mode of Baptism, Heinze explains that full immersion provides a strong symbol and experience (Romans 6), however, he also emphasises that Baptism gets its effectiveness only through the work of God and the faith of the recipient. The place of Baptism, the person who administers it, and the words used in Baptism, therefore, are not of special interest. As a final word Heinze reminds that the meaning of Baptism exceeds the baptismal service and especially in times of temptation and crisis can be used as a reminder of God's promise.

6.1.2 *Baptism in other Works*

During the time of Heinze's theological work the discussion about the connection of believer's Baptism and membership was a major issue in the German Baptist union (BEFG).⁶⁸³ This discussion is in the background of many of Heinze's baptismal works and he also addressed it directly with several practical contributions that provide interesting insight into the development of his baptismal theology.

In his earliest work on Baptism, his internship thesis,⁶⁸⁴ Heinze analyses the general practice of allowing membership in Baptist churches only after Baptism on the personal confession of a believer. Heinze sees this practice as intimately connected to the Protestant free church tradition, where the constituting element of membership is the personal faith of its members. This personal faith needs a historical concretisation, which Baptist churches see in the Baptism on the personal confession of faith, and, therefore, it might be better to speak of confession Baptism instead of believer's Baptism.⁶⁸⁵ Heinze concludes that the practice of confession Baptism is for Baptist churches a criterion of ecclesiological self-understanding that cannot be given up. He also, however, concedes that there is the theoretical possibility to disconnect the act of confession from Baptism, which would require to investigate the meaning of the baptismal understanding of the NT. This theoretical possibility reappears as a concrete demand in Heinze's presentation about Baptism and membership at the *Bundeskonzferenz* of the BEFG in 1997, republished in 1999,⁶⁸⁶ where he states that the seemingly natural connection of confession Baptism and membership in Baptist churches must be reconsidered in the light of recent challenges originating from church life, ecumenism, and postmodern thought. As starting point of reconsideration Heinze proposes a congregation-oriented approach, which means to analyse the understanding of church in the NT and the self-understanding of contemporary congregations, with the purpose to understand the role of Baptism for the church. Heinze then identifies that Baptism is foundational for the spiritual understanding of church as

⁶⁸³ The decades long discussion among the German Baptists about the question whether Christians from other denominations, who have been baptised as infants and want to become members in Baptist congregations, need to receive believer's Baptism or not. The topic was especially discussed on the BEFG conference in 1997 and settled by a declaration in 1999 which affirms the necessity of believer's Baptism. For an introduction in the discussion until 1997 see Günter Balders, ed., *Textbuch Taufe und Gemeindegliedschaft* (Kassel: Oncken, 1997), 3–6. Although the discussion went on and in a new statement of the BEFG leadership in 2007 new options of membership have been introduced, the problem persists. Cf. Thomas Illg, 'Kindertaufe und Gemeindegliedschaft – Möglichkeiten der Verständigung. Vikariatsarbeit' (BEFG, 2015).

⁶⁸⁴ André Heinze, 'Probleme mit der Offenheit? Eine Baptistengemeinde und ihre "Freunde." Vikariatsarbeit' (BEFG, 1995).

⁶⁸⁵ Similarly, already expressed by the German Baptist Hans Luckey in 1956. Swarat, *Texte*, 11.

⁶⁸⁶ André Heinze, 'Taufe und Mitgliedschaft. Ein Impulsreferat', *ZThG*, no. 4 (1999): 208–22.

fellowship of believers and body of Christ, as in Baptism God incorporates the believer into the church and confirms this fellowship (seen in 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). Heinze admits that the NT stresses God's commitment (*Bekennnis*) to the believer, while the Baptist movement's emphasis of Baptism as a believer's subjective confession of faith is not expressed clearly in the NT, and in a sense even contradicts the importance placed on Baptism as spiritual foundation for the fellowship of Baptist congregations as it results in building membership on individual and momentary sensitivities. Heinze, therefore, encourages further discussion in the local congregations and he himself responded to his demand in 1998 by developing together with an elder of his own congregation a study material to guide congregations in discussing and developing their own position.⁶⁸⁷ The study material follows Heinze's congregation-oriented approach, and in the part about the NT meaning of Baptism we see for the first time the complete biblical core of Heinze's baptismal theology (Romans 6, Galatians 3, and 1 Corinthians 12) that is extensively described in *Taufe und Gemeinde*, and also the description of Baptism as double confession. In the final conclusion Heinze again affirms the importance of the connection of membership and believer's Baptism in Baptist congregations, as he sees in the double confession of God and the believer the basis of mutual trust in a congregation. Heinze, however, also concedes that this view depends on a certain understanding of church that cannot be discussed on a level of absolute truth as other denominations also might have other valid understandings of church.

In his last contribution regarding the Baptism and membership discussion, a presentation at a congress of Baptist pastors in 2009, Heinze brought his previous considerations to a conclusion and we see remarkable shifts in his thought, also admitted by Heinze himself.⁶⁸⁸ As a clear biblical model is missing and Scripture provides several perspectives on Baptism and its relation to church, every contemporary church must responsibly weight and relate the different perspectives to each other, and Heinze, therefore, criticises the Baptists reference to their own practice as 'the biblical baptismal practice.' According to Heinze, the practice that is described in the NT has no theological reason in the act itself and, therefore, is not necessarily what Baptism is theologically. Some Christians, therefore, understand the baptismal practice of the NT seen in Acts as mandatory and deduce theological substance from it, e.g. see Baptism as an act of confession. Other

⁶⁸⁷ Heinze and Wilms, *Gemeindemitgliedschaft (1998)*. In an email from 8 December 2016 the co-author Wilms explained to me that the theological content of the work was completely provided by Heinze.

⁶⁸⁸ André Heinze, 'Taufe und Mitgliedschaft. Referat auf dem Konvent der Thüringer Pastorenschaft, 24.02.09', 24 February 2009.

Christians do not necessarily bind the theological substance of Baptism to the early practice, and therefore, come to different conclusions about the meaning of Baptism and its relation to church (especially in relation to Romans 6). Heinze acknowledges the irresolvable relationship of faith and Baptism but sees the order not as fixed and concludes that infant Baptism is only unbiblical regarding its practice, not regarding its meaning, which is God's promise to the recipient, and infant Baptism should be acknowledged as real Baptism. He himself still would not baptise anyone who is not able to personally express a wish for Baptism, but he implies that he should not (re)baptise persons who received infant Baptism and desire another Baptism as adults. In comparison to his earlier works and practice this is a remarkable shift.⁶⁸⁹ The best approach, according to Heinze, therefore is to bind membership to Baptism, independent of its received form, but he also recommends thinking about forms of baptismal remembrance for members that have been baptised as infants.

Heinze also published a few articles on Baptism, which in most parts repeat the thoughts of *Taufe und Gemeinde*,⁶⁹⁰ with the exception of an article presented at an ecumenical symposium in 2004.⁶⁹¹ In the ecumenical setting Heinze objected that the fierce discussion about Baptism often hinders the common testimony of the Christian faith and acknowledged that the arguments for the baptismal understandings of the different denominations all refer to Scripture. In his presentation of the NT baptismal understanding he again follows the core Scripture passages seen in *Taufe und Gemeinde* and emphasises the parallel roles of faith and Baptism as initiating into the new historical existence as justified person: faith initiates into a new vertical reality concerning the relationship to God, while Baptism initiates into a new horizontal reality concerning the historical existence and the relationship to the world. As a believer experiences in the horizontal initiation the new vertical reality, the vertical initiation must precede the horizontal initiation, which according to Heinze is indispensable in the light of the NT testimonies. But then Heinze also questions whether in a life that developed in an environment shaped by the Spirit, the vertical and horizontal initiations must necessarily be constrained to a fixed

⁶⁸⁹ In an email from 9 December 2016 Eberhard Wilms explained that Heinze also baptised persons who previously received infant Baptism.

⁶⁹⁰ Cf. André Heinze, 'Im Land der Verheißung. Mit der Taufe knüpfen die Christen an Johannes den Täufer an', *Evangelische Zeitung*, no. 6 (13 February 2011): 7; André Heinze, 'Was geschieht bei der Taufe?', in *Baptismus*, by Kollegium des Theologischen Seminars Elstal, vol. 1, Elstaler Impulse (Wustermark: Theologisches Seminar Elstal, 2013), 11–13.

⁶⁹¹ André Heinze, 'Glaube und Taufe als Initiation. Exegetische Anmerkungen aus baptistischer Sicht', in *Glaube und Taufe in freikirchlicher und römisch-katholischer Sicht*, by Walter Klaiber and Wolfgang Thönissen (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2005), 49–70.

historical sequence. While Heinze's approach of two initiations is questionable, as it in a sense distinguishes different effects of Baptism and faith, a thought that also does not reappear in later works, his practical conclusion is significant. Here Heinze states the theoretical possibility of accepting persons as members in Baptist congregations who acknowledge their infant Baptism, combined with a call to develop forms of baptismal remembrance, a theoretical possibility we have seen as concrete suggestion in the 2009 presentation.

Finally, Heinze also fulfilled his demand for baptismal instruction through preaching and teaching (137), seen in contributions to baptismal instruction material,⁶⁹² a preaching series on the Baptist heritage,⁶⁹³ and several sermons for Baptisms Heinze administered himself.⁶⁹⁴ These examples of how Heinze transferred his baptismal theology into practical instruction for the church also clearly show the developments in his understanding of Baptism. Especially the understanding of Baptism as confession of faith or double confession is disappearing in the later works, and we see a growing emphasis on the active role of God who wants to give a new foundation for life through faith and Baptism, while man rather passively only needs to let himself fall into God's hand. This development then also allowed for Heinze's final acceptance of infant Baptism and is also interesting in the light of his later theological reflections about his medical condition, where he emphasises the passivity of man and the necessity to be a recipient of God's life and presence.⁶⁹⁵

6.2 Use of Scripture

As Heinze's view of Baptism is best and most extensively described in *Taufe und Gemeinde*, this book will be the foundation for the detailed examination in the following sections, beginning with the use of Scripture.

⁶⁹² André Heinze, 'Einleitende Worte zur Taufe und Tauffragen', in *Taufe erleben - Leiterheft*, ed. Hinrich Schmidt, 2nd ed. (Kassel: Oncken, 2006), 28. Originally published in 2002. André Heinze, 'Was geschieht in der Taufe?', in *Taufe - Auf den Punkt gebracht. Ein Taufkurs*, ed. Volkmar Hamp (Kassel: Oncken, 2016), 27–39. Heinze already contributed the chapter in 2011, which therefore is his last work on Baptism.

⁶⁹³ André Heinze, 'Predigt Apg 8:26-39 (Predigtreihe Baptismus 1: Bibel und Taufe)', 30 January 2000.

⁶⁹⁴ André Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Mt 28:18-20' (EFG Neuhofen, 30 August 1998); André Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Joh 3:1-8' (EFG Ludwigshafen, 28 May 2000); André Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Off 21:1-8' (EFG Ludwigshafen, 10 September 2000); André Heinze, 'Taufpredigt 2Kor 5:17' (EFG Ludwigshafen, 10 June 2001); André Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Mk 16:16' (EFG Ludwigshafen, 2 September 2001); André Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Off 21:1-8' (EFG Falkensee, 4 June 2003); André Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Phil 2:4-7' (EFG Falkensee, 21 December 2009).

⁶⁹⁵ Cf. EST 141–42, 145, 257–60.

6.2.1 Selection, Distribution and Function of Scripture References

Heinze's selection of Scripture references shows that he generally places a strong emphasis on Pauline baptismal theology, with nearly one half of the references originating from the Pauline epistles (cf. Figure 6.1). References to the Gospels are represented by about one quarter, references to Acts by about one fifth, while the OT and the general epistles (including Hebrews and Revelation) are each represented by 4-6%.

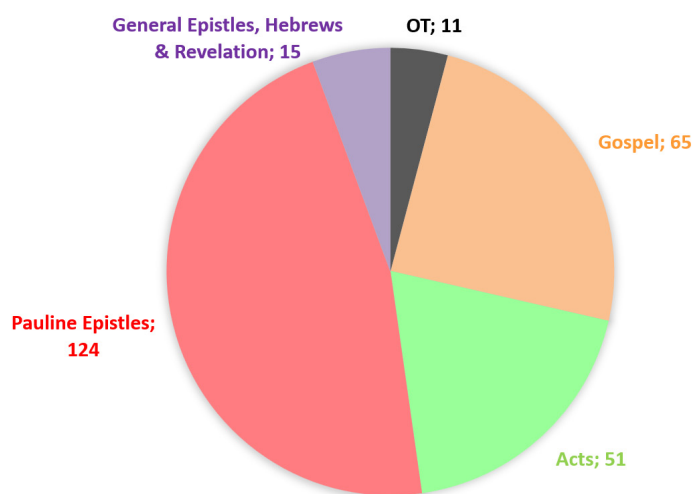


Figure 6.1 Selection of Scripture references (Heinze, TuG)

The strong emphasis on Pauline theology is also visible in the distribution of the Scripture references in the book (cf. Figure 6.2), with Pauline references building the core of the exegetical chapter with the main passages Romans 6:1-14, Galatians 3:26-28, and 1 Corinthians 12:13. Also in the conclusions from Scripture and in the systematic chapter there is a clear focus on Pauline passages. This is not surprising, as according to Heinze, the meaning of Baptism becomes especially manifest in Paul's thought (15).

The Gospel references are mainly used by Heinze to describe the origins of Baptism in the words of Jesus and in John's Baptism. The references to Acts are not discussed in a separate section about Acts, but appear in connection with the practice of Baptism in other sections, for example in showing that Baptism was natural for the first Christians, that there was a not explained connection between coming to faith in Christ and being baptised, the original baptism formula, household Baptisms, the connection of Baptism and laying of hands, and the connection of Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Especially the Spirit baptism excursus shows that Heinze sees Acts mainly as descriptive regarding baptismal practice and is not in favour of deducing theological meaning from it.

The references to the general epistles are especially significant for Heinze as Hebrews 6 and 1 Peter 3 provide passages that further emphasise the life changing meaning of Baptism and show that the early Christians saw a self-obligation in Baptism. The OT references appear in different places and are used to further clarify NT passages, e.g. in the context of John's Baptism, regarding the image of putting on new clothes, or in the infant Baptism excursus to evaluate the connection of Baptism and circumcision.

Generally, Heinze thoroughly uses Scripture throughout the whole book, except for the historical chapter. While Heinze occasionally refers to Scripture to describe and evaluate developments of the Early Church, in the subsequent discussion of the Reformation and contemporary positions he does not use Scripture at all. This is understandable in the light of the historical character of the chapter, however, given his strong biblical orientation and the example he sets in the Early Church discussion, we would expect him to also relate the other developments to Scripture.

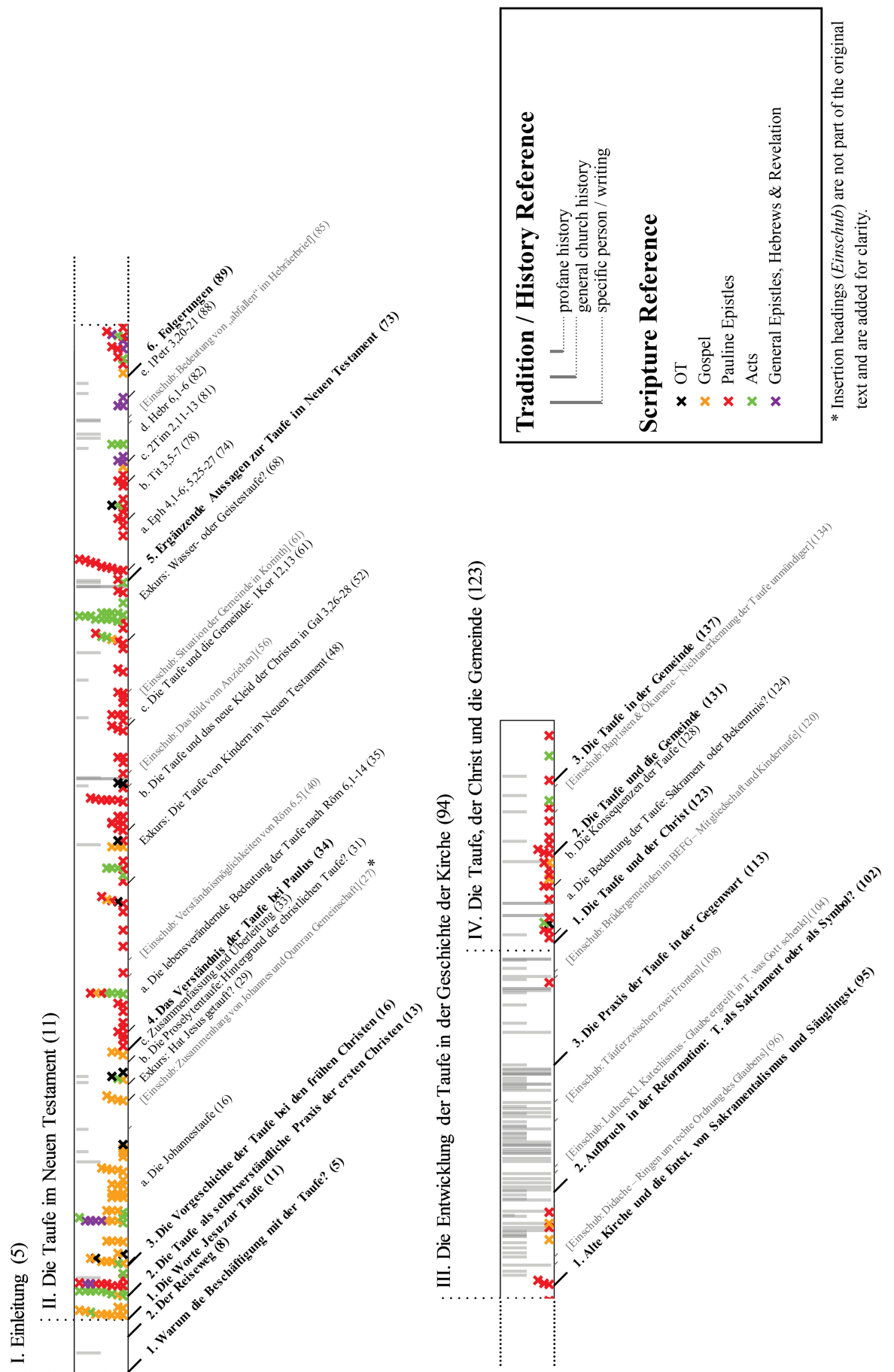


Figure 6.2 Distribution and category of Scripture references (Heinze, TuG)

6.2.2 *The Special Nature of Scriptural Statements on Baptism*

Heinze freely acknowledges the problem of missing and unclear statements about Baptism in the NT. Heinze observes that only few passages of the NT speak about Baptism (11), that in the words of Jesus no explanation why Baptism is important or what happens in Baptism is given (12), and that although Baptism was a natural practice for the first Christians, the reasons are not given (15). Especially what happens in and through Baptism is hardly mentioned, and the first Christians are only reminded about Baptism's meaning and effect in certain situations (34). Heinze is convinced that the first Christians heard additional preaching about the meaning of Baptism, but that these sermons, unfortunately, are not transmitted in Scripture (35). Even Romans 6, which according to Heinze is the closest to an explanation about the meaning of Baptism (35), does not further explain how the connection with Christ's death and resurrection can or must happen (46). Furthermore, the NT does not say anything about infant Baptism, whereas the household Baptisms of Acts provide neither supporting nor neglecting information (51). The only transmitted practice, therefore, is the Baptism of responsible believers (52), which however, does not necessarily mean that this practice reflects everything that Baptism theologically is.⁶⁹⁶

Regarding the ambiguous and diverse statements Heinze is more decisive and although he mentions other interpretations, he generally resolves and clarifies their relationship to Baptism. Heinze is convinced that Jesus' words about his own baptism and the baptism of John have no direct relation to Christian Baptism (11), and also that the blessing of the children is only a later attribution to Baptism that originally had no relationship to the practice (51). In the rebirth through water and Spirit (John 3:5) Heinze sees a direct link to Baptism although it is not explicitly mentioned (12). For circumcision, however, Heinze does not see any relationship to Baptism as the meaning in Colossians 2 is spiritually reinterpreted as circumcision of one's life, which points to Christ's death (46). Also, for the diverse statements about the meaning of Baptism Heinze is very decisive and sees the meaning of Baptism primarily in Romans 6 as life changing. Other meanings like the giving of the Spirit, the cleansing from sin, and the incorporation in the church are merely seen as consequences of this basic change of existence, however, not without seeing the ecclesiological aspect as climax.

⁶⁹⁶ Cf. Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 3.

6.2.3 *The Complexity of NT Baptismal Theology*

Heinze acknowledges the complexity of baptismal theology in the NT, stating that no NT writing provides the one NT teaching about Baptism (11). As the words of Jesus did not provide much information about the meaning of Baptism, the first Christians were challenged to understand the meaning of Baptism (13), which naturally led to different emphases. The different emphases in Romans 6 and Colossians 2 regarding the connection of Baptism and resurrection, for example, are seen by Heinze as addressing the different situations of the readers (47). Heinze also observes various developments in NT baptismal theology, such as the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12) that only later in Ephesians 4 is explicitly developed into this meaning (65),⁶⁹⁷ or Hebrews as an example for further developed baptismal practise that already included laying of hands and prayer for blessing (84), or an early stage distinguishing between Baptism and the gift of the Spirit (Acts), which soon was replaced by the conviction that in Baptism the Holy Spirit is received (Romans 6-8).⁶⁹⁸ Heinze, therefore, concludes that the baptismal theology of the NT is diverse, but that certain lines are in common,⁶⁹⁹ which he especially sees in Pauline baptismal theology based on Romans 6 (52).

6.2.4 *Scriptural Authority and Historical Criticism*

For Heinze the normative authority for baptismal understanding is not found in historically developed or contemporary understandings and practices, but in the origin of the Christian faith. This origin of Christian faith is found by Heinze in the testimonies of the first Christians about Baptism, contained in the writings of the NT. The NT, therefore, is the decisive authority (8, 13).

Heinze, however, also embraces and encourages the use of the historical-critical method,⁷⁰⁰ which is seen throughout the exegetical chapter of *Taufe und Gemeinde*. He distinguishes, for example, between the original words of Jesus and the testimony of the first Christians (13).⁷⁰¹ He also acknowledges that the words of Jesus regarding Baptism (Matthew 28, Mark 16, John 3) might not be original words, but already reflect the practice and understanding of the early Christian churches (12). Heinze also acknowledges

⁶⁹⁷ Cf. also Heinze, 'Initiation', 64.

⁶⁹⁸ Heinze, 'Verheißung'.

⁶⁹⁹ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 10.

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. André Heinze, 'Verantwortung vor der Schrift in der Gegenwart', *Theologisches Gespräch* 4, no. 33 (2009): 173–76; Präsidium des BEFG, *Umgang*, 62–64.

⁷⁰¹ Heinze sees a special significance of the words of Jesus, which were memorised and transmitted by his followers and later compiled by the Gospel writers. Cf. André Heinze, 'Neues Testament - 2. Lehrbrief. Das Zeugnis von der Auferstehung des Gekreuzigten' (Theologischer Grundkurs der Vereinigung Evangelischer Freikirchen in Deutschland, 1998), 2.

that the distinction of original Pauline writings and deuter-Pauline writings probably is correct, but as their content is clearly connected to Paul while also showing significant developments, it is not clear whether these developments are considerations of Paul himself or of his pupils. Heinze, therefore, prefers to speak about Pauline writings instead of Paul's writings (54). The acknowledgement of critical views regarding NT authorship is also seen explicitly in the text, as Heinze regarding Romans, Galatians, and 1 Corinthians talks about what Paul wrote and said, but regarding Ephesians, Titus, 2 Timothy, Hebrews, and 1 Peter always avoids specifying the name of the author and either uses passive voice or talks about the author, the writer, or the text. Additionally, not all Pauline letters are presented under the heading 'Paul's understanding of Baptism,' but some are arranged under additional baptismal statements.

Heinze is in his use and acknowledgement of historical-critical exegesis in line with the newer German Baptist theology that acknowledges the historical character of Scripture as 'God's word in human mouth'⁷⁰² and, therefore, explicitly commends the use of scientific methods to study Scripture, at least on the level of the Baptist union (BEFG).⁷⁰³ The question is how Heinze can encourage historical criticism while still insisting on Scripture as the absolute norm. The key is seen in an emphasis of the whole message of Scripture as testimony of the first Christians and in the integration of the historical-critical method into a broader hermeneutical framework. The authority of Scripture is for Heinze not found in the literal sense of single statements, but in the overall testimony of Scripture.⁷⁰⁴ The originality of Jesus' baptismal statements, therefore, is not essential as they still reflect the first Christians' understanding of the message of Christ, and the Pauline writings as well reflect Paul's message, no matter who the actual author was.⁷⁰⁵ Heinze, therefore, in both cases, can state that the discussion of the authorship theories does not contribute to the NT understanding of Baptism (12, 54). Heinze additionally urges to integrate the historical-critical method in the hermeneutical framework of the Baptist congregations, as he does not see the method harming the authority of Scripture but returning

⁷⁰² RvG 1:6.

⁷⁰³ Recommended by the *Bundesleitung* of the BEFG, see Uwe Swarat, 'Das Schriftverständnis im Baptismus', *Theologisches Gespräch* 2, no. 22 (1998): 54.

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. Heinze, 'Verantwortung', 177–78.

⁷⁰⁵ Similarly found in André Heinze, 'Der Bund sind wir! Neutestamentliche Beobachtungen über das Für- und Miteinander von Gemeinden in einem Gemeindebund', *Theologisches Gespräch*, no. Beiheft 2 (2001): 55. Regarding the authorship of the Johannine writings Heinze similarly proposes to speak of a Johannine school to avoid the discussion about an individual author while expressing the general relatedness to John's message. André Heinze, 'Dogmatik oder Exegese? Die Frage nach der Stellung der Apokalypse zu den johanneischen Schriften', in *Gemeinschaft am Evangelium: Festschrift für Wiard Popkes zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Edwin Brandt (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1996), 74.

authority to Scripture. He observes that in Baptist congregations often a tradition of understanding and interpreting Scripture is found, that only could be questioned by using the historical-critical method that enables Scripture to criticise traditional understandings and to speak to the actual situation.⁷⁰⁶ Integrated in such a hermeneutical framework, therefore, the historical-critical method can re-establish the authority of Scripture by questioning traditional interpretations, while also being embedded in the community of believers and thus controlled by what Heinze calls ‘the authority of consent,’ as in Baptist churches the whole community seeks corporate interpretation of Scripture.⁷⁰⁷

6.3 Use of Literature

Heinze’s references to literature in his baptismal writings are rather sparse, but at least he adds a three-page section with some literature recommendations at the end of *Taufe und Gemeinde* (142-144).

6.3.1 Selection, Distribution and Function of Literature References

Heinze’s use of literature in *Taufe und Gemeinde* is rather disappointing. In the whole book, apart from the literature recommendations, there are only 8 references to 4 different works. There is only one reference to an exegetical-historical work in the exegetical chapter, whereas only the author is given, while the remaining 7 references are quotations from practical works, used to describe the baptismal views of contemporary denominations. As the practical works used are the actual catechisms of the Catholic and Lutheran churches and a theological position paper of the Methodist church, we see that Heinze follows the good ecumenical practice of letting the denominations speak for their positions, however, without attributing any qualities of tradition or teaching authority to these works.

It is remarkable that Heinze’s use of literature references is so sparse as he claims the importance of the consideration of exegetical research for the study of the Bible.⁷⁰⁸ On closer examination, however, it becomes manifest that Heinze does use literature, but does not reference it. Especially in the exegetical chapter phrases such as ‘exegetes draw to attention’ (25), ‘the repeatedly written assertion’ (28), ‘in the NT research’ (54), or

⁷⁰⁶ Cf. André Heinze, ‘Die Bedeutung der Heiligen Schrift im deutschen Baptismus. Grundlegende Beobachtungen’, in *Die Bibel im Leben der Kirche* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2007), 60–68.

⁷⁰⁷ Cf. EST 236; Präsidium des BEFG, *Umgang*, 63–65.

⁷⁰⁸ Cf. André Heinze, ‘Die Bibel in der Mitte der Gemeinde’, in *So! Oder auch anders?: Beiträge aus dem BEFG zum Umgang mit der Bibel*, ed. Präsidium des BEFG (Kassel: Oncken, 2008), 61.

‘much discussions among NT researchers’ (77) indicate that Heinze deals with relevant literature (cf. Figure 6.3).

The reason for the missing references might be that the book *Taufe und Gemeinde*, although not shallow in content, was not primarily targeted to an academic audience, but to Baptist congregations and their members. For this reason the references might have been omitted in the print version, however, also the manuscript does not provide additional references.⁷⁰⁹ As the book was preceded by the practical contributions to the Baptism and membership discussion, Heinze certainly used to some extent already prepared material that did not have many literature references and as the target group did not necessarily require it, he also might not have added them to the book. The missing references, therefore, although clearly indicated at some places might exemplify the general reluctance against exegetical experts and suspicion against any authorities besides Scripture in the Baptist movement,⁷¹⁰ which makes it acceptable to mention positions of the exegetical discussion, while it is not relevant who represented them. The missing references certainly do not indicate a general academic weakness on Heinze’s side, as other writings published in academic context provide rather comprehensive and clear references.⁷¹¹

As most of Heinze’s baptismal writings are with a very practical focus it is not surprising they also do not contain many literature references. Only the exegetical part of the article *Glaube und Taufe als Initiation*, which resembles the main exegetical points of *Taufe und Gemeinde*, supplements some of the missing literature references.⁷¹² The references given in the article show that Heinze equally uses Catholic and Protestant exegetes to support his argument, and only one time refers to a Baptist theologian. Heinze’s work on Baptism, therefore, also shows the blurring denominational boundaries in biblical exegesis, as results from different denominations are recognised and used.⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁹ Explained by Christian Wehde in an email from 19 October 2016.

⁷¹⁰ Cf. EST 238.

⁷¹¹ Cf. Heinze’s extensive use of literature in André Heinze, ‘Herausforderung Theologie. Beobachtungen am 3. Johannesbrief und Überlegungen für die Gegenwart’, *Theologisches Gespräch* 3, no. 27 (2003): 91–103; or in Heinze, ‘Verantwortung’.

⁷¹² Heinze, ‘Initiation’, 50, 54–55, 57–58.

⁷¹³ Similarly, clearly manifest in Heinze’s diploma thesis and doctoral dissertation, André Heinze, ‘Ekklesiologie bei Paulus und Johannes’ (1990); Heinze, *Johannesapokalypse*.

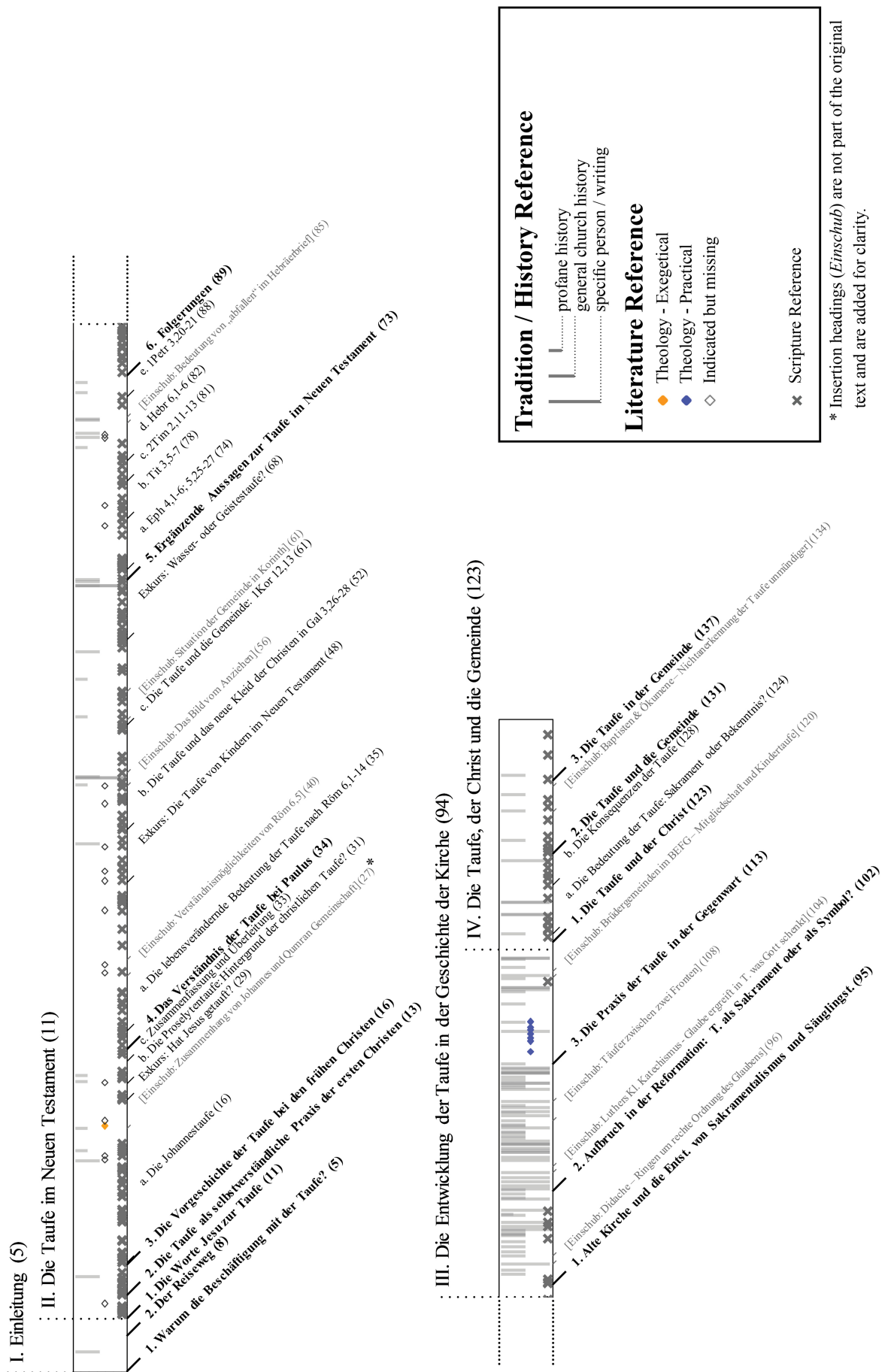


Figure 6.3 Distribution and category of literature references (Heinze, TuG)

6.3.2 Selection of Literature Recommendations

At the end of the book Heinze gives recommendations of mostly recent literature where we can see a strong focus on practical works originating from various denominations (cf. Figure 6.4). Additionally, Heinze recommends some exegetical and systematical works, both including Baptist works, whereas the systematic works are only of Baptist and Methodist origin. The recommended historical works are exclusively from Protestant state church authors, testifying the thorough historical work that has been done by the Protestant authors in the infant Baptism discussion. Interestingly no ecumenical works are used or recommended by Heinze.

A curious fact is the presence of several Methodist works. The reason might be found in Heinze's close cooperation with Methodist colleagues in the theological education program for lay people, and also in the traditionally relatively close cooperation of the Baptist and Methodist free churches in the *Vereinigung Evangelikaler Freikirchen* (VEF), that originally consisted of the Baptist union (BEFG), the Methodists, and the *Bund Evangelisch Freikirchlicher Gemeinden* (FeG).⁷¹⁴ This might also explain Heinze's selection of these denominations in the presentation of the baptismal positions of contemporary German denominations.

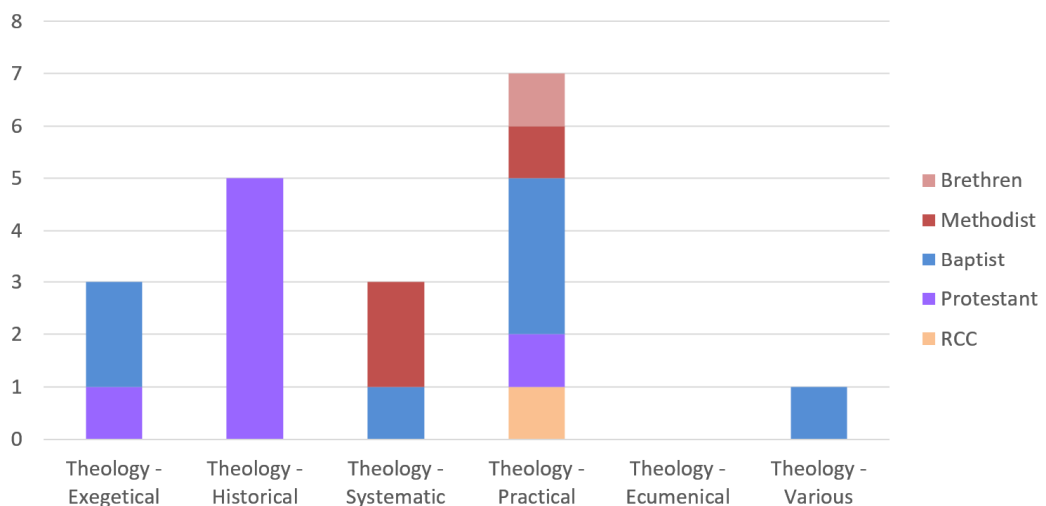


Figure 6.4 Category, number and origin of recommended literature (Heinze, TuG)

⁷¹⁴ Cf. Erich Geldbach, *Freikirchen: Erbe, Gestalt und Wirkung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 327.

6.4 Explicit Use of Tradition and Church History

To see how Heinze uses tradition and church history to develop his view of Baptism we first collect all explicit references to tradition, church history, and profane history, and we examine the general features of selection and usage. Secondly, we examine the distribution of the references in the text, and how they are used and evaluated.

6.4.1 Selection of References to Tradition and Church History

Heinze uses many references to tradition, church history and history throughout the whole book, whereas about one half are general references to events or developments of church history (cf. Figure 6.5). References to profane history are represented by about 10% and specific references to writings or authors of Christian tradition count 40%. It is noteworthy, however, that Heinze only has 5 actual quotations of Christian authors in the whole book, while 3 of them originate from Luther's catechisms (cf. Table 6.1). Also noteworthy is the fact that the thought of most Christian authors is stated generally without indicating the work or origin. We see in Heinze's work, therefore, a general appreciation of tradition and church history, but also a certain superficiality, which is especially manifest in the large percentage of general references to church history, in the missing indication of the actual works, and the few quotations. The reason for this superficiality again might be found in the general disregard of authorities in the Baptist movement, already observed regarding the literature references, which might render it satisfactory to just generally state developments and positions of tradition and history.

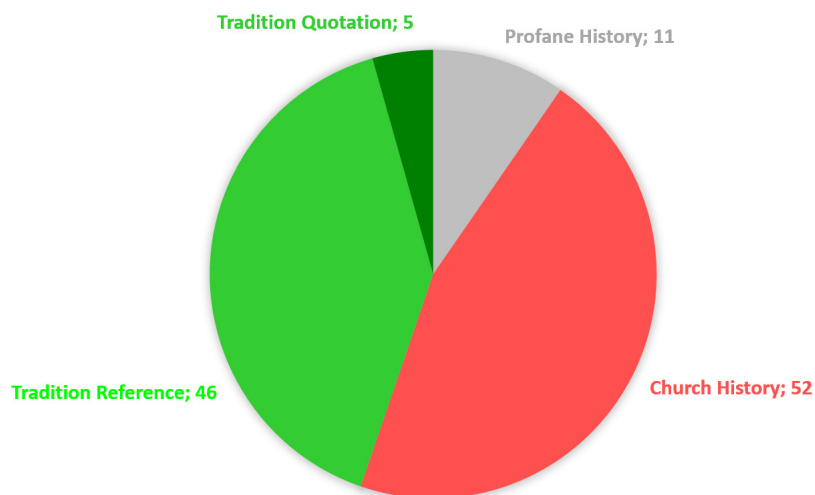


Figure 6.5 Type of tradition and church history references (Heinze, TuG)

The temporal distribution of the references to tradition and church history shows that for Heinze in regard to Baptism especially the periods of the Early Church and the Reformation are important (cf. Figure 6.6). For the Early Church, Heinze mainly focuses on Augustine's thought and the accompanying developments that led to the rise of infant Baptism as general practice. For the Reformation, there is a significant presence of the events that led to the emergence of the Anabaptism movement and theology, and also of the magisterial reformers Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, all of them to some extent criticising the baptismal practice of the Catholic Church. References to the Pre-apostolic, Apostolic and Medieval times are relatively few, with no reference to the Scholastics at all, as Heinze does not see any development in baptismal theology from Augustine to the Reformers. References to the modern time are also present, referring to the emergence of the Baptist movement and other German free churches, and to recent discussions in the German Baptist union.

In contrast to *Taufe und Gemeinde*, Heinze's other baptismal works hardly contain any references to early tradition and church history, but mainly refer to the Baptist confessional writing *Rechenschaft vom Glauben* and the inner-Baptist discussion about believer's Baptism and membership around the millennia. Except for the actual German Baptist confession writing, other confession writings seem not to have an important place in Heinze's thought, as he never refers to international Baptist confession writings, only once mentions the early German confession writing of 1847,⁷¹⁵ and only once the *Schleitheim Confession*, however, only regarding the Anabaptist's view of nonviolence.

⁷¹⁵ Cf. Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (1999)', 220.

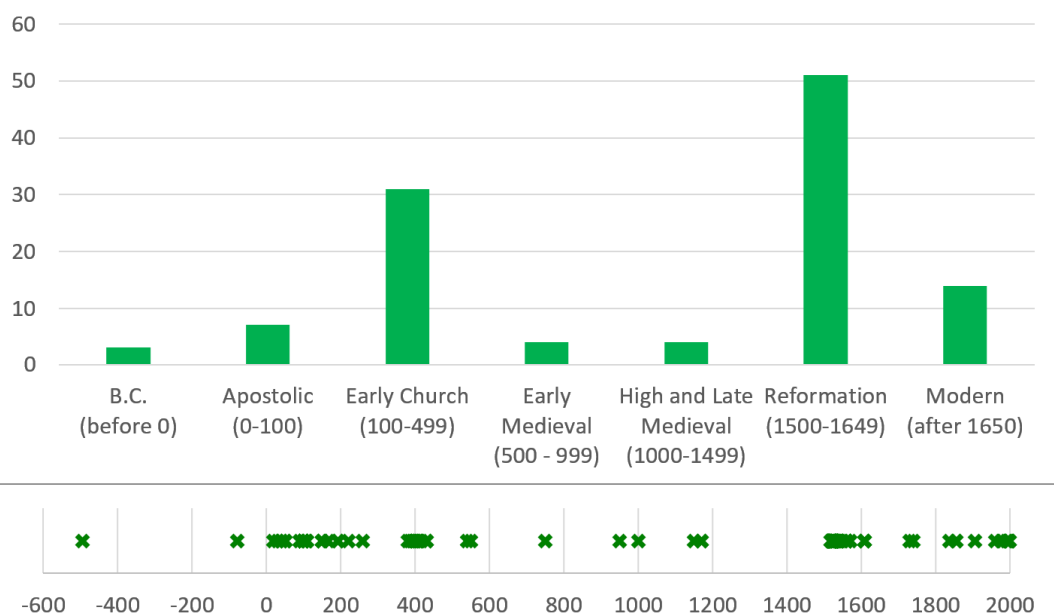


Figure 6.6 Temporal distribution of tradition and history references (Heinze, TuG)

The detailed list of Heinze’s references in the following table (Table 6.1) shows, again, the general superficiality regarding the source of an author’s thought, and the massive presence of Augustine and the magisterial Reformers, first of all Luther.⁷¹⁶

Table 6.1 References to Tradition, Church History, and History (Heinze, TuG)

NON-CANONICAL CHRISTIAN AUTHORS & WRITINGS	Date	Page	Func.
<i>Didache</i>	~100	96, 100	■Ill Aff
Cyril of Jerusalem			
[Report of Baptism of unclothed people] ⁷¹⁷	386	57	Itp+
Augustine			
[Doctrine of original sin] ⁷¹⁸	396	101	Inf
[In correct administered Baptism Christ alone is active, its effectiveness is neither bound to the church nor to the recipient] ⁷¹⁹	400	99	Inf
[Obligation of parents to baptise their infants] ⁷²⁰	411	101	Inf
[Understanding of Baptism as visible word] ⁷²¹	416	126	Inf
[Augustine’s baptismal theology] ⁷²²	430	99	Inf

⁷¹⁶ The format and structure of the table is introduced in connection with Table 4.1.

⁷¹⁷ Cf. Lectures on the Mysteries 2:2.

⁷¹⁸ Cf. *De Divinis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* 1:1:10.

⁷¹⁹ Cf. *De baptismo; Contra litteras Petilianii*.

⁷²⁰ Cf. *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum* 2:27:43.

⁷²¹ Cf. *In Ioannis Evangelium tractatus* LXXX, 3 (on John 15:3).

⁷²² Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 790–816.

John Chrysostom				
[Report of Baptism of unclothed people] ⁷²³	407	57	Itp+	
Cathars				
[Distinction of water and Spirit Baptism, consequently initial rejection of water (and infant) baptism] ⁷²⁴	~1000	72, 102	Inf- Inf	
Waldensians				
[Distinction of water and Spirit Baptism] ⁷²⁵	~1200	72	Inf-	
[Emphasis of spirit baptism and demand for believer's Baptism] ⁷²⁶	~1200	103	Inf	
Martin Luther				
Small Catechism				
<i>Das Sakrament der Heiligen Taufe</i> , BSELK 884:3-7	1529	104	■III	
[Maintenance of infant Baptism because God can give faith to little children] ⁷²⁷	1518	105	Inf	
[Understanding of Baptism as visible word] ⁷²⁸	1518	127	Inf	
[Emphasis of the necessity of faith in Baptism (early Luther); faith and Baptism belong together] ⁷²⁹	1520	103, 115	Inf III	
[Baptism is sufficient preparation for Christian life, rejection of Catholic Confirmation] ⁷³⁰	1520	106	Inf	
[Reemphasis on God's (objective) action in Baptism and its sacramental character (later Luther in confrontation with Anabaptist movement)] ⁷³¹	1525	103	Inf	
['In die Taufe hineinkriechen'] ⁷³²	1529	106	■III	
['Ich bin getauft'] ⁷³³	1545	112	■III	
[God gives what man believes; experience of Baptism is foundation of the assurance of salvation] ⁷³⁴	1529	112	III	
[Baptism is the beginning of a lifelong rebirth] ⁷³⁵	1529	130	Aff+	
Huldreich Zwingli				
[Baptism first of all confession of faith] ⁷³⁶	1522	105, 107, 112	Inf Inf III	

⁷²³ Cf. *Baptismal Instructions* 11:28-29.

⁷²⁴ The Cathars had an initiation rite of laying hands called *consolamentum* or Spirit baptism. Cf. Albert Zimmermann, ed., *Die Mächte des Guten und Bösen: Vorstellungen im XII. und XIII. Jahrhundert über ihr Wirken in der Heilsgeschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977), 342.

⁷²⁵ Cf. Kurt-Victor Selge, *Die ersten Waldenser - Bd.1: Untersuchung und Darstellung* (De Gruyter, 1967), 158, 163-66.

⁷²⁶ Cf. *Liber antiheresis* 1:10; Kurt-Victor Selge, *Die ersten Waldenser - Bd.2: Der Liber antiheresis des Durandus von Osca* (De Gruyter, 1967), 43.

⁷²⁷ Cf. WA 57:170:10-13.

⁷²⁸ Cf. WA 2:15:28.

⁷²⁹ Cf. WA 6:533-534.

⁷³⁰ Cf. WA 6:549-550; 10:1:1, 117.

⁷³¹ Cf. Luther's polemic against the Anabaptists from 1525 on, e.g. in LC / SC.

⁷³² BSELK 1130.

⁷³³ WA 44:720:30-31.

⁷³⁴ Cf. BSELK 1130.

⁷³⁵ Cf. BSELK 1120, 1128.

⁷³⁶ Cf. ZW 1:130-131; 4:218-219.

[Critique of the sacramental understanding of Baptism and the connection of the actions of God and man; Reluctance in regard to an understanding of Baptism as God's life changing work] ⁷³⁷	1522	121, 126	Inf Inf
[Initial acceptance of infant Baptism in the light of Christian upbringing by parents and sponsors] ⁷³⁸	1523	105	Inf
[Baptism only for instructed children] ⁷³⁹	1523	105	Inf
[Baptism is sufficient preparation for Christian life, rejection of Catholic Confirmation] ⁷⁴⁰	1525	106	Inf Inf
[Infant Baptism again accepted as external sign like circumcision (confrontation with Anabaptist movement)] ⁷⁴¹	1525	106	Inf
[Teaching of election] ⁷⁴²	1530	111	Inf
Thomas Müntzer			
[Radical sermon on the change of social structure that led to the peasant war] ⁷⁴³	1524	108	Ill-
Anabaptists			
[The teaching of the Anabaptist movement] ⁷⁴⁴	1525	109	Inf
[Baptism is first of all a confession of faith] ⁷⁴⁵	1525	112	Ill
Melichior Hoffman			
[Apocalyptic enthusiastic teachings] ⁷⁴⁶	1526	109	Ill-
Menno Simons			
[Teaching of Simons. Emphasis on rebirth to a new existence in Christ, radical separation from the world, submission to the in Scripture revealed absolute will of God] ⁷⁴⁷	1540	110	Ill
John Calvin			
[Baptism is outward symbol for the inward work of God] ⁷⁴⁸	1559	106	Inf
[Baptism is sufficient preparation for Christian life, rejection of Catholic Confirmation (<i>Firmung</i>)] ⁷⁴⁹	1559	106	Inf
[Teaching of election] ⁷⁵⁰	1559	111	Inf
[Baptism is symbol of work of God, which can also be given to the recipient independently of Baptism; Baptism is answer of the believer, and symbolic assurance of God's gift of grace; Baptism is a sign of remembrance of God's work and not God's work itself] ⁷⁵¹	1559	112	Ill

⁷³⁷ Cf. ZW 1:130-131.

⁷³⁸ Cf. ZW 2:122-123.

⁷³⁹ Cf. ZW 4:206-234.

⁷⁴⁰ Cf. ZW 3:823.

⁷⁴¹ Cf. ZW 4:629.

⁷⁴² ZW 6/3:64-230.

⁷⁴³ Cf. *Fürstenpredigt*.

⁷⁴⁴ The context indicates that Heinze sees the Anabaptist teaching represented by the Zürich Anabaptists, Balthasar Hubmeier, the *Schleitheim Confession* (Michael Sattler), and Menno Simons.

⁷⁴⁵ Especially seen in the Anabaptist teaching and practice of Baptism beginning in 1525 in Zürich.

⁷⁴⁶ Cf. *Das xij Capitel des prophet Danielis außgelegt*.

⁷⁴⁷ Cf. *Fundament und klare Anweisung von der seligmachenden Lehre*.

⁷⁴⁸ Cf. Inst. 4:15:15.

⁷⁴⁹ Cf. Inst. 4:19:4-13.

⁷⁵⁰ Cf. Inst. 3:21-24.

⁷⁵¹ Cf. Inst. 4:15-16.

[Critique of the sacramental understanding of Baptism and the connection of the actions of God and man] ⁷⁵²	1559	121	Inf
[Reluctance in regard to an understanding of Baptism as God's life changing work] ⁷⁵³	1559	126	Inf

CREEDS, COUNCILS & OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Schleitheim Confession , introduction	1527	109	■III+
<i>Rechenschaft vom Glauben (BRD/CH/A)</i>	1977	119	III
<i>Rechenschaft vom Glauben (DDR)</i>	1978	119	III
<i>Rechenschaft vom Glauben (Gesamtdeutsch)</i>	1995	119	III+
<i>Die Taufe, das Mahl des Herrn und die Zugehörigkeit zur Gemeinde. Zum Gemeindeverständnis der Brüdergemeinden</i>	1998	120	Inf

EVENTS & DEVELOPMENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

Connection of Baptism and membership in the church ⁷⁵⁴	~100	67	Aff+
The interpretation of Hebrews 6:1-6 as referring to the loss of salvation due to postbaptismal sin ⁷⁵⁵	~100	84	III-
Situation of the early Christian church: mission, inner consolidation, and struggle to define the core of Christian faith	~100	96	Inf
Development of baptismal understanding in Early Church: emphasis on God, church and minister, believer mere receiver	~100	96	Inf
Development of authorities in the Early Church: canon, creed, and office of the church	~100	97	Inf+
Increasing importance of the church and its office bearers (successors of the Apostles) for the guidance of Christian believers ⁷⁵⁶	~100	99	Inf
Baptism for the dead (vicarious Baptism)	~150	14	III
Repentance not available after a believer fell into sin ⁷⁵⁷	~150	86	III
Reduction of the meaning of Baptism on forgiveness of past sins ⁷⁵⁸	~150	98	Inf
Identification of Baptism and illumination ⁷⁵⁹	165	85	III
Emergence of infant Baptism through second generation Christians	~200	97	Inf
Development of delay of Baptism and deathbed Baptism	~200	99	Inf

⁷⁵² Cf. Inst. 4:15-16.

⁷⁵³ Cf. Inst. 4:15-16.

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. *Didache* 9:5.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. Hermas, *Mandates*, 4:3:1-2, 6.

⁷⁵⁶ Earliest testimonies are seen in Ignatius' writings, e.g. *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*.

⁷⁵⁷ In the second century the understanding of Hermas that the warning passages of Hebrews 'absolutely forbid a second repentance' directed the discussion, cf. C. Adrian Thomas, *A Case for Mixed-Audience with Reference to the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008), 38.

⁷⁵⁸ E.g. Hermas, *Mandates* 4:3:1-4, 6.

⁷⁵⁹ Justin, *Apologia* 1:61:14.

Distinction of qualities of sins and special sins to death ⁷⁶⁰	220	86	III
Development of the practice of Penance	~250	99	Inf
Development of a political dimension of Baptism due to the changed role of Christianity in the Roman Empire ⁷⁶¹	380	98	Inf
Practice of putting on white clothing after Baptism ⁷⁶²	~400	57	Aff+
Understanding of Jesus blessing the children as supporting infant Baptism ⁷⁶³	~400	51	III
Development of sacramentalism: Baptism is not only sign of affiliation but effects it ⁷⁶⁴	~400	100	Inf
Baptism of John is primarily understood as sign of repentance ⁷⁶⁵	407	24	III-
Foundational change in the baptismal understanding of the Early Church ⁷⁶⁶	~430	99	Inf
Development of compulsory infant Baptism after Christianity became state religion ⁷⁶⁷	539	102	Inf
Further development of Penance into an integral part of ecclesiastical life	~550	102	Inf
Connection of Baptism and name giving ⁷⁶⁸	~750	6	III
Before Reformation no foundational changes in baptismal understanding, only consequential progression ⁷⁶⁹	~1150	102	Inf
Development of a spectrum of baptismal understandings in the Reformation between the extremes of all is God's work and all is mere human confession, and consecutive discussion	1520	111, 113, 121, 124	Inf Inf Inf Inf
Emergence of the various groups of the radical reformation ⁷⁷⁰	1521	107	Inf
'Reformation of Baptism' in Waldshut under the leadership of Balthasar Hubmaier ⁷⁷¹	1525	107	III
Conflict between Zwingli and his students and first Baptism of adult believers in Zurich	1525	107	Inf

⁷⁶⁰ E.g. Tertullian, *De Pudicitia* 2, 9, 20.

⁷⁶¹ Theodosius I. declared Christianity as state religion (Edict of Thessalonica).

⁷⁶² Cf. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homily* 14.

⁷⁶³ Cf. *Apostolic Constitutions* 6:15:7.

⁷⁶⁴ Especially seen in the Donatist controversy.

⁷⁶⁵ E.g. Chrysostom, *On the Baptism of Christ*, 3.

⁷⁶⁶ Heinze sees the foundational change in the baptismal teaching mainly in Augustine's teaching, influencing the whole Western church (99, 102).

⁷⁶⁷ Infant Baptism was made compulsory by Justinian I, *Codex Iustinianus* 1:11:10.

⁷⁶⁸ Cf. Orthodox prebaptismal practice of the rite of name giving at the 8th day after birth, *Codex Barberini* gr. 336.

⁷⁶⁹ Seen in the Scholastics, e.g. Lombardus or Aquinas.

⁷⁷⁰ E.g. the Zwickau prophets and Müntzer.

⁷⁷¹ At Easter 1525 Hubmaier and 60 other citizens have been (re)baptised by Reublin, and Hubmaier started to defend believer's Baptism theologically, cf. Christof Windhorst, *Täuferisches Taufverständnis: Balthasar Hubmaiers Lehre zwischen traditioneller und reformatorischer Theologie* (Brill Archive, 1976), 17–18.

Emergence of Anabaptist groups	1525	107	Inf
Necessity of the Anabaptist movement to distinct itself from the Catholic and protestant state churches on the one side, and from the violent groups of the radical reformation on the other side	1525	108	Inf
Persecution, torture, and execution of the Anabaptist movement by secular authorities as well as Catholic and magisterial Reformation churches	1525	108, 109	Inf- Inf-
Münster Rebellion (<i>Täuferkönigtum zu Münster</i>)	1534	109	Ill-
Emergence, persecution and spread of Mennonite churches ⁷⁷²	1535	111	Inf
Development of protestant Confirmation (<i>Konfirmation</i>) ⁷⁷³	1539	107	Inf
Emergence of the Independents (radical Puritans or Separatists) in England, persecution and escape to the Netherlands ⁷⁷⁴	1570	111	Inf
Formation of the first Baptist churches in the Netherlands and England; influenced by the Anabaptists but also remained in the in the Reformed tradition in their further development in England ⁷⁷⁵	1609	111, 118	Inf Inf
Baptist churches accused of rebaptism and disrespecting other churches ⁷⁷⁶	1609	134	Inf
Experiences of fulfilment with the Holy Spirit in protestant holiness movements	~1730	72	Aff+
Emergence of the Methodist church from the Anglican church	~1740	116	Inf
Free churches originally emphasised Baptism as confession of faith, which lead to a reduction of its meaning to the beginning of the Christian life and sometimes even to its neglect ⁷⁷⁷	1837	137	Inf-
Establishment of the FeG (<i>Freie Evangelische Gemeinde</i>) with the purpose to gather faithful Christians	1854	121	Inf
Devaluation of Baptism in recent free church history: faith constitutes church, not Baptism	1854	132	Inf
Emergence of teaching of a special baptism with the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal movement	1906	72	Inf-
Reception of teaching of a special baptism with the Holy Spirit within the Charismatic movements	~1960	72	Inf-

⁷⁷² After the Münster Rebellion in 1535 Simons started to gather followers around him.

⁷⁷³ Cf. *Ziegenhainer Kirchenzuchtordnung*.

⁷⁷⁴ The Independents (or Separatist) movement began with ‘the real Puritan Separatist’ groups of Brown and Harrison in the 1570s.

⁷⁷⁵ In 1609 John Smyth founded the first Baptist church in Amsterdam upon the basis of believer’s Baptism.

⁷⁷⁶ One of the founders of the Baptist church movement, John Smyth, was judged by Henry Ainsworth in 1609 as ‘gone “over to the abomination of the Anabaptists,”’ Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists: Traced by Their Vital Principles and Practices, Vol. 2* (Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 2001), 455.

⁷⁷⁷ The tendency to reduce Baptism to the human confession of faith is seen, for example, in the earliest German Baptist confession writing *Hamburger Bekenntnis* (1837).

Discussion about the right understanding of Baptism, especially seen when the East- and West-German Baptist associations united ⁷⁷⁸	1991	119	III
Discussion about the possibility of membership in Baptist churches (BEFG) for persons baptised as infants without believer's Baptism ⁷⁷⁹	1997	135	Inf
German Baptists reaffirm their position that persons who are baptised as infants cannot become members ⁷⁸⁰	1999	120	Aff

PROFANE HISTORY

Use of the body and member parable in the theory of the state ⁷⁸¹	-494	64	III
Description of the Qumram Community (Essenes)	-100	27	Itp
Original meaning of sacrament (<i>sacramentum militiae</i>) ⁷⁸²	-78	100	Inf
Conversions to the Jewish religion in postbiblical times (proselytes) ⁷⁸³	~20	31	Inf
Artefacts of history: trading roads and public immersion baths in Israel	~30	25	Itp
Washing and purification rites of other religions	~40	83, 88	Itp III
Clothing in consecration rites of Hellenistic mystery cults	~50	56	Inf
Significance and situation of the city Corinth	~50	61	Aff
Additional requirements of washing and sacrifice for proselytes (Proselyte Baptism) ⁷⁸⁴	~90	32	Inf
Letter of Pliny to Trajan	110	89	■Aff+

6.4.2 Distribution, Function and Evaluation of References to Tradition and Church

History

The general picture of the distribution of the references to tradition and church history shows that Heinze's references in the exegetical chapter are sparsely scattered and are mainly unspecific references to church history or profane history, whereas the latter are exclusively found in the exegetical chapter. The quotations and specific references are

⁷⁷⁸ Especially seen in the discussion about the Baptism article of RvG, which was different in the West and East German versions. For a comparison of the different versions of the Baptism article see Swarat, *Texte*, 197–213.

⁷⁷⁹ Cf. preface of Balders, *Textbuch*.

⁷⁸⁰ Cf. Bundesleitung des BEFG, 'Wort der Bundesleitung zu Taufe und Mitgliedschaft', 1999.

⁷⁸¹ Cf. parable of Menenius Agrippa 'the belly and the members,' which is often used to interpret 1Cor 12:12-30. Found in Livius, *Ab urbe condita* 2:32:9.

⁷⁸² Heinze refers here to the oath that a soldier has sworn to his field commander. This is not the same as the earlier use of an oath to the Roman consul and first was requested by Sulla (138-78 BC).

⁷⁸³ Heinze likely refers here to the Adiabenean rulers who converted to Judaism.

⁷⁸⁴ Cf. dispute of Hyrcanus and Hananiah. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 80.

expectably very dense in the historical chapter but are also present in the final systematic chapter.

The temporal distribution (cf. Figure 6.7) shows that Heinze uses in the exegetical chapter only references that are close to the Apostolic time and only once incorporates more recent references when he describes the development of the doctrine of a separate Spirit baptism in a short sequence. In the three main sections of the historical chapter, which are concerning the Early Church, the Reformation, and the contemporary church there are corresponding references, with only few references in the timespans in between. Except for one reference to Augustine, the systematic chapter only contains references to the Reformation and the contemporary situation, which are more specific in the section that deals with the meaning of Baptism and more general and recent in the latter more practical sections. For the exegetical use we see, therefore, the closer to the NT the better, for the systematic use it is more the tradition of the Reformation than the Early Church that influences Heinze's thought.

The function of the references to tradition and church history in the text (cf. Figure 6.8) shows that the references in the exegetical chapter are mainly used for interpretation, affirmation and illustration, and to a lesser degree also as information. In the historical and systematical chapters, there is a clear emphasis on information references with few references that are illustrations or affirmations. In the whole book, there are no references to tradition and church history that are as a source, but Heinze's thought is primarily controlled by and deduced from Scripture, with explicit tradition and history only having supplementing function.

Regarding the evaluation of the references to tradition and church history we see an overall neutrality, with few instances where Heinze explicitly labels something positive or negative. Generally, he often states whether a historical development is biblical or not, but this does not necessarily imply a positive or negative evaluation but is primarily a neutral observation. Heinze, however, explicitly positively marks developments of the Early Church, including canon, creeds and the office of the church as significant accomplishments that must be highly valued (97) and explicitly expresses that Luther's thought on Baptism as lifelong rebirth is an adequate expression of a biblical thought (130). Here we see that Heinze does not see the Early Church in apostasy, although he criticises maldevelopments, and that he also acknowledges valid points in the baptismal theology of the magisterial reformers. For the explicit negative evaluations, we see two conditions that provoke Heinze to outspoken negative evaluations: first, teachings that lead to violence

like the radical Reformation events of the peasant war (108) or the Münster rebellion (109); and, second, teachings that constrict scriptural theology, like the reduction of John's baptism to a mere sign of repentance (24), the interpretation of Hebrews 6 as referring to a loss of salvation due to postbaptismal sin (84), and, most significant, the emphasis of Baptism as a mere confession of faith that led to a reduction of the meaning of Baptism and its neglect in the actual life of the church (137). Heinze's evaluation of the tradition statements, therefore, shows that he is generally not polemic, does appreciate developments and aspects in pre-Baptist history and in other denominations, but he is also able to criticise wrong developments in his own denomination.

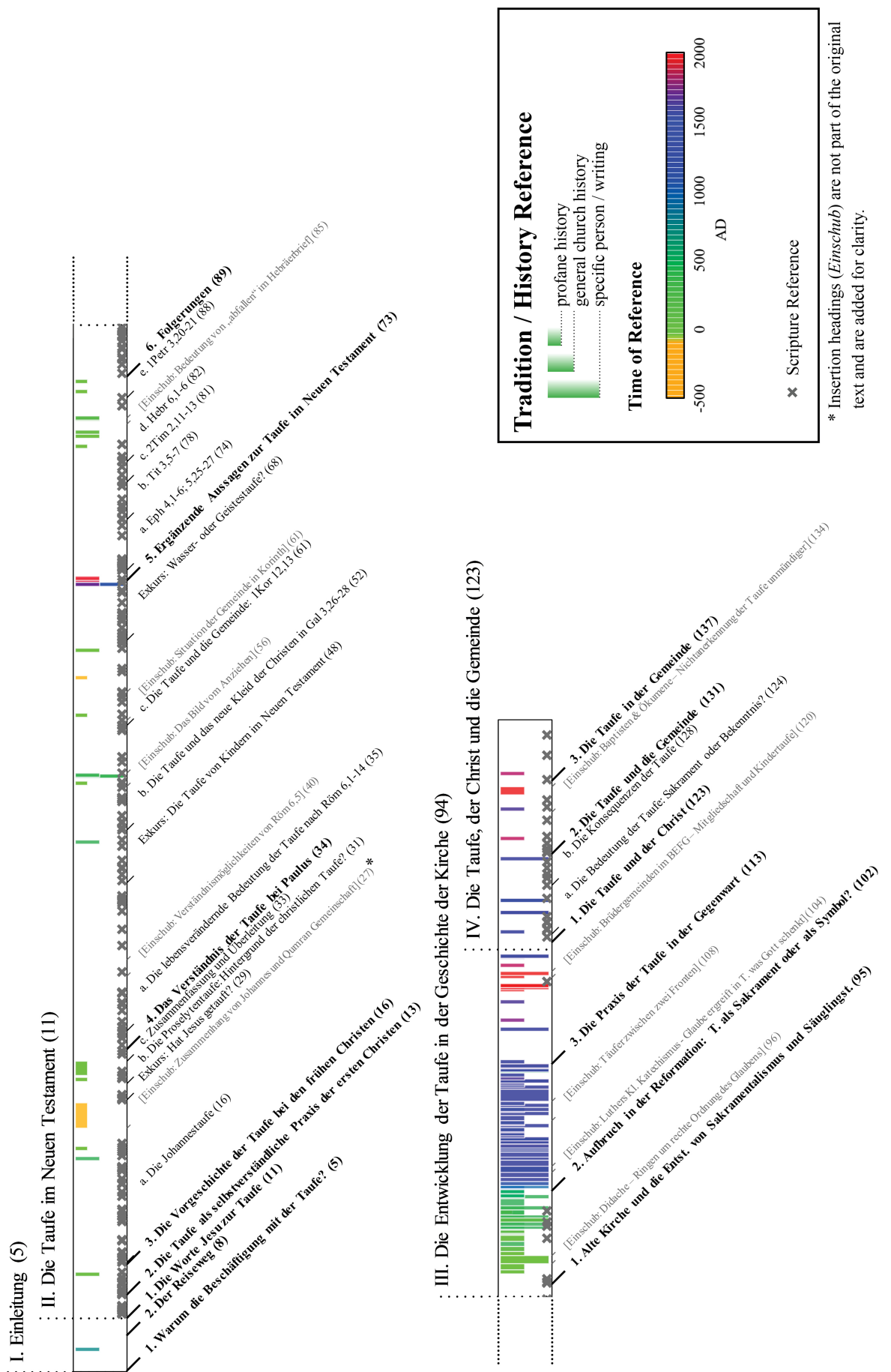


Figure 6.7 Distribution and time of tradition and history references (Heinze, TuG)

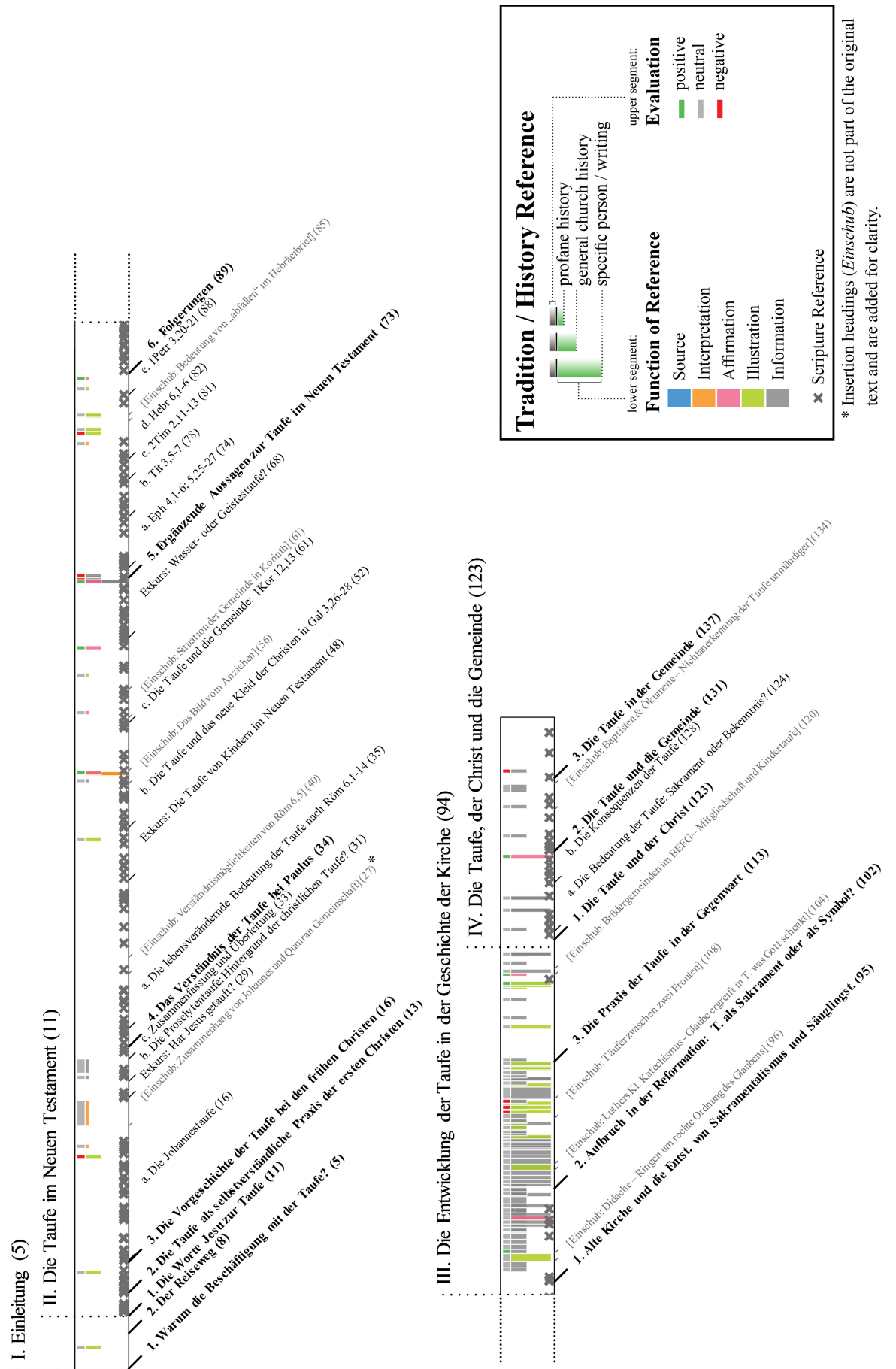


Figure 6.8 Distribution, function, and evaluation of tradition and history references (Heinze, TuG)

6.5 Implicit Reflections of Tradition and Church History

We see the implicit reflections of tradition and church history in theological terms, in structure and methods, and in theological frameworks. Especially here, however, we also need to consider the developments we have seen in Heinze's later works on Baptism and cannot exclusively rely on *Taufe und Gemeinde*.

6.5.1 Theological Terms

Heinze generally does not use many particular terms in his baptismal view, which also might be a reflection of Baptist tradition. In the Baptist movement there is much freedom and plurality regarding liturgical practice,⁷⁸⁵ which leads to less standardised liturgical terms, and due to the freedom local congregations have regarding theological or structural questions, there are also problems on agreeing on common terms.⁷⁸⁶ We still can see, however, some typical key terms that appear several times in Heinze's baptismal writings.

Congregation and Church

Heinze's use of the terms congregation (*Gemeinde*) and church (*Kirche*) is a clear reflection of Baptist ecclesiology. Even the title of his main work *Taufe und Gemeinde* shows the central role the local congregation plays in Baptist ecclesiology as well as in Heinze's thought. In *Taufe und Gemeinde* we find the term congregation nearly twice as often (about 200 times) as church (about 120 times). When Heinze talks about the meaning of Baptism in the exegetical and systematical chapters he always refers to its meaning for the congregation and does not mention church. For Heinze, through Baptism the community of a congregation is established (75-76), as incorporation into the body of Christ means incorporation into the concrete local congregation (133). If he refers to the spiritual reality of the universal church, therefore, he speaks about the body of Christ, and for the Baptist union he normally speaks in the plural of congregations and not of church. The term church is used by Heinze mainly in the historical and systematical chapters. While in the historical chapter Heinze identifies the Early Church with the body of Christ, after it developed into the institutionalised church (98-102), Heinze uses term churches synonymous to denominations. We see in Heinze's baptismal writings, therefore, that he

⁷⁸⁵ According to Heinze there is no liturgy that goes beyond a local Baptist congregation. André Heinze, 'Eckpunkte gottesdienstlicher Spiritualität im Baptismus', in *Gebet und gottesdienstliche Spiritualität auf ökumenischen Tagungen*, ed. Viorel Ionita and Klaus Raschzok (Genf: Conference of European Churches, 2009), 1, 3.

⁷⁸⁶ Heinze himself points to the inability to find a common designation for full-time church workers in the BEFG. Heinze, 'Bund sind wir', 41.

ascribes a theological quality to the term congregation, which is the manifestation of the body of Christ, but church is mainly an expression of a mere institutional entity.

Heinze's usage of the terms congregation and church reflects Baptist tradition, with its understanding of the local congregation as concrete realisation of the body of Christ and the emphasis on independent local congregations.⁷⁸⁷ The word church in general is used with reluctance in the Baptist tradition as the Anabaptist groups and later the Baptist congregations needed to separate from the institutionalised churches and fight against their repression.⁷⁸⁸ Heinze, therefore, mainly uses church to refer to other denominations but not for his own Baptist denomination, which is just described as association of congregations (*Bund*).

Heinze, however, also critically evaluates the Baptist understanding of autonomous local congregations as contradicting the close connection and interdependence of the congregations in the NT.⁷⁸⁹ In his later ecclesiological writings, therefore, Heinze even recommends to speak of a Baptist church and not only of a Baptist union, to express the theological dignity that belongs to the association of congregations.⁷⁹⁰ In Heinze's baptismal view we can already see this development towards an ecclesiology that goes beyond the local congregation. As Baptism establishes the fellowship of believers (*κοινωνία*), which goes beyond the local congregation and is also expressed in the fellowship of congregations,⁷⁹¹ it is Baptism that also demands fellowship that surpasses the boundaries of one's own congregation or even one's own denomination (136).

Believer's Baptism

As well closely connected with Baptist and free church ecclesiology in general, is the term believer's Baptism (*Glaubenstaufe*). Heinze emphasises that believer's Baptism is the only practice explicitly described in the NT and thus should be practised, but he also notes that it had its reasons in the missionary situation, which suggests a certain flexibility

⁷⁸⁷ Cf. RvG 2:1:5, 2:1:7. One of the main teachings of the Baptist movement is that every local congregation is free, independent, and autonomous. Andrea Strübind and Martin Rothkegel, eds., *Baptismus: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 40; cf. also Geldbach, *Freikirchen*, 187.

⁷⁸⁸ Karl Heinz Voigt, *Freikirchen in Deutschland (19. und 20. Jahrhundert)* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004), 35.

⁷⁸⁹ Heinze, 'Bund sind wir'. Swarat similarly criticises that the unity of the Christian church that surpasses the local congregations is generally neglected in Baptist practice and teaching. Cf. Volker Spangenberg, ed., *Luther und die Reformation aus freikirchlicher Sicht* (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2013), 43.

⁷⁹⁰ EST 254–56.

⁷⁹¹ André Heinze, 'Der bunte Bund: Gemeinschaft von selbstständigen Ortsgemeinden - ein neutestamentlicher Auftrag', 2009, 7–8, http://old.theologisches-seminar-elstal.de/fileadmin/downloads/Heinze_-_Der_bunte_Bund.pdf; EST 242–43.

in a different context.⁷⁹² At some instances Heinze also states that he himself prefers to speak of Baptism of responsible persons (*Mündigentaufe*) in order to emphasise that the deciding factor is not a special age, but the ability of a person to voluntarily accept Christ and receive Baptism (48). Heinze also generally prefers to speak of believers instead of Christians, which implicitly also shows the importance of personal faith, that stands before the affiliation to an institution or religion.

The concept of believer's Baptism, however, is not just baptismal practice, but essential for Baptist ecclesiology. As church in Baptist and Anabaptist traditions is understood as gathering of persons that voluntarily responded to the message of the Gospel by personal faith, believer's Baptism as visible expression of personal faith is constituting the congregation.⁷⁹³ Heinze, therefore, also emphasises that Baptism can only be the third step and never be the first address of God to man, and that Augustine's and Luther's term of the visible word must not be misunderstood in this way (127). Baptism, therefore, is the foundation for mutual trust and brotherly congregational life, as it ensures that only persons are members who voluntarily sought to believe and be part of the congregation, which the congregation also evaluates before admitting a believer for Baptism.⁷⁹⁴ Here Heinze especially affirms the close connection of Believer's baptism and Baptist ecclesiology, which cannot be given up as it ensures the believer as well as the congregation of his belonging and obligation to the community (131-136),⁷⁹⁵ at least as long as the personal confession of faith is exclusively bound to Baptism.

Täufer

Another noticeable wording that is especially visible in German language, is Heinze's use of the word *Täufer* (baptiser) to refer to the Anabaptist movement of the Reformation, which shows that he does not see them as rebaptising believers who already received infant Baptism. A position, however, that he revises later where he affirms the validity of infant Baptism and even implies to reject (re)baptising persons who are not willing to accept their infant Baptism.⁷⁹⁶ The use of *Täufer*, however, is not only theological, but also shows Heinze's neutral or positive evaluation of the Anabaptist movement, whereas the German word *Wiedertäufer* (re-baptiser) is often used by other denominations with a negative connotation.

⁷⁹² Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 15.

⁷⁹³ Voigt, *Freikirchen*, 34, 52, 57; Geldbach, *Freikirchen*, 37; Strübind and Rothkegel, *Baptismus*, 32.

⁷⁹⁴ Esp. seen in Heinze and Wilms, *Gemeindemitgliedschaft (1998)*, 19–21.

⁷⁹⁵ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (1999)', 219–21.

⁷⁹⁶ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 9, 14–17.

Sacrament, Sign, and Symbol

Sacrament is an important word in Heinze's thought, which can be seen in the many explicit references to tradition and church history where he describes the usage of the word sacrament in the Early Church (100-101), the Reformer's thought (105, 112, 121), and the Anabaptist movement (110).⁷⁹⁷ Even though Heinze acknowledges the validity of the initial usage of sacrament to express the idea of God giving in Baptism participation in his salvation,⁷⁹⁸ he criticises the development in church history to the extreme of sacramentalism where Baptism is seen as automatically effective in itself (*ex opere operato*) and mediated by the church (100, 128). Heinze, however, also criticises the counterreaction of Zwingli and the Anabaptists who reduced Baptism to a mere human action, a confession or sign of obligation (105, 121). Heinze sees both extremes as wrong developments and emphasises that Baptism is a work of God, as well as a work of man (139).⁷⁹⁹ As the action of God is the main emphasis and the action of man is a passive acceptance of Baptism, Heinze still thinks it is acceptable to speak of Baptism as a sacrament (127). However, like Zwingli,⁸⁰⁰ Heinze warns that the word sacrament is potentially misleading and should be used cautiously to avoid the impression of a self-effective sacrament that is mediated by the church and is independent from the faith of the recipient (128). The fear of a mere sacramentalist understanding, however, must not lead to the rejection of the NT's understanding that in Baptism a real action of God happens.⁸⁰¹ Heinze even affirms that the emphasis of God's work in Baptism is an important basis for Baptist ecclesiology as only God's support and confirmation of a person's faith provides a reliable foundation for the congregation as community of believers (132).⁸⁰²

The words sign and symbol, according to Heinze, are traces of the Reformed tradition that influenced the early Baptist movement (118). Zwingli's and Calvin's fear of an understanding of God being forced to act in Baptism led to their interpretation of Baptism as sign and symbol (126), an outward symbol of an internal process in which God independent from Baptism gives grace and salvation, or even a mere sign of human confession

⁷⁹⁷ Cf. Heinze, 'Predigt Apg 8', 8–9.

⁷⁹⁸ Heinze does not describe the origin of sacrament with the Greek *μυστήριον*, which might be due to his objection to an understanding of a mystic or unexplainable action of God in Baptism (42), but with the Roman *sacramentum militiae* (100). Heinze sees in the concept of the soldier who uses his commander's badge as identification mark a valid expression of the NT's understanding of Baptism: God gives in Baptism participation in salvation to the person who acknowledges him.

⁷⁹⁹ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 13–14.

⁸⁰⁰ Cf. ZW 3:757.

⁸⁰¹ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 13–14. Heinze criticises that although RvG 2:1:3 emphasises the action of God in Baptism, this aspect is neglected in the actual ministry of the church. Heinze, 'Initiation', 51–52.

⁸⁰² Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (1999)', 221.

(106). On the basis of Romans 6 Heinze criticises a merely symbolical understanding, as Paul sees the connection of the believer with the death of Christ in Baptism as a real event (42). The word symbol for Baptism, therefore, is rejected completely by Heinze,⁸⁰³ and he affirms the usage of sign insofar as Baptism is a visible sign for the real change that comes from God and is desired by the recipient (132). The understanding of Baptism as a sign that shows real action of God is even more emphasised in his later thought, where Heinze explicitly states that the sign of Baptism shows an objective action of God, figuratively real establishing a new reality. Heinze, however, also affirms the important role of faith that must grasp what God promised in the sign of Baptism, whereas not faith makes Baptism but only grasps the effect of Baptism, which is the new existence in Christ.⁸⁰⁴ Heinze's thoughts in regard to the understanding of Baptism as a sign basically resemble Luther's thoughts, who also explains that the external sign of Baptism has a real effect, but not apart from faith.⁸⁰⁵ By emphasising the active sacramental work of God in Baptism and the use of a Lutheran understanding of sign, Heinze sets himself far apart from the Anabaptist tradition and from many parts of the Baptist movement. From the beginning of the German Baptist movement till today, however, there was always a strand that regarded Baptism as a sign with real effect.⁸⁰⁶

6.5.2 *Structure and Methods*

In the structure of *Taufe und Gemeinde* with its extensive exegetical chapter we see a distinct feature of the Baptist movement, which is the extreme weight of Scripture. The same emphasis and authority of Scripture we also see on a methodical level in the ultimate evaluation question whether something is biblical or not, which is distinct for the Baptists and many conservative evangelical free churches.

Sophisticated but Accessible Extensive Scriptural Foundation

A prominent feature of the structure of *Taufe und Gemeinde* is the extensive exegetical chapter in which Heinze elaborately presents the scriptural foundation for Baptism (over 80 pages out of 140). The exegetical chapter is sophisticated as Heinze presents many thoughts of historical-critical research and often shows different interpretations before he describes his preferred understanding, but it is also accessible as Heinze adds many explanations, introductions, and describes the context of the key passages. As we already

⁸⁰³ Heinze, 'Initiation', 67; Heinze, 'Taufkurs', 31, 35.

⁸⁰⁴ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 14–15; cf. also Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Joh 3', 5.

⁸⁰⁵ LC (BSELK 1130).

⁸⁰⁶ Baptism is expressed as effective sign in the 1843 confession writing of the Berlin Baptist congregation or the West German RvG (2:1:3). Cf. Swarat, *Texte*, 176–174, 201–3.

saw, Heinze regards the use of scientific exegesis as an important feature to criticise traditional understandings and to find the right scriptural meaning. In this exegetical chapter, therefore, Heinze shows the congregation the necessary tools to do this regarding Baptism. He uses every method or source (including tradition and archaeology) that helps to find the best understanding of Scripture but does it in a way that people without formal theological training can follow his conclusions. To this end, Heinze also might use the *Elberfelder* Bible translation, which with its literalness and precision is often the preferred choice in German free churches to achieve the best scriptural understanding while not being able to study the Bible in original language.⁸⁰⁷

In the extensive exegetical chapter, therefore, we see the influence of Baptist tradition in the major importance of Scripture as only authority for faith and church, but also in the fact that it is not enough to convince the theological leadership, but also the members of the local church as final authority in questions of scriptural interpretation.⁸⁰⁸ Here we also might notice the subtitle of Heinze's book which says 'biblische Impulse für ein Verständnis von Taufe,' which with the word impulses in the sense of suggestions also indicates that Heinze, although pastor and professor, can only give recommendations to the local congregations that as 'hermeneutic community' decide on the correct interpretation of Scripture.⁸⁰⁹

The 'Biblical Criterion'

In Heinze's baptismal writings, especially in *Taufe und Gemeinde*, we can see his consistent use of the biblical criterion in describing whether a theological position or development is scriptural (*biblich* or *schriftgemäß*). This is especially obvious regarding believer's or infant Baptism (48-52, 103, 118), but is also seen in his evaluation of the teaching of a separate Spirit baptism as foreign to the NT (72), and in the historical chapter where Heinze several times evaluates historical developments regarding their relationship to the NT (cf. 98, 99, 102, 103). Similarly, in the systematic section Heinze uses the biblical criterion to show that baptismal views that reduce Baptism to either God's action or

⁸⁰⁷ Cf. Gerhard Jordy, *150 Jahre Brüderbewegung in Deutschland. Eine Bewegung blickt nach vorn* (Dillenburg: CLV, 2003), 27.

⁸⁰⁸ Kollegium des Theologischen Seminars Elstal, *Baptismus*, vol. 1, Elstaler Impulse (Wustermark: Theologisches Seminar Elstal, 2013), 9–10; Voigt, *Freikirchen*, 35; Klaiber and Thönissen, *Bibel*, 69–71, 81. The local congregation as centre of theological perception was also a key understanding of the Anabaptist movement. Yoder, *Täuferium*, 101–8.

⁸⁰⁹ The concept of the congregation as 'hermeneutic community' that decides about the meaning of Scripture and where 'even the scholar must himself explain to the simple brother,' is seen by Yoder as the defining element of Anabaptist and free church ecclesiology. John Howard Yoder, *To Hear the Word*, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010), 230–36; cf. also Goertz, *Bruchstücke*, 50–54.

human action, both are foreign to the NT (126, 128). Also, the delay of Baptism to wait for a more fully developed faith (139), and the claim of Baptism as necessity for salvation are described as unbiblical by Heinze (129).

The evaluation whether a teaching or the life of individuals and churches is biblically, is a fundamental concern of the Baptist movement, which defines itself as Bible movement.⁸¹⁰ Heinze's use of the biblical criterion, therefore, is a clear expression of Baptist tradition, but he does neither use the biblical criterion in a polemic nor in a simplistic way. When he evaluates the historical developments in regard to Scripture, he explicitly states that his purpose is not to judge but only to understand (94). In presenting the different baptismal positions found in contemporary German churches (113-122), Heinze only once expresses that the Baptists follow the NT teaching that a congregation only can consist of baptised Christians (120) but does not use the biblical criterion to evaluate the other contemporary positions as he did in the historical subchapter. Here we see ecumenical respect for the developed understanding of the other denominations and not polemical judging.

Heinze is also aware of the challenge to define what biblical really means, and that the biblical criterion cannot be used in a simplistic way. His differentiated understanding of the biblical criterion is seen in statements such as that '*the perception of the biblical statements*' is used to decide whether something is right or wrong (120), or that the Baptist churches are '*obligated to their understanding of Baptism and church in the NT*' (136). Here we see that Heinze is well aware that the evaluation criterium is not just plain Scripture in a simplistic way, but always a specific interpretation of Scripture. Heinze, therefore, in later thought rejects to talk of 'the biblical Baptism' or the 'the biblical practice' as he realises that the NT statements about Baptism and its relation to the church have several aspects and that every church needs to responsibly align them to each other, which might lead to different biblical Baptisms.⁸¹¹ Consequently, Heinze later explicitly describes infant Baptism as being unbiblical in practice but biblical in meaning, and warns against deducing baptismal theology only from the NT believer's Baptism, as it was practised in the context of the NT missionary situation and cannot just be simply copied to a situation where Christians seek to become members of another church.⁸¹² The use of the biblical criterion in Heinze's baptismal theology, therefore, is a clear expression of

⁸¹⁰ Swarat, 'Schriftverständnis', 56–57.

⁸¹¹ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 3.

⁸¹² *Ibid.*, 15.

Baptist tradition, but also shows how Heinze critically questions and refines the methods and understandings of his own tradition.

6.5.3 *Theological Frameworks*

Finally, for the examination of theological frameworks we will focus exemplarily on theological frameworks that are typical for Baptist theology, such as Baptism as public confession of faith or the (non-)necessity of Baptism for salvation. We will also need to examine, however, a Lutheran influence in Heinze's understanding of Baptism as promise of God.

Baptism as Public Confession of Faith

We already saw in the evaluation of Heinze's use of sacrament that the reduction of Baptism to a mere confession of a believer is not acceptable. In the analysis of the explicit references to tradition we also observed that one of Heinze's rare negative evaluations of tradition is concerning the understanding of Baptism as a mere confession of faith (137). As the view of Baptism as a public confession of faith is a core element of the Anabaptist and Baptist traditions,⁸¹³ Heinze discusses this topic in most of his baptismal writings and moves towards a rejection of the identification of Baptism with the confession of faith.

Heinze acknowledges many times that the understanding of Baptism as mere confession of faith with its connection to membership is a major topic in Baptist theology (120, 134, 137).⁸¹⁴ He also shows, however, that from the beginnings of the German Baptist movement, there were also streams that acknowledged God's work in Baptism (118).⁸¹⁵ This ambiguity that is already manifest in the early German Baptist movement is also illustrated by Heinze by the two different articles on Baptism in the confession writings of East and West Germany, whereas the East version described Baptism as mere sign of human confession, while the West version also acknowledged God's action (119). In the actual Baptism article of the Baptist confession both aspects are present: Baptism is described as confession of faith and the work of God is also emphasised, but Heinze objects that the latter aspect is rather vague and rarely influences the teaching of the congregations.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹³ Cf. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists* (Routledge, 2013), 68–84; William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 201–35; Voigt, *Freikirchen*, 34–35; Geldbach, *Freikirchen*, 187; Geldbach, *Taufe*, 62–67.

⁸¹⁴ Cf. Heinze, 'Offenheit', 7, 12, 33; Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (1999)', 209–209; Heinze, 'Initiation', 50–51; Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 4–6.

⁸¹⁵ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (1999)', 220.

⁸¹⁶ Heinze, 'Initiation', 50–51; cf. RvG 2:1:3.

From his biblical understanding, Heinze rejects the view of Baptism as mere human confession (92),⁸¹⁷ and he questions whether this aspect in the NT really was emphasised.⁸¹⁸ He also criticises the fact that in many free churches the understanding of Baptism as mere human confession led to the reduction of Baptism to an act of obedience only important for the beginning of a life in faith, and also leading to the disappearance of Baptism from the regular life of the church (137). Although Heinze regards the term confession as misleading and emphasises God's work in Baptism, he initially maintains the term. He speaks, however, more refined about God's confession in Baptism⁸¹⁹ and introduces the term 'double confession' to express the thought that Baptism is a confession of God to man as well as a confession of man to God (92, 128, 137, 139).⁸²⁰ In his later works we see a growing emphasis of God's work in Baptism and Heinze describes the human action in Baptism as 'active passivity,' as receiving or letting oneself fall into the hands of God. The active role of the believer, therefore, is reduced to his willingness to let Baptism happen.⁸²¹ In Heinze's latest work even the term double confession does not appear anymore and the term confession is only used negatively to emphasise that Baptism is not only a human confession.⁸²² Here we see that the theoretical possibility to separate the act of confession from Baptism, expressed in Heinze's earliest baptismal writing,⁸²³ is realised on grounds of scriptural and practical-theological considerations. Heinze, for example, criticises the demand for Baptism on a personal confession might be an excessive demand as Baptism is not the end but the starting point of a Christian life and the actual confession of a believer is always under reserve of a later deeper understanding.⁸²⁴ Also regarding the foundational role of Baptism in establishing the congregation, God's work and promise in Baptism is much more important and reliable than a human confession.⁸²⁵

While Heinze in *Taufe und Gemeinde* only remarks that it might be better not to use the terms sacrament and confession to avoid misunderstandings (127-128), in his later works he really does not positively use these terms anymore and rather describes Baptism,

⁸¹⁷ Cf. Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Off 21', 4 June 2003, 3; Heinze, 'Taufkurs', 32.

⁸¹⁸ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (1999)', 220.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid., 213; Heinze, 'Predigt Apg 8', 8.

⁸²⁰ Heinze and Wilms, *Gemeindemitgliedschaft (1998)*, 13,15,19; André Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Mt 28:18-20' (EFG Neuhofen, 30 August 1998), 3-4.

⁸²¹ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 14; Heinze, 'Taufkurs', 32; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Phil', 5; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Mk 16', 5.

⁸²² Heinze, 'Taufkurs', 32.

⁸²³ Heinze, 'Offenheit', 23.

⁸²⁴ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 7.

⁸²⁵ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (1999)', 208; Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 15.

at least in the case of adult Baptism, as the recipient's answer to God and God's answer to the recipient.⁸²⁶ Here we see that Heinze accepts the understanding of other traditions (sacrament) as valid expression of biblical teaching, but tries to avoid using words that could be misunderstood in his own tradition, and we see also that he struggles with his own tradition and finally even dismisses part of its core thought and vocabulary.

Baptism is Not Necessary for Salvation

The question about the necessity of Baptism has two aspects in Heinze's thought: Baptism is not necessary for salvation but necessary for the reassurance of salvation. According to Heinze, it is not Baptism that gives salvation but the grace of Christ, which as a gift of God is not bound to Baptism (80, 91). Heinze affirms, therefore, that only faith is needed for salvation and although Baptism is an act of faith, faith cannot be reduced to Baptism (129). While Baptism in Heinze's thought is not necessary for salvation, in Baptism the believer receives the reassurance of God's grace as a new foundation for life (91), which becomes an anchor point for the certainty of salvation (129). In a later work Heinze even boldly claims that although Baptism is not necessary for salvation, Baptism is necessary to continuously believe and grasp salvation in this life.⁸²⁷

Heinze's understanding that only faith is necessary for salvation reflects the view that is held in the Baptists movement from its beginning, which has its roots in the Reformed heritage.⁸²⁸ The emphasis on the necessity of Baptism for the reassurance of salvation, however, is not only an important aspect of Reformed theology,⁸²⁹ but might as well be an influence from Luther's thought, especially as Heinze explicitly referred to this aspect of Luther's baptismal theology (112, cf. Table 6.1).⁸³⁰

Baptism as God's Promise of a New Existence

We already saw that Heinze rejects the traditional Anabaptist and Baptist understanding of Baptism as mere human act of confession and emphasises God's active work in Baptism. The active work of God in Baptism is described by Heinze as God's promise

⁸²⁶ Heinze, 'Taufkurs', 32.

⁸²⁷ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 14; cf. also Heinze's idea of Baptism as horizontal initiation that gives a new foundation for the life in this world. Heinze, 'Initiation', 66–67, 70.

⁸²⁸ Swarat, *Texte*, 175; cf. Inst. 4:15:20, 4:16:26.

⁸²⁹ Seen for example in Calvin's thought (Inst. 4:15:1-6) or in the *Heidelberg Catechism* (HK 65, 69). Cf. Markus Öhler, *Taufe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 117; Michael Beintker, ed., *Certitudo salutis: die Existenz des Glaubens zwischen Gewissheit und Zweifel: Symposion aus Anlass des 75. Geburtstags von Hans Helmut Esser* (Münster: LIT, 1996), 65.

⁸³⁰ The LC states that only faith gives salvation, but faith needs the external sign of Baptism to cling to (BSELK 1116).

(*Zusage*) of a new existence. This promise, however, is not only symbolic but Heinze believes that God in Baptism really gives what he promises to the person who believes.

The view of Baptism as promise is a major thought in Heinze's baptismal theology that becomes especially prominent in his baptismal writings and sermons after his main work *Taufe und Gemeinde*. Heinze's understanding of Baptism as God's promise primarily means the promise of a changed, new existence, a new foundation and a new reality of the life in this world (92, 126, 141).⁸³¹ The promised new existence is the changed position before God, the promise of grace, love, and salvation through participation in Christ (92, 131),⁸³² which mediates a new reality of forgiveness, as the recipient of Baptism is not anymore under the control of sin and death.⁸³³ The realisation of the promised new life with Christ is also connected to the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit (90, 95, 129),⁸³⁴ God's caring presence in one's life (128),⁸³⁵ and the connection with all others who participate in this new existence, which is the foundation for membership in the church (66).⁸³⁶

The promise of a new existence, however, is not effective apart from faith. Heinze emphasises that the personal character of Baptism is that God's promise of the new existence needs to come together with the recipient's openness to accept God's gift in faith (126).⁸³⁷ In his later thought Heinze additionally emphasises that faith does not make Baptism, but that faith grasps the effect of Baptism, which is the new existence.⁸³⁸ These thoughts are similar to Heinze's description of Luther's view (104) and are found in the Large Catechism as 'If I am baptized, I have the promise that I shall be saved and have eternal life,' 'Baptism is a treasure which God gives us and faith grasps,' and 'faith does not make baptism; rather, it receives baptism.'⁸³⁹ The understanding of Baptism as promise (*promissio*) that does not only create the new existence of a Christian but also provides the foundation for its continued existence, as well as the understanding that promise and faith constitute the efficacy of a sacrament, are central aspects of Luther's view of Baptism.⁸⁴⁰

⁸³¹ Heinze, 'Initiation', 67; Heinze, 'Taufkurs', 32.

⁸³² Heinze, 'Taufkurs', 33; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt 2Kor', 3.

⁸³³ Heinze, 'Initiation', 59; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Off 21', 10 September 2000, 6.

⁸³⁴ Heinze, 'Verheißung', 2; Heinze, 'Taufkurs', 28; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt 2Kor', 5.

⁸³⁵ Heinze, 'Initiation', 59; Heinze, 'Predigt Apg 8', 8; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Mk 16', 6; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Phil', 9.

⁸³⁶ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (1999)', 213; Heinze, 'Initiation', 64; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Phil', 9; Heinze, 'Taufpredigt 2Kor', 7.

⁸³⁷ Heinze, 'Taufpredigt Mk 16', 5.

⁸³⁸ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 14.

⁸³⁹ BSELK 1120-1124.

⁸⁴⁰ Bayer, *Promissio*, 254-73, esp. 268-70.

Heinze's understanding of Baptism as God's promise that needs to be grasped by faith also provides the foundation for his final acceptance of infant Baptism. Heinze states that although the practice of infant Baptism is not found in Scripture, its meaning of God's promise to the recipient is not affected by a large distance of time to the actual acceptance of this promise. He explains that a later conversion can become the moment of grasping the promise of the new existence that in the previously received Baptism already has been freely and gracefully awarded. He admits, that although personal faith and Baptism belong together and elementarily complement each other, their order cannot be determined. Heinze finally even goes so far that he says that because of the Gospel the promise of Baptism can be given to all people while only the believers will grasp it.⁸⁴¹ Also here we see Luther's thought who claimed that it is not Baptism that lacks anything but only faith, and that Baptism without faith still is right Baptism.⁸⁴²

The Lutheran influence is also seen in Heinze's emphasis that the significance of Baptism cannot be reduced to the beginning of the Christian life (130, 137), but that it is the beginning of a lifelong rebirth, and that the promise of Baptism especially needs to be remembered in times of struggle and temptation (141),⁸⁴³ both important aspects we already saw in Heinze's explicit references (quotations) to Luther (cf. Table 6.1). Also, Heinze's reason for the unrepeatability of Baptism is the emphasis of its understanding as a gift of God's grace that is not bound to human piety or a level of faith (92), a thought similar to Luther's understanding of Baptism as an 'eternal gift.'⁸⁴⁴

6.6 Evaluation of the Use and Understanding of Tradition and Church History

In a first step we analysed the individual explicit references and important implicit reflections of tradition and church history in Heinze's view of Baptism. Now we will bring everything together to evaluate the general understanding and use of tradition and church history in his baptismal theology. We first will deduce and evaluate Heinze's views of tradition and church history, considering his explicit explanations in the text and other relevant works. Finally, we will evaluate the general use of tradition and church history in Heinze's baptismal theology.

⁸⁴¹ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 14–16.

⁸⁴² BSELK 1124:23-31; cf. Lorenz Grönvik, *Die Taufe in der Theologie Martin Luthers* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 163–65; Horst Kasten, *Taufe und Rechtfertigung bei Thomas von Aquin und Martin Luther* (München: Kaiser, 1970), 277; Schwab, *Entwicklung*, 363–64.

⁸⁴³ Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 14.

⁸⁴⁴ WA 34/1:97:24-27.

6.6.1 *View of Tradition*

In the use of the explicit references we already saw that Heinze in *Taufe und Gemeinde* regularly refers to tradition, but we also saw differences in the usage that indicate his understanding of tradition. In the exegetical chapter, we observed that Heinze uses tradition for the interpretation of unclear Scripture passages or as affirmation and illustration of his interpretations. Here Heinze does not explicitly describe his use of tradition and it seems that tradition has no special authority besides profane history or exegetical results of modern scholars but is just one tool besides others to interpret and explain Scripture. Also, although Heinze affirms developments in the original Tradition embodied in Scripture (cf. 6.2.3), and acknowledges the only gradual acceptance of the Scriptural canon (97), he still sharply distinguishes between Scripture and tradition, and describes Scripture as the common foundation for the evaluation of all practice and teaching (94).

In the historical and systematical chapters Heinze's use of tradition looks different and there he also explicitly explains his understanding and use of tradition. According to Heinze every period had its own specific circumstances and questions, and, therefore, different understandings of Baptism developed that all had their reasons. Every generation of Christians had to address the questions of their time and had to develop answers in responsibility towards Scripture, which was especially difficult if the new problems have not been addressed in Scripture (94, 124). Heinze regards these historically developed different understandings of Baptism as useful to develop one's own understanding of Baptism. He explains, therefore, that it is important to consider, comprehend, and understand the background of developed understandings as they might help to understand the questions and challenges that arise in the process of implementing the NT teaching of Baptism in the contemporary church (9, 90, 94, 121-124). Different nuances of the authority of tradition, however, are not important in Heinze's thought. As Heinze, for example, sees the basic direction and baptismal understanding of the Catholic view as already developed after Augustine, he does not consider the Scholastic theological reflection about the early Christian thought or its reception into the official teaching of the church (such as the council of Trent where many aspects of the early baptismal view have been received as authoritative dogma).

Tradition, therefore, is seen by Heinze not as an authority or as an additional source of theology, but only as an example and advice in developing one's own position based on Scripture while addressing the needs of the contemporary church. In his systematic chapter Heinze consequently uses tradition in this way, seen in his inclusion of topics

described as historically controversial and still influencing the contemporary views, such as the understanding of Baptism as sacrament or confession, while only using them as informative starting point in the process of finding his own answers based on Scripture.⁸⁴⁵ The same we also see in his other baptismal writings, where he often uses the Baptist confession *Rechenschaft vom Glauben* as information about present understandings but in his argument only relies on Scripture.

Especially in the implicit reflections of tradition we saw one additional aspect of Heinze's understanding of tradition in his use of the biblical criterion. Heinze identifies interpretations of Scripture in the Baptist movement as unconscious tradition, and he uses the same standard in evaluating them that he applies to explicitly developed tradition. Tradition embedded in these unconscious hermeneutical frameworks, therefore, is similarly criticised by Heinze, and only used as recommendation and example. This also enables Heinze to come to conclusions different from his denominational background in his evaluation of infant Baptism or the meaning of Baptism.

In Heinze's view of Baptism, therefore, we see the key points of his view of tradition, which we can sum up as tradition having no authority but only being helpful to interpret Scripture, tradition as example and advice for the contextualisation of the scriptural message in new situations, and tradition as an unconscious hermeneutical framework that must be criticised to correct wrong or restricting interpretations of Scripture.

Tradition In and Outside of Scripture

Heinze is aware that Scripture not only contains the tradition of the Early Church but itself also is a product of tradition. The testimonies of Scripture not only report the message of Christ, but also show how this message was theologically reflected upon. Heinze observes that the NT openly reports conflicts between different streams of tradition, which is understandable as the different local congregations in the first century faced different challenges that required different responses. Additionally, there has been a great number of different preachers that were bearers of tradition.⁸⁴⁶ The challenge of the Early Church, therefore, was to decide which developments were valid expressions of the original message and which were distortions. In the beginning the authority to distinguish right and wrong tradition was held by the Apostles and their successors, the bishops, but

⁸⁴⁵ With exception of the one explicit use of Luther as affirmation.

⁸⁴⁶ EST 72; Heinze, 'Herausforderung Theologie', 95; Heinze, 'Mitte', 61–62.

later this function according to Heinze moved to the canon of Scripture.⁸⁴⁷ The tradition that is embodied in Scripture, therefore, has authority over all other tradition.

For Heinze one of the main tasks of theology is to understand Scripture as precisely as possible in its original historical context. To explicate Scripture all tools that help to achieve this task are regarded by him as good, no matter whether these are historical-critical methods, findings of other sciences, or other historical testimonies.⁸⁴⁸ In his exegetical work, therefore, Heinze often refers to Early Church tradition outside of Scripture to understand the tradition in Scripture, but in this case tradition outside of Scripture has no more authority than any other exegetical tool.

Tradition as Help for the Contextualisation of the Gospel

Besides the explication of Scripture, for Heinze the second task of theology is the application of the scriptural message to the contemporary situation.⁸⁴⁹ The historical testimony of Scripture needs to be heard in the language of its time, and then the responding faith needs to become a testimony in word and deed in the contemporary world. Heinze warns, however, that this process of the application of scriptural truth is not a simple copying of models, but that the change of history and contexts needs to be considered to come to an understanding of Scripture's relevancy for today.⁸⁵⁰ In the process of application Heinze sees the value of tradition as an example how previous generations applied the message of Scripture to the challenges of their time. In his theological method, therefore, he explicitly encourages considering the answers that Christians in similar situations have found over the course of church history, and he values also the tradition of other denominations as attempt to live according to their understanding of the Gospel.⁸⁵¹

In the process of application, however, tradition has no special authority but only serves as example and advice. Heinze follows here the Baptist understanding that no tradition or confession has any authority besides Scripture, and that tradition has only recommendation character for the congregation and can always be criticised.⁸⁵² The optional character of tradition becomes also manifest in Heinze's work in general. Even though he claims the importance of tradition in the process of theological application, he does not

⁸⁴⁷ EST 252.

⁸⁴⁸ Heinze, 'Mitte', 66–67; Heinze, 'Verantwortung', 162–63, 174–75.

⁸⁴⁹ EST 213–14.

⁸⁵⁰ Heinze, 'bunte Bund', 2; Heinze, 'Verantwortung', 171–76.

⁸⁵¹ Heinze, 'Predigt Apg 8', 1; Heinze, 'Wachstum', 38.

⁸⁵² Heinze, 'Bund sind wir', 41; Heinze, 'Verantwortung', 172; Heinze, 'Mitte', 53–54.

as consequently as in *Taufe und Gemeinde* use tradition in his other writings and especially medieval tradition is generally not present in his works.

Unconscious Hermeneutical Frameworks of Tradition

One of the basic principles of the Baptist movement is the absolute authority of Scripture over all teaching and confessions. Here the Baptists follow the understanding of the Reformation that Scripture interprets itself and no external means are needed for the congregation and the individual to understand Scripture (formal sufficiency).⁸⁵³ The claim that only Scripture is the final norm and authority of faith, however, is criticised by Heinze as oversimplification, as ‘Scripture is always interpreted Scripture.’⁸⁵⁴ He warns, therefore, that often unconscious hermeneutical frameworks guide the interpretation of Scripture in a congregation, whereas the congregation’s understanding of the past just becomes the rediscovered understanding of the present.⁸⁵⁵ To explain the basic aspects of understanding Scripture Heinze distinguishes between the Scripture as the product of an author, the actual interpretation of Scripture at a specific time, and the tradition that emerges from this actual interpretation.⁸⁵⁶ Such traditions of interpretation are found in Baptist congregations that read and interpret Scripture along the lines of their tradition. As in the Baptist movement the congregations by corporately studying Scripture decide how to understand Scripture, the final authority is not Scripture as claimed, but the congregation and its tradition of interpretation. Heinze describes this as ‘authority of consent’ and ‘faith of the congregation,’ similarly expressed by other Baptist theologians with terms like ‘interpretations held by tradent circles’⁸⁵⁷ or ‘verbal tradition that guides the thinking.’⁸⁵⁸ In these often unconscious hermeneutical frameworks Heinze sees a form of authoritative tradition in the Baptist movement that guides the understanding of Scripture, which is exactly what the Baptists often criticise regarding other denominations.⁸⁵⁹

Heinze consequently applies the Baptist understanding of tradition as having only optional character to these unconscious traditions of scriptural interpretation, and he demands openness to criticise and adjust these traditions. For Heinze the means to achieve

⁸⁵³ Heinze, ‘Ekklesiologie’, 5; Heinze, ‘Bedeutung’, 49; EST 233.

⁸⁵⁴ Heinze, ‘Bedeutung’, 54.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁸⁵⁶ EST 185. Bedford-Strohm similarly talks about interpretation-traditions (*Auslegungstraditionen*). Ulrich Luz, Thomas Söding, and Samuel Vollenweider, eds., *Exegese-ökumenisch engagiert: der ‘Evangelisch-Katholische Kommentar’ in der Diskussion über 500 Jahre Reformation: ein Rückblick und ein Ausblick* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 22.

⁸⁵⁷ Kim Strübind, ‘Ist die Taufe ein “Gehorsamsschritt”?’ *ZThG*, no. 12 (2007): 186.

⁸⁵⁸ Spangenberg, *Reformation*, 32.

⁸⁵⁹ Heinze, ‘Bedeutung’, 65.

this end and to give back the claimed authority to Scripture is the historical-critical method. The historical-critical method radically focuses on Scripture and enables one to question traditional interpretations of Scripture through its demanded methodical distance from all preunderstanding.⁸⁶⁰ Heinze also explicitly emphasises that it is not Scripture that is criticised, but the understanding and interpretation of Scripture in the tradition of the congregation.⁸⁶¹ As Heinze acknowledges that in Baptist congregations the authority lies in the consent of its members, he demands that all members of the congregations must not only be informed about the findings of the historical-critical method but must be instructed to apply it by themselves, a demand Heinze also put into practice in his teaching of the *Theologischer Grundkurs*.⁸⁶² According to Heinze, only through these new methods of interpreting Scripture, congregations and individual believers can be guided towards a critical encounter with their own tradition.⁸⁶³

Evaluation

We saw that Heinze's baptismal writings show the main characteristics of his view of tradition, which we also confirmed by his other works. Overall Heinze's view of tradition reflects basic aspects of both, the Irrelevancy and Ancillary views of tradition (cf. 2.4.1). The characteristics of the Ancillary view are especially seen regarding Baptist tradition, where Heinze freely criticises what he thinks contradicts Scripture, and keeps what he regards as helpful and right understanding of Scripture. The characteristics of the Irrelevancy view are especially seen regarding medieval tradition, which is generally neglected by Heinze, although he claims that all tradition is helpful in the process of making the Gospel relevant to the world today. The characteristic Baptist understanding of tradition as having no authority besides Scripture is clearly visible in Heinze's thought and he consequently applies this to all forms of tradition, also to the unconscious traditions that he sees in the hermeneutical frameworks of his own Baptist tradition. Heinze's critique of the unconscious hermeneutical frameworks of Baptist tradition as having equal authority to the confessions or teachings of traditional denominations has also been acknowledged by the Baptist-Roman Catholic international conversations of 1988.⁸⁶⁴ The same is

⁸⁶⁰ EST 201.

⁸⁶¹ Heinze, 'Verantwortung', 177–78; Heinze, 'Mitte', 63.

⁸⁶² Seen esp. in Heinze, 'Neues Testament - 2. Lehrbrief. Das Zeugnis von der Auferstehung des Kreuzigten', 1–4; André Heinze, 'Neues Testament - 6. Lehrbrief. Die Darstellung Jesu in den vier Evangelien' (*Theologischer Grundkurs der Vereinigung Evangelischer Freikirchen in Deutschland*, 2001), 5–8.

⁸⁶³ Heinze, 'Bedeutung', 68–69.

⁸⁶⁴ No. 45–46 in Roman Catholic Church and Baptist World Alliance, 'The Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations. 1984–1988', 1988.

affirmed by the 2010 conversations, in which the described Baptist position in many parts fits to Heinze's view of tradition, affirming the development of tradition in Scripture, the usefulness of historical-critical methods to interpret Scripture, and also the value of tradition in the process of contextualising the message of Scripture.⁸⁶⁵

6.6.2 *View of Church History*

In *Taufe und Gemeinde* Heinze sees church history as important foundation to understand the developments of the different baptismal views present in contemporary churches, and we saw that his evaluation of the references to tradition and history in general is neutral, at some points even positive. As in the Early Church many movements emerged that claimed to be Christian, Heinze especially emphasises the positive contributions of the first centuries' church, seen in the canon, the creed, and the teaching office to secure the Christian faith (97). Although Heinze also describes developments like the rise of Christianity to official state religion and the corresponding shifts in baptismal understanding, he still speaks about the church in contrast to other groups, like the Cathars, which he labels as sects (*Sekte*), implying that they are not part of mainstream Christianity (103). Here we see that Heinze neither sees the institutional church in complete apostasy, nor limits true Christianity to the persecuted groups that sought to reform the mainstream church. For Heinze the church and its history seem to be everywhere where believers responsibly try to follow Jesus on the basis that the Early Church formed, which is found in Scripture (94). Heinze, therefore, also speaks of the 'history of faith' (9) synonymously to church history.

Heinze describes the Anabaptist movement similarly to the other movements of the Reformation as seeking to correct the shortcomings of the Catholic Church based on Scripture (110). Even though Heinze positively evaluates the main branch of the Anabaptist movement (cf. *Täufer*), he does not see the Baptist movement in direct succession to the Anabaptists or the radical Reformation, but describes it as a later movement with its own characteristics that resulted from the encounter of the English Presbyterian dissidents and the Dutch Anabaptists (111, 118).⁸⁶⁶ Heinze also sees the distinct features of the German Baptist movement, especially seen in the discussion about God's work in Baptism, found in the German movement from its beginning, and he seems not to be interested in the understandings and developments of the international Baptist movement.

⁸⁶⁵ No. 44, 56-57, 42, 55 in Catholic Church and Baptist World Alliance, 'The Word of God in the Life of the Church. A Report of International Conversations between The Catholic Church and the Baptist World Alliance 2006-2010', 2010.

⁸⁶⁶ Cf. Heinze, 'Predigt Apg 8', 2.

In Heinze's use of church history in his baptismal writings we see an emphasis on important events that led to changed understandings, and, therefore, important periods in his view of church history are the Early Church, the Reformation, including the subsequent development of the Baptist movement, and the recent developments in the German churches. His emphasis is not on continuity in church history but rather on the responsibility of every generation. The persecution of the Reformation, therefore, although negatively evaluated, is not seen by Heinze as directly connected to the present-day Baptists, which allows him to appraise the baptismal theologies and achievements of the Reformers without negative bias.

The Church as Fellowship of Believers: Church History as History of Faith

Although Heinze also understands church as a historical entity through which God is present and shapes this world,⁸⁶⁷ the basic aspect of his view of church history is not the church but the faith of believers that is the foundation for the encounter with God in history.⁸⁶⁸ Heinze, therefore, describes church history as 'history of faith' (9), as through faith the God of history becomes the Lord of individual believers and enters history by living in them and testifying himself through them.⁸⁶⁹

The focus on the faith of individual believers and not on the church enables Heinze not to reduce church history to the history of one denomination or Christian stream, but to critically acknowledge God's work in all different streams of Christianity. Consequently, he freely admits wrong developments in his own denomination as well as in other Christian churches, but always seeks to understand how believers tried to find and apply the right understanding of God's revelation in their own historical context.⁸⁷⁰ This, finally, also leads Heinze to reject a reduction of Christianity on an 'orthodox Christianity' that is only based on dogmatic criteria.⁸⁷¹

Focal Points of Church History: Acknowledging Faith in all Streams

Heinze's understanding of church history as history of faith gives him the freedom to see the broader picture of Christianity, to acknowledge faith in different streams, and therefore, he also does not trace single streams through history but points out similar understandings of faith. This might also be the reason why he skips the whole Medieval period

⁸⁶⁷ Heinze, 'Ekklesiologie', 5.

⁸⁶⁸ Heinze, 'Verantwortung', 167.

⁸⁶⁹ Heinze, 'Mitte', 67.

⁸⁷⁰ Cf. Heinze, 'Predigt Apg 8', 1.

⁸⁷¹ EST 50.

in his discussion of Baptism, as in his understanding during this time no fundamental new developments appeared.

As Heinze does not trace a single Baptist movement through the ages he also does not subscribe to a position called ‘Baptist successionism’ or ‘Baptist perpetuity.’⁸⁷² He does not even directly connect the early British Baptist movement with the German movement, as he describes the formation of the Baptist congregations in continental Europe as a originating from German Christians who 200 years ago applied the principles of the British Baptist movement to their faith.⁸⁷³ Heinze sees the connection between the British and German Baptists therefore not in terms of a continuous history, but in terms of identical principles applied to their faith. This disconnection to the early Baptist movement, and consequently to the Anabaptist movement, enables Heinze to be much more positive about the thought of the magisterial Reformers. Baptists who directly connect the history of the Baptist churches to the Anabaptists or even further to other persecuted minorities, in contrast, are much more negative about the thought of traditional denominations as they still see the old conflict and persecution connected to these theological positions.⁸⁷⁴

Evaluation

Heinze’s view of church history reflects features of the views of Critical Disregard and Critical Reverence. Like in an understanding of Critical Disregard Heinze sees church where people in faith turn to God and not necessarily connected to a specific historical succession. He does not, however, draw the consequence of regarding the church as an ahistorical reality or seeing denominations that advocate different theological standpoints in apostasy.⁸⁷⁵ On the contrary, Heinze acknowledges that in all streams of Christianity people in faith encounter God, which enables him to see the history of all churches with Critical Reverence. This leads to an ecumenical openness on Heinze’s part, which also

⁸⁷² Cf. James Edward McGoldrick, *Baptist Successionism: A Crucial Question in Baptist History* (Scarecrow Press: Kent, 2000), 1–5; W. A. Jarrel, *Baptist Church Perpetuity: Or, the Continuous Existence of Baptist Churches from the Apostolic to the Present Day Demonstrated by the Bible and by History* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2000), 1–3.

⁸⁷³ Heinze, ‘Predigt Apg 8’, 2.

⁸⁷⁴ Seen for example in Andrea Strübind’s article ‘*Erbe und Ärger. Was gibt es für Kirchen aus täuferischen und nonkonformistischen Traditionen anlässlich des Reformationsjubiläums 2017 zu feiern?*’ where she speaks of ‘Konflikt- und Verletzungsgeschichte’ and admits that it is difficult to celebrate the Reformation for the Baptist churches who see themselves in the tradition of the marginalised and persecuted Anabaptist movement. Spangenberg, *Reformation*, 71–87.

⁸⁷⁵ Similarly, Bentley Hart states ‘Perhaps the only true story of Christianity is that which unfolds in the hearts and minds of believers. Even so, these hidden movements of the spirit have made themselves manifest, even if only fitfully, in the outward events of Christian history.’ David Bentley Hart, *The Story of Christianity: A History of 2000 Years of the Christian Faith* (London: Quercus, 2013), xii.

enables him to embrace theological views originating from other backgrounds, also seen in his baptismal view.

6.6.3 *General Evaluation*

We have seen that Heinze's baptismal view in many aspects reflects his views of tradition and church history, and that he applies them more consistently than in his other works. Tradition both plays a significant role in his explication of Scripture, and in his systematic application of the exegetical findings to the church today. In the explication of Scripture the tradition of the Early Church is especially important to Heinze, whereas for the application Heinze is content to outline the development of the traditional positions that still are present today. As he sees the Catholic position as already developed around the time of Augustine, he does not further refer to Medieval or Scholastic baptismal views that in a sense just followed the established view and transferred it into the teaching of the church, which is not important to Heinze. He, therefore, jumps straight to the developments of the Reformation and the reformers' critique of the Catholic view. Both in Heinze's explicit use and in his implicit reflections of tradition we have observed that tradition in whatsoever form has no authority in his thought. This is also underlined by the many unspecific references to tradition, the omission of any description of authoritative tradition of councils or confessions, and in his ability to freely criticise his own Baptist tradition, or even to go beyond it in developing of his own view.

Noteworthy is Heinze's appreciation of Luther, which is manifest in his explicit quotes from Luther, but also in his implicit acceptance of Luther's thought. We saw that under the influence of exegetical findings in Heinze's baptismal writings his understanding of the meaning of Baptism gradually shifted to a view that in its core is close to a Lutheran understanding.⁸⁷⁶ This development is also quite interesting as it is contrary to the development we see in Calvin's baptismal theology. The early Calvin was heavily influenced by Luther and emphasised the invisible church, but the later Calvin moved more towards Zwingli's understanding of Baptism as public confession and an emphasis of the visible congregation.⁸⁷⁷ In Heinze's thought we see the opposite development as he gradually dismisses the understanding of Baptism as confession of faith and moves towards Luther's thought, accompanied by a growing emphasis of the invisible universal church

⁸⁷⁶ The fellow Baptist Swarat also criticised a Lutheran or Catholic tendency in Heinze's baptismal theology regarding the attempt to distinct the effects of Baptism and faith. Swarat, 'Rezension', 231.

⁸⁷⁷ Cf. John W. Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition: A Historical and Practical Theology* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 39–51.

reality that goes beyond the local congregation and even beyond his own Baptist denomination.

Given the strong Lutheran influence and Heinze's later cautious acceptance of the validity of infant Baptism we might ask whether Heinze's view still can be considered a Baptist view. We can answer this question 'yes' due to several reasons: We have seen that Heinze's baptismal view in many aspects is shaped by Baptist tradition, which becomes manifest, for example, in his emphasis of the authority of Scripture in the context of the local congregation, or his understanding of congregation as assembly of true believers. Remarkably, Heinze does not see the emphasis of the objective and sacramental character of Baptism as contradicting Baptist tradition but as essential for Baptist ecclesiology: only if Baptism is a work of God, it can become the reliable foundation for the community of the congregation. Additionally, although Heinze acknowledges the theological validity of infant Baptism, he still advocates believer's Baptism as the best practice and, therefore, rejects to personally practise infant Baptism. Furthermore, the strong Lutheran influence in Heinze's baptismal theology does not automatically set him outside of the German Baptist tradition, which from its beginning had streams that embraced a Lutheran sacramental view.⁸⁷⁸ Additionally, Heinze strongly identified himself as Baptist and was faithful to his church till his death. Although he held some views regarding Baptism or hermeneutics that were not embraced by the more conservative Baptists, he did not become resentful or even left his church as others did. Kim Strübind, for example, who also embraced the validity of infant Baptism, finally became a member of the Lutheran church.⁸⁷⁹ Finally, we observed that Heinze is more consistently applying the Baptist understanding of tradition than Baptists who strongly cling to their heritage, as he also applies it to the unconscious hermeneutical frameworks of Baptist tradition, and replaces elements of Baptist tradition with what he thinks more scriptural understandings, even if this means to embrace Lutheran characteristics.

6.7 Conclusions

Heinze's view of Baptism is an interesting example for recent German Baptist theology as it reflects the tension between conservative and progressive views, which the Baptist movement encountered in the last decades. Heinze being on the progressive side but still

⁸⁷⁸ Beginning with the congregation in Berlin under the leadership of Gottfried Lehman. Cf. Swarat, *Texte*, 176–81.

⁸⁷⁹ Cf. Kim Strübind, 'Abschied von der Placebo-Kirche. Warum ich dem "Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in Deutschland" den Rücken kehre', *ZThG*, no. 16 (2011): 11–23.

rooted in Baptist tradition and accepted by his denomination, constantly tries to be faithful to his tradition while also following what he regards as the right biblical understanding. Especially remarkable is his strong advocacy of the historical-critical method, which he systematically uses and which, for him, represents the means to lead the Baptist movement back to giving all authority to Scripture. A major part of his baptismal work, therefore, is the extensive but accessible exegetical foundation, which, however, does not mean that he neglects the application of the exegetical results to the contemporary situation of the church. His baptismal view also reflects an ecumenical orientation that is especially seen in his general neutral description of other denominations' baptismal views and in his acknowledgment that all views have their good reasons. This openness also urges him to reflect on the meaning of Baptism, which finally leads him to reject the understanding of Baptism as a mere confession of faith and to embrace the validity of infant Baptism.

Heinze's baptismal view, nevertheless, is a true Baptist view, clearly seen in his emphasis on the necessity of faith and his preference to only baptise responsible believers who can decide about Baptism for themselves. Also, in Heinze's understanding of church with the focus on the local congregation and the importance of the personal confession of faith for the fellowship of the congregation, the Baptist roots and ecclesiology are visible. However, Heinze points out that the fellowship of the congregation should not be built upon a subjective confession of faith, but upon God's promise of a new existence given in Baptism, whereas the confession of faith can be detached from Baptism. Remarkably positive is that Heinze always sees Baptism in relation to its role for the church or congregation, and thus omits a shortcoming that Hubert criticised when he observed that many works of Baptism see Baptism in isolation and that Baptism should always be considered in relation to a NT understanding of church and sacraments.⁸⁸⁰

In general, we can conclude, that Heinze's view is a suitable example of the use of tradition and church history in a recent Baptist position. Heinze's view considers relevant tradition, but also reflects the Baptist understanding of tradition only being optional, which in Heinze's case is also consistently applied to unconscious hermeneutical frameworks of his own Baptist tradition. This use of tradition leads to a baptismal view that reflects Baptist characteristics, while also being open for the critical evaluation of them and for the incorporation of other influences like Lutheran baptismal theology or the acknowledgement of the validity of infant Baptism.

⁸⁸⁰ Hubert, *Streit*, 121.

‘Baptism into his name snatches the believer out of the realm of sin and death, leading him into the realm of the living God, which is opened by the Messiah Jesus.’⁸⁸¹

– Theodor Schneider –

‘Baptism is also, then, an act that constitutes the new existence of the Christian...’⁸⁸²

– Wolfhart Pannenberg –

‘The sign of baptism refers to what happens through God’s free grace in the act of baptism: the gift of the Holy Spirit filled new existence of the baptised person.’⁸⁸³

– André Heinze –

Chapter 7

Comparison of Schneider’s, Pannenberg’s, and Heinze’s Views of Baptism

In this final chapter we will bring the baptismal views of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze into dialogue, first by comparing their general features and theoretical approach, second, by comparing their practical usage of references to tradition and church history, and, finally, by comparing some exemplary topics of Baptism that are related to tradition and church history or the traditional discussion about Baptism.

⁸⁸¹ ‘Die Taufe auf seinen Namen entreißt den Gläubigen dem Machtbereich der Sünde und des Todes und führt ihn in den Herrschaftsbereich des lebendigen Gottes, der durch den Messias Jesus eröffnet ist.’ ZdNG 66.

⁸⁸² ‘Die Taufe ist auch Konstitutionsakt der neuen Existenz des Christen...’ ST 3:266. Quote from ST.E slightly adjusted to emphasise the original German meaning.

⁸⁸³ ‘Das Zeichen der Taufe verweist auf das im Vollzug der Taufe aus freier Gnade Gottes Stattfindende: Die Gabe der vom Heiligen Geist erfüllten neuen Existenz des Getauften.’ Heinze, ‘Mitgliedschaft (2009)’, 14.

7.1 Scripture, Tradition, and Church History

First, we will compare the general approach to Scripture, tradition and church history in the thought and baptismal views of our three authors, also considering their understanding of the location and authority of the teaching of the church.

7.1.1 *Scripture and the Teaching of the Church*

We saw that the baptismal views of all three authors are thoroughly based on Scripture, seen in chapter structure and in the use of Scripture in their argument. All three authors do not only claim Scripture to be the foundation and norm of faith and theology, but also methodically determine the primacy of Scripture: Schneider continuously refers to Vatican II's new dogmatic method that prescribes Scripture as starting point; Pannenberg has built in the dependence on Scripture into the first validation criteria of theological statements; and Heinze defines Scripture as starting point and evaluation criteria for historical positions in his four steps of theology. The primacy of Scripture, expressed in its material sufficiency and resulting authority, therefore, is a central aspect of all three examined baptismal views, which also reflects the recent ecumenical convergence regarding the foundational role of Scripture among different denominations in Germany.⁸⁸⁴

Whereas for all three authors Scripture is the starting point and authority of theology, all of them also adhere to the historical-critical method in biblical exegesis. They all see themselves guided to it by modern thought's understanding of the historical character of Scripture and as well find approval for its use in their respective denominational traditions. Schneider follows in the use of the historical-critical method the recommendations of Vatican II; for Pannenberg its use is a consequence of Luther's clarity of Scripture and the self-interpretation of Scripture; and Heinze, similarly, finds the reason in Luther's thought of Scripture as creature of God⁸⁸⁵ and in the understanding of Scripture as 'God's word in human mouth,' found in the confession writing of the German Baptists. The problem that the historical-critical method weakens the authority of Scripture, is answered by all three authors by not binding Scripture's authority to the inerrancy of single statements, but by seeing the authority in the message of Scripture as a whole. Additionally, although all three authors acknowledge the use of the historical-critical method, all of them are also critical about its results and do not elevate it into a position of independent and absolute

⁸⁸⁴ Cf. Christoph Böttigheimer, *Die eine Bibel und die vielen Kirchen: die Heilige Schrift im ökumenischen Verständnis* (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 251–55.

⁸⁸⁵ Cf. Heinze, 'Verantwortung', 169–71.

authority but methodically integrate it in the broader context of biblical interpretation in the church.

The integration of the historical-critical method into the broader scope of interpretation in the church also functions in the thought of all three authors as critical corrective to the teaching of the church, which also indicates where they see the actual teaching authority in their denominations: Schneider understands the historical-critical method as counter-movement to the determination of scriptural interpretation by dogma and magisterium and demands that the teaching office of the church must consider the results of historical-critical exegesis. Schneider, however, only expresses this regarding the process of creating new teaching and is not that clear about the critical role of Scripture regarding the revision and correction of already established authoritative teaching. This undermines his understanding of Scripture as absolute authority and is typical for post Vatican II Catholicism. Similarly, Pannenberg understands the historical-critical method as protection against the dogmatic preconditions of dogmatic theology, represented by the theologians of the Protestant faculties, which effectively gives them magisterial quality. Here we also might critically remark that with the use of the historical-critical method the authority still remains within the theological faculty, however, transferred to the exegetical department. Heinze correspondingly sees the historical-critical method as protection of the predetermination of scriptural interpretation by the hidden hermeneutical frameworks of the local congregations. All three authors, therefore, do not understand the historical-critical method as undermining biblical authority, but on the contrary see it as returning authority to Scripture in relation to tradition and the teaching of the church.

The acceptance of the historical-critical method, and thus the use of a common exegetical approach by all three authors, expectedly leads to some convergence in their baptismal views. For example, they all see Paul's thoughts on Baptism as core of NT baptismal theology, especially Romans 6, and therefore heavily rely on Paul. Also, all three authors are aware of the descriptive nature of Acts and, therefore, only cautiously use it to formulate baptismal theology. And, likewise, all three authors regard Jesus' words about Baptism in Matthew 28 and Mark 16 as not authentic and, therefore, search for other explanations for the historical formation of Baptism. The use of the historical-critical method, therefore, contributes to convergence in the baptismal views and thus at least to a certain degree is ecumenically significant. This significance is not only seen in core exegetical similarities but is also reflected by the used literature of all three authors, which shows that the denominational boundaries are blurring in regard to exegetical method and

results.⁸⁸⁶ Another ecumenically significant consequence of the acknowledgement of the historical-critical method, seen in all three authors, is the awareness of the tradition process before and in Scripture and consequently the understanding of Scripture as product of tradition and historical document. This alleviates the traditional juxtaposition of Scripture and tradition and thus also reflects the ecumenical developments towards a common understanding of tradition (cf. 2.4.3).⁸⁸⁷ However, the same development might endanger the special place and relative authority of Scripture over tradition, which is seen, for example, in Schneider as he places the *Didache* on a similar level as Scripture and also in Pannenberg's description of the *Nicene Creed* in similar terms as Scripture. Despite these occasional tendencies, however, all three authors affirm the relative authority of Scripture over tradition.

The use of the historical-critical method, therefore, alleviates the influence of denominational biases in baptismal views by generating a common exegetical foundation, while also contributing to the awareness of historical developments in and before Scripture and thus the acceptance of the complexity and diversity of NT theology.⁸⁸⁸ The acknowledgement of the complexity of NT baptismal theology, despite the use of similar historical-critical exegetical results, therefore, leaves room in the baptismal views for the influence of the view of tradition and church history of our authors and their respective traditions. Böttigheimer, therefore, correctly observes that 'the interpretation of Scripture is not only

⁸⁸⁶ According to Gräßer especially 'the general acceptance of historical criticism' contributed to the close cooperation of Catholic and Protestant exegetes, which is affirmed by Breytenbach who further concludes that 'based on historical-critical exegesis a fundamental consensus has been found in regard to old controversial topics.' The ecumenical significance is also acknowledged by the concluding report of *Verbindliches Zeugnis* that declares the 'exegesis of the Old and New Testament has become a theological discipline which is capable of providing ecumenism with important stimuli.' Erich Gräßer, 'Evangelisch-katholische Exegese? Eine Standortbestimmung', *ZThK* 95, no. 2 (1998): 193–96; Breytenbach, 'Das II. Vatikanische Konzil und „evangelische“ Exegese des Neuen Testaments', 346, 348, 357–58; VZ.E 44, 122; cf. also Luz, Söding, and Vollenweider, *Exegese*, 12–13, 26; Böttigheimer, *Bibel*, 351–54.

⁸⁸⁷ Cf. Böttigheimer, *Bibel*, 254.

⁸⁸⁸ Also acknowledged by the concluding report of VZ. VZ.E 85–86. The awareness of the differences in genre, content, and concepts in the NT results in the understanding of the NT as 'document of diversity' which naturally leads to controversies but not to arbitrariness. Uwe Swarat and Thomas Söding, eds., *Heillos gespalten? Segensreich erneuert? 500 Jahre Reformation in der Vielfalt ökumenischer Perspektiven / herausgegeben für den Deutschen Ökumenischen Studienausschuss (DÖSTA)* (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 230–32; cf. also Luz, Söding, and Vollenweider, *Exegese*, 21; Walter Klaiber and Wolfgang Thönissen, eds., *Glaube und Taufe in freikirchlicher und römisch-katholischer Sicht* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2005), 11. Käsemann came to the same conclusion and famously stated that 'the New Testament canon does not as such constitute the unity of the church. On the contrary, as such (that is in its accessibility for the historian) it constitutes the multiplicity of denominations.' Ernst: Käsemann, 'Begründet der neutestamentliche Kanon die Einheit der Kirche?', in *Das Neue Testament als Kanon. Dokumentation und kritische Analyse zur gegenwärtigen Diskussion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 131.

determined by the use of exegetical methods, but also by the context in which Scripture is read and which provides the basis for the attempt to understand Scripture.’⁸⁸⁹

7.1.2 Tradition

All three authors thoroughly use tradition and church history in their baptismal views, while their use also reflects their general understanding of tradition and church history. The importance of tradition in our authors’ thought is not only manifest in the mere use of tradition, but we have seen that all three authors, similarly to the primacy of Scripture, integrated the requirement of the discussion with tradition into their theological method: for Schneider the second step of the new dogmatic method demands the dealing with the historical developments, for Pannenberg the second and forth validation criteria of theological statements require the consideration of historical and theological developments, and for Heinze the third step of his theological method calls for studying and evaluating historical answers. Here we see that all three authors recognise that there is development in tradition regarding the original Tradition testified in Scripture, otherwise its consideration would not be necessary, but we also see on a methodological level that there are nuances in the weight of tradition. Heinze, for example, states that ‘it is not always necessary or possible to go through all steps’ of his method,⁸⁹⁰ which is also seen in his other works where the discussion of tradition is not always as thorough as in *Taufe und Gemeinde*. For Schneider and Pannenberg, the consideration of tradition is a hard requirement, as the new dogmatic method does not allow for skipping tradition and Pannenberg’s validation criteria must be all fulfilled for a theological statement to be a valid hypothesis. The different weight of tradition is also reflected in the argument of the main baptismal works of our authors: Heinze treats the results of the historical discussion in an optional way as suggestion or inspiration in his systematic conclusions, whereas Pannenberg’s systematic part thoroughly discusses the developments of tradition to find the practical implications for the present-day church. Even more obvious is the difference in the weight of tradition in the structural comparison between Schneider’s baptismal chapter and Heinze’s baptism book. The two works are structurally very similar in the sequence of a scriptural, a historical, and a systematic part, both similarly closing the scriptural part with concluding theses from Scripture. But while for Heinze the historical part that describes the developed traditional views ends openly, Schneider adds another set of

⁸⁸⁹ Böttigheimer, *Bibel*, 355.

⁸⁹⁰ Heinze, ‘Wachstum’, 38.

concluding theses from Scripture *and* tradition, which provides the foundation for the systematic section, practically lifting tradition on the same level as Scripture.

Even though all three authors require the discussion with tradition, we have also seen that there are significant differences regarding the authority and fallibility of tradition, and in the consequent possibility to criticise tradition. Heinze has already in his method integrated that traditional views must be criticised by Scripture and need to be discarded if necessary. Pannenberg's view also gives the possibility to reject or correct tradition, as his understanding of the proleptical and hypothetical nature of theological statements already implies that there cannot be final theological knowledge and all statements, including authoritative teaching of the church, must be open for revision. Although Schneider emphasises the normative authority of Scripture and also uses Scripture to evaluate and question tradition, he is bound by the lack of the possibility to criticise and discard authoritative tradition included in the teaching of the Catholic Church. He applies, therefore, other means to practically maintain the material sufficiency and normative authority of Scripture, in order to achieve the possibility to evaluate and question tradition while still working in the constraints of his denomination: if there is tradition that lacks the required obvious scriptural foundation, he applies the concept of 'infolding' in order to discover its scriptural origin, which allows him to uphold the claim of material sufficiency of Scripture. For tradition that contradicts his understanding of Scripture and is part of the teaching of the church, he uses the concept of the 'double relationality of dogma' to show that the questionable tradition emerged in response to challenges of a specific time, as application of a correct scriptural thought. This gives Schneider the possibility to ignore the questionable tradition as irrelevant for the present time without explicitly discarding it, while finding a new expression for the underlying scriptural thought. In Schneider's baptismal view the application of these concepts is especially seen regarding the connection of Baptism to original sin, a topic Schneider initially ignores, and only later, when he finds an acceptable expression of the core intention, he explicitly reintegrates this doctrine in his baptismal view.

In the baptismal views of Pannenberg and Heinze it is manifest that they are not constrained by authoritative tradition and the teaching of the church, but straightforwardly criticise and discard parts of their own tradition even if it is part of the official or implicit teaching of their church. This is clearly seen in Pannenberg's neglect of the word and promise character of Baptism and in his demand to correct the *Confessio Augustana's* condemnation of the Anabaptists, and in Heinze's rejection of the understanding of Baptism

as a mere confession of faith and especially in the possibility to see the confession of faith disconnected from Baptism and the resulting acceptance of infant Baptism. In regard to the possibility of criticising tradition and the teaching of the church, therefore, we see in the baptismal views of our three authors the reflection of the prevailing ecumenical problem that ‘there is still an explicit consensus missing about the critical function of Scripture with respect to the developed ecclesiological traditions,’ as the ecumenical study about the mutual condemnations of the Reformation concluded.⁸⁹¹ The missing possibility of criticising and reforming authoritative tradition is considered as a major shortcoming of Vatican II, also acknowledged and criticised by Catholic theologians,⁸⁹² and is still present as seen in the recent Catholic study document *Theology Today* of the International Theological Commission.⁸⁹³

7.1.3 Church History

The baptismal views of our three authors all reflect a critical appreciation of church history and an ecumenical openness regarding other denominations or streams of Christianity. The critical appreciation of church history is expressed by our authors in different terms: Schneider emphasises the sacramental character of the church, which for him means that the visible Catholic Church does signify the universal reality of the body of Christ, while not being identical with it. This opens the possibility of acknowledging the shortcomings and sinfulness of church history, as the church and its members stay in the tension between holiness and sinfulness. Pannenberg emphasises the church as part of the eschatological people of God (*Volk Gottes*) that is elected in the event of Christ’s death and resurrection. The sinfulness and shortcomings of the church lead to the judgement of God, which sets the history of the church in the tension between election and judgement. Heinze stresses the church as community of believers and he, therefore, sees church history mainly as history of faith, which puts the history of the church in the tension between faith and unbelief. All three authors, therefore, acknowledge the dignity of the church, while also providing a framework to explain the shortcomings of the church and its history. Here we see the in today’s ecumenical dialogue commonly accepted fact that ‘the true nature of the Church is not at the disposal of mankind. It is repeatedly obscured by

⁸⁹¹ LV 1:29–32.

⁸⁹² Böttigheimer, *Bibel*, 256; Vorgrimler, *Commentary*, 3:193; cf. also Lane, ‘Authority’, 307.

⁸⁹³ The missing possibility of the tradition-critical function of Scripture is seen by Christine Axt-Piscalar in the fact that the academic Scripture interpretation is bound to authentic magisterial interpretation, whereas “‘dissent” towards the magisterium has no place in Catholic theology.’ Söding, *Rolle*, 260–69 The important paragraphs are 30, 37–44, esp. 41 in International Theological Commission, ed., *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles, and Criteria* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

the fallibility of human action,' which also implies the continuous need of repentance and correction.⁸⁹⁴

All three authors' understanding of church also opens room for other denominations and streams of church history, and thus reflect an ecumenical openness. For Schneider the sacramental character of the church implies that the reality of the church is bigger than just one institution. He, therefore, frequently goes back to the Early Church, however, not to idealise or restore it, but to look for an original broadness that allows other theological views and denominations to coexist as valid expressions of Christianity. Pannenberg with the emphasis of the church as eschatological people of God moves in the opposite direction. Except in the person of Jesus himself, he does not see unity in Early Church history, and, therefore, he concludes unity will only be possible in the eschatological future, when it will become manifest that all churches have part in the greater reality of the eschatological people of God. Heinze, finally, does not so much emphasise the continuity of church history, and so he does neither look back to the origins nor forward to the future, but he sees unity in the common faith that is manifest in the different streams of church history.

In these different approaches we still see the denominational backgrounds reflected, from which our authors move towards the middle ground of a view of Critical Reverence of church history. Schneider comes from the direction of a church that traditionally regarded itself as the one true and apostolic church, and consequently looked upon its history in Authoritative Reverence. For Schneider, therefore, it is important to show that his church also has its sinful history and that the other churches still are in the wider scope of the apostolic church. Heinze, on the contrary, comes from a church tradition that historically tended to regard the other churches as unfaithful to the Gospel and consequently saw church history in Critical Disregard, basically regarding its own congregation as faithful movement with no direct historical succession. While Heinze's concept of the history of faith still shows this tendency of unconnected movements, he is aware that the Christian church supersedes the local congregations formed by individual believers, and that God works in and through the church as historical entity. Heinze, therefore, does not inappropriately 'assume a history of faith besides the factual history of the church.'⁸⁹⁵ Pannenberg's position is in its roots a traditional view of Critical Reference, a view of a

⁸⁹⁴ Dorothea Sattler and Volker Leppin, eds., *Reformation 1517 - 2017: Ökumenische Perspektiven. Für den ökumenischen Arbeitskreis evangelischer und katholischer Theologen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 95–96.

⁸⁹⁵ Rendtorff, Trutz in OaG 128.

church that from its beginnings was aware of the need of Reformation, and that does not depend on a historical institutional succession but on the present faithfulness to the Gospel of Christ, who is the beginning and the goal of church history.⁸⁹⁶

In the baptismal views of all three authors, finally, we see a rootedness in their own tradition while being able to admit the shortcomings of their own history and to non-polemically interact with the history of other denominations and streams of Christianity. The views of church history of all three authors, therefore, are compatible with the ecumenical considerations that a healthy understanding of church history ‘enables churches to be secure in their resilient core identity while acknowledging the apostolicity and the apostolates of other Christian communities’ and approaches its task ‘in the spirit of forgiveness and repentance.’⁸⁹⁷

7.2 Selection and Usage of Tradition and Church History References

After having compared the more theoretical features of our authors’ thought, we will now compare the practical use of tradition and church history references in their main baptismal works, also noting how their theoretical claims are put into practice.

7.2.1 Selection of Tradition and Church History References

The general selection of references to tradition and church history of our three authors shows some obvious characteristics (cf. Figure 7.1). First of all, we see similarities regarding the number of used references to the Early Church, amounting up to 30-40% for each author, and the very little use of references to the Early Medieval Age, which confirms the general description of this period as dark age, or with the words of Olson, as ‘period without theological innovation.’⁸⁹⁸ The large amount of Early Church references in each author’s view is not surprising, given the importance of this period for the formation of the Christian faith in general. A closer look, however, reveals that Heinze with exception of references to the *Didache* and Augustine, largely refers to this period very unspecifically, which shows that although he acknowledges the general importance of this period it is not an explicit authority in his own thought. In comparison to the other authors Heinze also uses a relatively large amount of (non-biblical) references to the pre-

⁸⁹⁶ Cf. Sattler and Leppin, *Reformation*, 53.

⁸⁹⁷ See the 14 principles of ecumenical historiography, especially principles 1, 3, and 9-12. Timothy J. Wengert and Charles W. Brockwell, eds., *Telling the Churches’ Stories: Ecumenical Perspectives on Writing Christian History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 3–20, esp. 4, 6, 15, 17.

⁸⁹⁸ Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 279.

Apostolic and Apostolic periods, mainly referring to profane history, to support his exegetical conclusions.

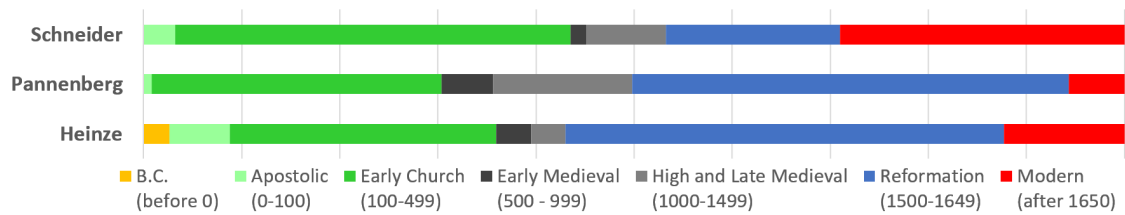


Figure 7.1 Comparison of temporal selection of tradition references

Apart from the common features, the selection of references obviously shows the denominational background of all three authors and what is regarded as formative period in their respective denominations. Schneider’s references to the Reformation period are rather few and he only marginally mentions the positions of the magisterial and radical Reformation while mainly focusing on the history of the Catholic Church and its councils. Schneider’s numerous references to the modern era largely refer to Vatican II and corresponding developments in liturgy and ecumenism, whereas Vatican II is generally understood by Schneider as return to Early Church thought, emphasising the origin of the Catholic Church in Early Church history and its connection to it.

Pannenberg’s Lutheran heritage is manifest in the many references to Luther and other Lutheran reformers, whereas only a few references to Calvin are present and Zwingli and the Anabaptists are nearly completely neglected. Additionally, the very few references to the modern period illustrate the lack of development in official Lutheran teaching since the Reformation, a fact Pannenberg himself criticises.⁸⁹⁹ Also, the many references to the Scholastics and Trent indicate the importance of the period from the late Medievals to the Reformation as formative period of the Lutheran church, which arose from the confrontation with the established Catholic theology.

Similarly, Heinze’s Baptist background is manifest in his many references to the thought, developments, and theologians of the radical Reformation, and in his interaction with all three important protestant Reformers Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, while completely ignoring Trent, other councils, Catholic theologians, and documents after the Early Church. Also, the clear focus on Baptist and free church developments and documents in his references to the modern period show the importance of this time together

⁸⁹⁹ BSTh 3:358-360.

with the magisterial and radical Reformation, for the formation of the modern-day Baptists.

Additionally interesting is that although all authors interact with references to the High and Late Medieval Ages, their selection is quite different. While Heinze completely neglects the Scholastics, Pannenberg completely neglects the medieval reform movements like the Cathars or Waldensians, and only Schneider mentions both streams making him the most balanced one in this regard. Finally, only Schneider and Pannenberg interact with ecumenical developments, like the BEM document, and refer to the modern discussion about Baptism, while Heinze completely focuses on his own denomination without considering recent ecumenical developments. In Heinze's references to the Early Church and the Early Medievals we also see traces of the typical negative understanding of the historical development of infant Baptism often found in Anabaptist and free church tradition, as he refers to the political dimension of infant Baptism and the consequent development into a compulsory practice, however, without explicitly evaluating it negatively.

The selection of references to tradition and church history, therefore, clearly shows the denominational bias of each author, which in some instances even results in neglecting other streams. This is even more obvious in our authors' practical baptismal works, where we only find references to their own denominational tradition or the Early Church. Although, therefore, all three authors' understanding of church history is open for other denominations, the explicit interaction with other streams could be improved. And while on an academical level there is still interaction with the tradition of other denominations, this interaction is completely missing in practical works accessible to ordinary believers, who are especially troubled by the denominational differences.

7.2.2 Usage of Tradition and Church History

The comparison of the use of explicit references to tradition and church history in the main baptismal texts of our three authors shows some interesting characteristics. The number of tradition references in relation to the length of the whole text shows that Schneider and Heinze are closely together, whereas Pannenberg's use is about three times higher (see Table 7.1). Although Heinze's number of tradition references is the lowest, which is expectable given the marginal importance tradition traditionally has in Baptist churches, his number is still close to Schneider, which demonstrates a reasonable interaction with tradition. If we also take the relative number of Scripture references into consideration, we see again that Schneider and Heinze are nearly identical, while Pannenberg uses 1.5 times more Scripture references. If we look only on the main text body, however,

the relative number of Scripture references of all three authors is about the same, which illustrates on a practical level the equally important place Scripture holds in all three authors' baptismal theology. A further look on the relative number of literature references shows that Schneider and Pannenberg are nearly identical, both demonstrating an equally high academic standard. Although Heinze's number of literature references is nearly zero, his content is not shallow and also hints to his interaction with literature, while the omission of the references is rather an indication of his target audience.

Table 7.1 Comparison of metadata about the usage of references to tradition, Scripture, and literature in the main baptismal works of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze

	SCHNEIDER	PANNENBERG	HEINZE
approx. number of total characters	107,600	141,900	259,600
TRADITION & CHURCH HISTORY REFERENCES			
total number of tradition references	62	247	114
number of tradition ref. in footnotes	3	67	0
percentage of tradition ref. in footnotes	4.8 %	27.1 %	0 %
tradition ref. per 1000 characters	0.6	1.7	0.4
SCRIPTURE REFERENCES			
total number of Scripture references	106	217	266
number of Scripture ref. in footnotes	0	70	1
percentage of Scripture ref. in footnotes	0 %	32.3 %	0.4 %
Scripture ref. per 1000 characters	1.0	1.5	1.0
LITERATURE REFERENCES			
total number of literature references	74	113	22 ⁹⁰⁰
number of literature ref. in footnotes	60	101	1
percentage of literature ref. in footnotes	81.1 %	89.4 %	4.5 %
literature ref. per 1000 characters	0.7	0.8	0.1

A final comparison of the relative number of Scripture references to the relative number of tradition references shows that Schneider and Heinze use much more Scripture than tradition, whereas Pannenberg uses slightly more tradition than Scripture. Pannenberg's relatively excessive interaction with tradition, however, does not allow one to draw the conclusion that tradition has more authority than Scripture, but might be a consequence of the consistent application of his theological method that demands the thorough interaction with tradition and literature (the state of theological discussion) to formulate solid

⁹⁰⁰ Also including the obvious implicitly indicated literature usage.

theological hypotheses, while Scripture still is the authoritative foundation for every hypothesis.

To compare the authority tradition has in the thought of our three authors, therefore, we must not just look at the plain number of references to tradition and church history but must also consider their usage in the author's argument, seen in the type, the function, and the evaluation of the references (for a detailed explanation of these categories and how they might indicate authority see chapter 3.3.1). If we especially look at the neutral and positive references to tradition, and additionally combine the type and function of the references to tradition, we get a better understanding about the actual authority of tradition in our authors' baptismal views. The distribution of the type and function of the tradition references of our authors (cf. Figure 7.2, C), shows that all authors use a large number of information references of all types, and also use many references as illustration whose type already narrowed down towards Christian origin. The number of references that function as information and illustration, however, only confirms the general consideration of tradition in the thought of all three authors but does not contribute much to determine the authority tradition has in the authors' thought.

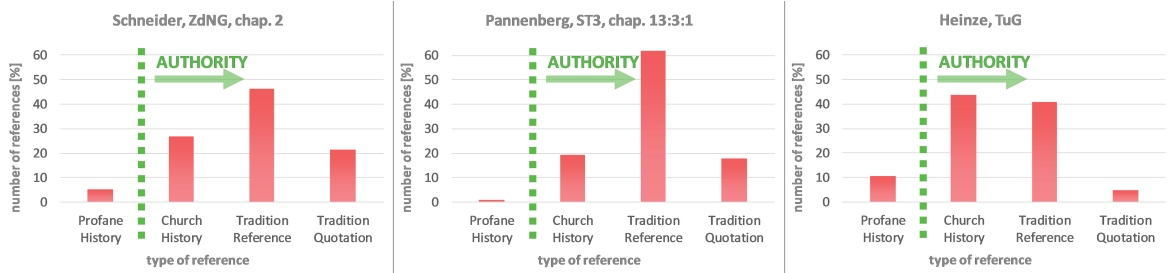
If we look at the references that function as affirmation, interpretation, or as source, we get a clearer picture. Here we find the most authoritative references in Schneider's baptismal view, a similar number but with less authority in Pannenberg, whereas Heinze only has very few references that indicate authority. Additionally, the weight of the more authoritative references of Schneider and Pannenberg is further emphasised by their type being rather specific or even quotations. Interestingly, on the level of academic scriptural interpretation, tradition and history plays a more important role in Heinze's thought than in Schneider and Pannenberg. As the type of references Heinze uses for interpretation are stretched out from profane history to Christian tradition, however, we see in this function no clear display of a special authority of Christian tradition but merely the utilisation of the principle 'whatever helps to interpret,' whereas on a systematic level his theoretical understanding of tradition as optional advice is largely confirmed by his practical usage.

If we compare Schneider and Pannenberg, we see that tradition has authority in their thought, however, Pannenberg uses tradition more as affirmation of thoughts he developed from Scripture, and freely criticises tradition if it contradicts Scripture, whereas in Schneider's baptismal view we find tradition not only used as affirmation but also as a source of content and authority for the development of his baptismal view. Pannenberg's practical usage of tradition references, therefore, confirms his theoretical approach that

acknowledges the importance of tradition, however, only if based on Scripture and under the authority of Scripture. While Schneider theoretically also claims Scripture as absolute source and norm of theology, his practical usage of tradition references occasionally contradicts this claim. We could now criticise Schneider for this, but to be fair, when personally asked about a specific source reference (cf. Appendix 2.2.6:a), he admitted that this contradicts his understanding of the primacy of Scripture and that it should be corrected by adding the concrete references to Scripture, which basically would change the source reference into an affirmation reference. The same would be applicable to nearly all tradition references he used as a source in his baptismal view, and if transformed into affirmation references, the picture for Schneider and Pannenberg would look pretty similar. We can conclude, therefore, that Schneider because of his Catholic background might not be as carefully avoiding the impression of giving tradition too much authority in his practical usage as he does in theoretical understanding. Additionally, his commitment to the Catholic Church, a church whose teaching still lacks the possibility to explicitly criticise authoritative tradition and the teaching of the church, might occasionally force him to give tradition more authority than he would theoretically admit. Similarly, we could criticise Heinze for not giving tradition more authority, especially as we already see some tentative attempts in his use of Luther and the *Didache*, but we should also affirm that given his background as a Baptist theologian, he already does a good work in giving tradition a positive place in his baptismal view. The degree of authority he gives to tradition, however, could be increased especially in the systematic argument, without being unfaithful to his commitment to Scripture and his own denomination, which has been demonstrated, for example, by the British Baptist Winward.⁹⁰¹

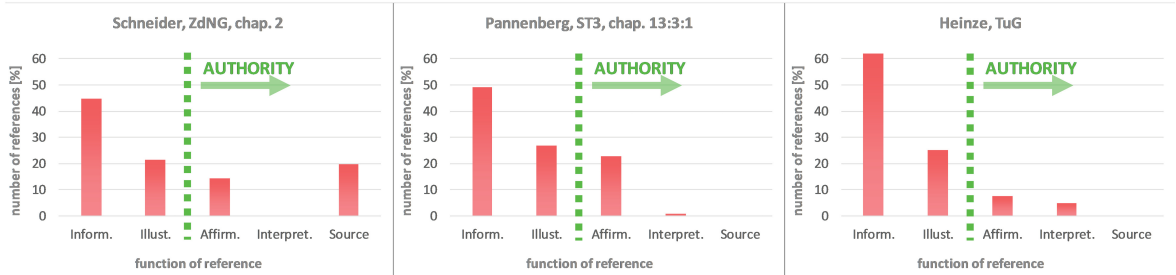
⁹⁰¹ The concluding recommendations of Winward basically resemble an Ancillary view of tradition, calling for the consideration of tradition, however, not uncritical but by testing it against Scripture, and only to accept it if ‘it can be shown to be a legitimate development of what is in Scripture.’ Stephen F. Winward, ‘Scripture, Tradition, and Baptism’, in *Christian Baptism; a Fresh Attempt to Understand the Rite in Terms of Scripture, History, and Theology*, ed. Alec Gilmore (Chicago: Judson Press, 1959), 53; cf. also Paul Hartog, ‘Evangelicals and the Tension of Ressourcement - A Baptist Response’, in *Contemporary Church and the Early Church: Case Studies in Ressourcement*, ed. Paul Hartog (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 201–28. Similarly, Williams calls for the integration of ‘the serious study of patristics (study of the “Fathers,” or more broadly, the life and literature of early Christianity) into current theological reflections of evangelicalism, a task that has already begun though very much in its infancy.’ Williams, *Retrieving*, 4–5.

A) Type of Tradition References (pos. / neut.)



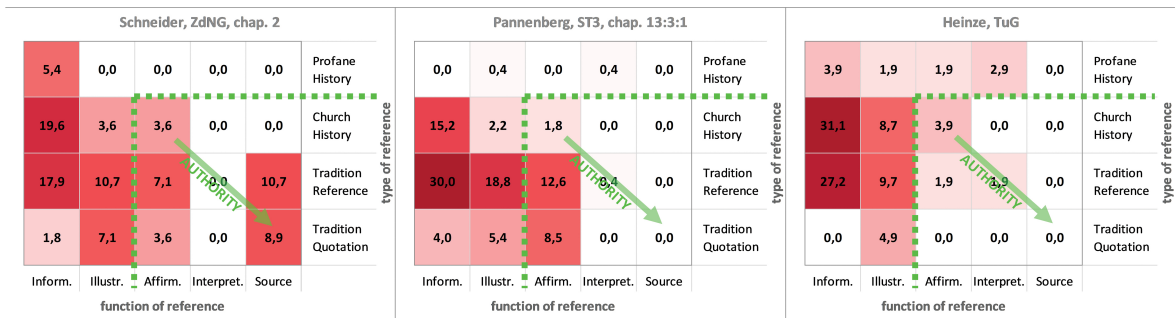
Explanation: The type of the references evaluated positively or neutrally might indicate a certain intrinsic authority. While a reference to profane history does not bear significant authority, a reference to Christian history does bear authority in a Christian argument (traditional authority), however, the most authority will be attributed to a specific reference or even a quote of a Christian author (charismatic authority) or document (rational-legal authority). The different types are ordered on the x-axis according to their growing authority. Left of the green dotted line there is no significant authority indicated by the type of reference, the green arrow shows the direction in which the authority of a reference increases.

B) Function of Tradition References (pos. / neut.)



Explanation: The function of the references as well indicates how much authority a reference to tradition has in an author's thought. The authority of references used as information or as illustration is marginal. A reference used as affirmation, thus as direct support for the authors thought, represents authority, however, not as much as references used to decide about scriptural interpretation or as source of content or authority in the authors argument. The different usages are ordered on the x-axis according to their growing authority. Left of the green dotted line there is no significant authority indicated by the usage of reference, while the green arrow shows the direction in which the authority of a reference increases.

C) Combination of Figures A and B: Type versus Function of Tradition References (pos. / neut.)



Explanation: The combination of the two criteria, the type and the function of the references to tradition and church history, gives an even better understanding of the actual authority of Christian tradition in an author's thought. For example, a reference used to decide about scriptural interpretation indicates a high degree of authority, if the type, however, is only profane history this authority is not what we are looking for to determine the authority of Christian tradition in the authors thought. If a reference to tradition is used as affirmation or even as source while being an actual quotation of Christian origin, the two criteria intensify each other representing a high degree of authority. The green dotted line marks an area in the lower right, outside of which no significant authority is indicated, while the green arrow indicates the direction in which the authority of a reference increases. In the figure every coloured square represents the number of references [%] for a given type (y-axis) versus its function (x-axis).

Figure 7.2 Comparison of type and function of tradition references

Finally, if we compare the outline of the main baptismal texts of our authors, we see that the general chapter structure reflects their theological method: in Schneider's chapter structure the new dogmatic method is seen in the sequence of Scripture, historical development, and systematic discussion, whereas the systematic influences in the scriptural foundation reflect his demand to do every step under the consideration of the present situation. The structure of Heinze's work is surprisingly similar, and his theological method is also seen in the sequence of Scripture, historical development, and systematic discussion. The structure of Pannenberg's baptismal chapter looks different, but also displays his method centred on the systematic development of theological hypotheses, seen in the extensive systematic discussion that is placed in between the rather short biblical-theological introduction and biblical-historical addendum.

If we additionally consider the distribution of tradition references in the text of the main baptismal works of our authors, we see that the distribution largely corresponds with the chapter structure (cf. Figure 7.3). All three begin the presentation of their baptismal view with a scriptural part, and although different in emphasis and size this illustrates the primacy of Scripture in their thought, supplemented by tradition references largely originating from the Apostolic times and the Early Church. As most of these references are close to the NT time, their purpose is to support the interpretation of Scripture while avoiding dogmatic predetermination, which is more obvious the more recent denominational tradition is used in this part.⁹⁰² An interesting difference is the placement of the biblical-historical part, where all three authors trace the historical origins of Baptism: for Heinze this part functions as part of the biblical foundation in the very beginning, and he exclusively uses Apostolic and Early Church references. For Schneider it is part of the historical development in the middle, showing that Scripture itself is also part of the historical development, and with one insignificant exception he also only uses references to Apostolic times and the Early Church. For Pannenberg the historical origin is an addendum at the end, reemphasising the validity of Baptism after the systematic discussion, and he uses a much wider range of references from the Apostolic times to the Reformation.

⁹⁰² In Heinze's scriptural chapter there is one significant exception of an historical sequence that ends in modern day. This sequence about the development of the understanding of Spirit baptism is used by Heinze to show that this view was not accepted from the Early Church till the 20th century, and therefore, is not a correct biblical interpretation.

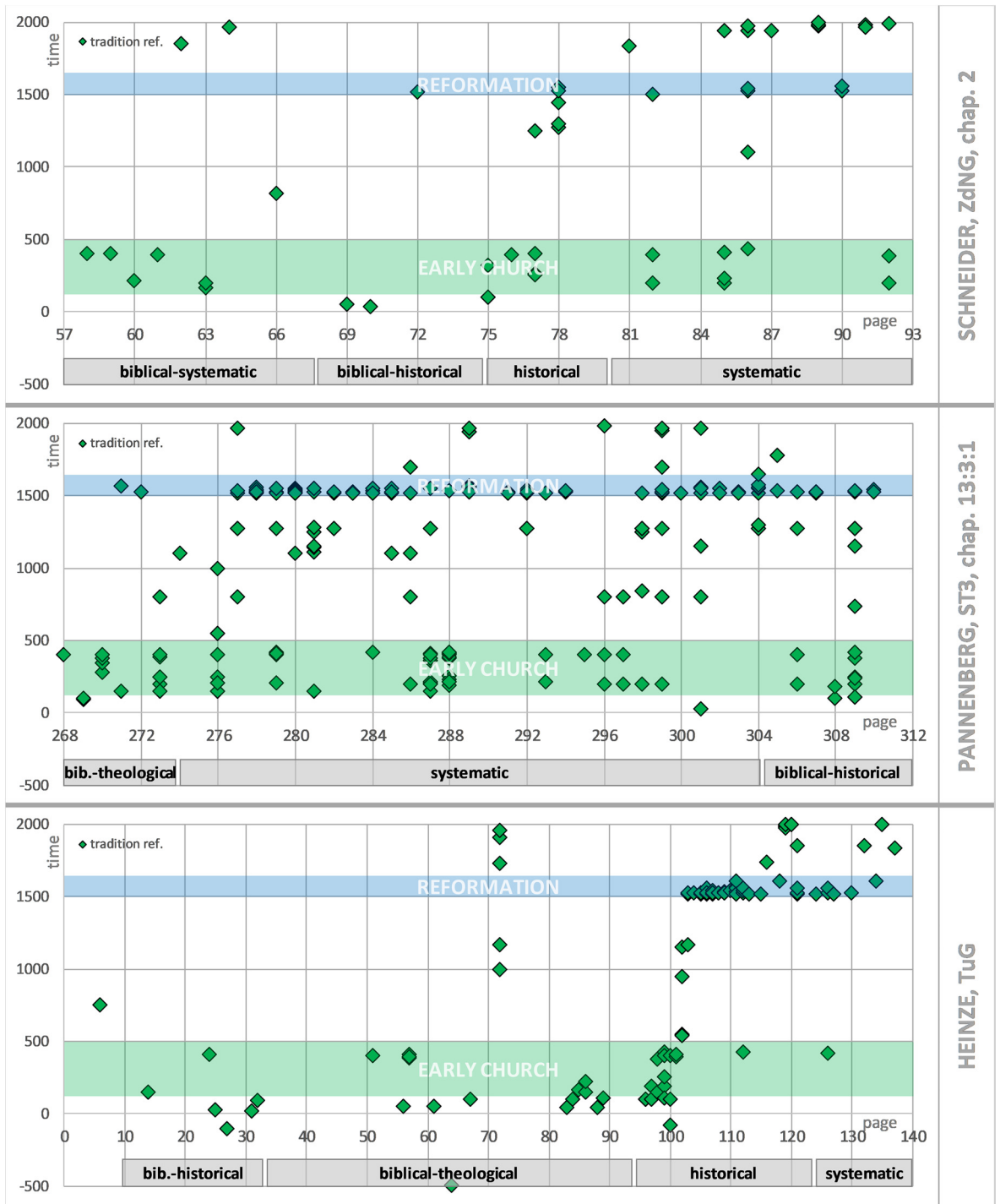


Figure 7.3 Comparison of time and position of tradition references

Especially interesting is the rather clear separation of the historical development of Baptism from the systematic discussion in Schneider and Heinze, resulting in a clear temporal sequence of tradition references in their historical chapter, while Pannenberg completely integrates the historical developments in his systematic discussion, resulting in many small temporal sequences and a continuous jumping back and forth regarding the temporal origin of tradition references. In the resulting differences in the overall trend of

the temporal distribution of tradition references, therefore, we also see a reflection of their understanding of tradition. In Heinze we see a relatively obvious separation of Early Church tradition and Reformation to recent tradition in the exegetical and systematic parts, which indicates his two understandings of tradition as exegetical tool and tradition as advisor for the contemporary church, whereas the advisory function is more optional and therefore, we see an focus on his own denominational roots without emphasising the continuity with the Early Church. In Pannenberg we already saw how closely tradition is interwoven with his systematic argument, mainly focusing on the Early Church to Reformation tradition, which shows his understanding of tradition as important to consider, but the constant back and forth interaction also indicates the critical discussion, evaluation, and correction of tradition in his thought. In Schneider, finally, we see a more organic integration of tradition in all parts, also regarding recent tradition like Vatican II as expression of original Tradition as helpful in the exegetical task. Also, the in comparison to Pannenberg more linear temporal distribution of tradition references indicates a view of tradition that focuses on continuous growth and development of authoritative understanding without the constant need to go back and re-evaluate.

7.3 Topics with Relevance to Tradition and Church History

In this last subchapter we will bring the baptismal views of our three authors into dialogue. The goal of this comparison, however, is not comprehensiveness, deep level of detail, or a complete theological evaluation, but to see the influence of tradition and church history on our authors baptismal views by selecting exemplary topics and showing general similarities and differences.

7.3.1 Origin of Baptism

All three authors find the origin of Christian Baptism neither in Jewish washing rites, proselyte baptism, and Hellenistic mystery cults, nor in the words of Matthew 28 and Mark 16, but in the baptism practised by John the Baptist.⁹⁰³ For all three authors the historical-critical results suggest that the institution words are later additions and that Jesus himself did not baptise, and, therefore, it is the knowledge of John's baptism and his relationship to Jesus and his disciples that naturally led the first Christians to practise Baptism as seen in Acts. An interesting difference, however, is that Schneider and Pannenberg see the connection between John's baptism and Christian Baptism in Jesus receiving John's baptism, while Heinze sees the connection in John's proclamation that

⁹⁰³ ZdNG 68-73; ST 3:270, 306-313; TuG 11-34.

Jesus will baptise not with water but with the Spirit and in the Jordan location that symbolises a new beginning, like Israel's entrance into the promised land. No matter how the connection between John's baptism and Christian Baptism is made, the essential difference between the two baptisms is seen by all three authors in the gift of the Holy Spirit, which shows that Baptism in contrast to John's baptism is not only preparation but also realisation of the new life in God.

The thought of all three authors, therefore, reflects the consensus of recent exegetical research that 1) the institution words of Baptism are 'either a mystical word of the Lord that encompasses the whole action and being of Jesus, or a reverse-projection of the church.'⁹⁰⁴ And 2) that it is a historical not refutable fact that the 'Early Church did not invent the practice of baptism but adopted it from John the Baptist,' and that the 'specific Christian element is not seen in the practice itself but in the meaning the Early Church attributed to it,' whereas the distinguishing Christian element is the gift of the Spirit.⁹⁰⁵ The actual connection between John's baptism and Christian Baptism, however, is not explicitly explained in the NT and, therefore, as seen in our author's views there is a certain flexibility of argument that can be influenced by tradition, seen for example in Pannenberg's illustrations.

7.3.2 *Effect of Baptism*

We already saw in the relationship to John's baptism that all three authors understand Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit to be inseparably connected, which they see confirmed by the testimonies of Acts and the Pauline writings. Traditions, therefore, that teach anything that could indicate a separation of Baptism and the gift of the Spirit are rejected by all three authors.⁹⁰⁶ Schneider emphasises that the Spirit is already given in Baptism while Confirmation only bestows a special gifting, and he also sees Reformed views that tend towards the separation of a spiritual rebirth and Baptism as break with early Christian tradition. Similarly, Pannenberg rejects Barth's distinction of water and Spirit baptism as having no scriptural foundation, and Heinze describes the Pentecostal teaching of Spirit baptism as a recently developed teaching that has no grounds in Scripture and Early Church history. By explicitly emphasising the connection of Baptism and the gift of the Spirit all three authors, therefore, overcome what Haacker calls the 'most

⁹⁰⁴ Herbert Wandschneider, 'Zur Lehre und Ordnung der Taufe', in *Estudos teológicos - Studien und Berichte*, ed. Comissão Teológica do Sínodo Riograndense (São Leopoldo: Buchhandlung Rotermund, 1951), 70; cf. LV 4:55.

⁹⁰⁵ Haacker, 'Taufe', 30, 42.

⁹⁰⁶ ZdNG 90-91, 98-105; ST 3:289-90; TuG 68-72.

serious difference between the early Christian understanding of Baptism and contemporary baptismal teaching and experience.⁹⁰⁷

The gift of the Spirit in Baptism already indicates that all three authors do not regard Baptism as a mere symbolic act, but as having a real effect. This effect is in its core understood as the gift of a new existence, a new life and identity in Christ, which is seen by all three authors in the (anticipatory) participation in Christ's death and resurrection through Baptism as expressed in Romans 6.⁹⁰⁸ All three authors, therefore, see Baptism as an act of transfer from the sphere of influence of sin and death into a new identity in Christ, also expressed in the NT baptismal formulas.⁹⁰⁹ In this context Schneider and Pannenberg also discuss the connection of Baptism and the doctrine of original sin, and although they do not see it as valid reason for infant Baptism, both affirm the usefulness of the doctrine to express the freeing nature of Baptism.⁹¹⁰ Even though Heinze also affirms that Baptism frees from the influence of sin, and like Schneider also sees the problem of human existence in the foundationally disturbed relationship with God and fellow humans,⁹¹¹ and although he also mentions the doctrine of original sin in describing the historical development of infant Baptism, in his own reflections he avoids the term original sin. Similarly, Schneider and Pannenberg describe the effect of Baptism as rebirth, regeneration, and justification, but Heinze avoids these terms.⁹¹² Heinze, although he also describes the lifechanging effect of Baptism⁹¹³ and affirms that Titus describes Baptism as rebirth and regeneration, hesitates to apply these terms to Baptism in his own reflections and recommends using rebirth only if the lifelong development is emphasised that ends with the resurrection.⁹¹⁴ These two examples show, that although Heinze understands the effect of Baptism similarly as Schneider and Pannenberg, he hesitates to use certain key words foreign to his tradition.

Finally, as all three authors understand Baptism to have a real effect, they understand Baptism primarily as an act of God not depending on human ability, which is also the reason for its unrepeatability.⁹¹⁵ They all reject, therefore, talking about Baptism as a symbol and prefer to speak of Baptism as sacrament, sacramental sign, or sign with real

⁹⁰⁷ Haacker, 'Taufe', 44.

⁹⁰⁸ E.g. ZdNG 67; ST 3:270; TuG 42-45.

⁹⁰⁹ ZdNG 66; ST 3:268; TuG 38.

⁹¹⁰ Cf. 4.5.3, Original Sin; ST 3:284.

⁹¹¹ Cf. EST 102.

⁹¹² Cf. 4.5.3, 5.5.3, Regeneration, Justification, and Original Sin.

⁹¹³ Cf. 6.5.3, Baptism as God's Promise of a New Existence.

⁹¹⁴ TuG 130.

⁹¹⁵ ZdNG 79; ST 3:291; TuG 92, 128; cf. BSTh 3:356.

effect.⁹¹⁶ But although they are in basic agreement about the effect of Baptism and the resulting rejection of the term symbol, their preferred term still reflects their own tradition. Heinze and Pannenberg tend more towards the term sign or sacramental sign to avoid the misunderstanding that Baptism produces an automatic effect without human response, whereas Schneider prefers to use sacrament to underline the real effect of Baptism while also emphasising the necessity of human response, which he also sees expressed in the traditional term ‘sacrament of faith.’ We can conclude, therefore, that all three authors especially on the grounds of Romans 6 ascribe a real life-changing effect to Baptism and that their denominational tradition in this regard mainly surfaces in their preferred terms.

7.3.3 *Baptism, Faith, and Christian Life*

Even though Baptism is understood by all our three authors as action of God that has a real effect, they all reject an automatic effectiveness apart from faith but emphasise the close relatedness and interdependence of Baptism and faith.⁹¹⁷ Schneider, therefore, refers to Baptism as the centre of Christian existence, where God’s grasp and human faith fall together; Pannenberg expresses the same with the term sign, which does not only point to God’s action but also implies the required human response in faith; and Heinze speaks about Baptism as ‘double confession,’ as God confesses his grace while the recipient confesses his faith.⁹¹⁸ All three of them, however, warn against an overemphasis of faith, as seen in the rejected understanding of Baptism as mere confession of faith, as although faith is foundational for Baptism, the action of God in Baptism and the life changing effect of Baptism cannot be understood as being created by the faith of the recipient. They all describe, therefore, the relationship of faith to Baptism in a rather passive way: Schneider states ‘our faith is receiving, accepting, sometimes even more modest: be accepted, be loved.’⁹¹⁹ Pannenberg rejects that the personal faith can ‘be a basis of the baptism that links all one's life to Jesus Christ’ and rather sees faith as reception, appropriation, or re-enactment of Baptism, as realisation or ratification of what happened in Baptism.⁹²⁰ And Heinze similarly describes the human role in Baptism as active passiveness, as letting oneself fall in God’s hand, and faith as seeing or grasping the reality that God gives in Baptism.⁹²¹

⁹¹⁶ Cf. 4.5.1, 5.5.1, 6.5.1, Sacrament, Sign, and Symbol.

⁹¹⁷ E.g. ST 3:275, 291; ZdNG 75, 86; TuG 91.

⁹¹⁸ ZdNG 80; ST 3:272; TuG 92; cf. 6.5.3, Baptism as Public Confession of Faith.

⁹¹⁹ ZdNG 88.

⁹²⁰ ST 3:209, 303, 305-6.

⁹²¹ TuG 91; Heinze, ‘Mitgliedschaft (2009)’, 14.

Additionally, all three authors are aware that the close relatedness of faith and Baptism does not mean that a certain level of faith is required for Baptism, but that faith must grow over the whole Christian life.⁹²² Schneider, therefore, emphasises that faith and Baptism are a growth process that does not come to an end in this life.⁹²³ Similarly, Pannenberg emphasises the necessity of daily remembrance and appropriation of Baptism in faith, thus typical for Lutheran tradition focusing on the individual Christian. This is also seen in his understanding of Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick as strengthening the already baptised person's personal faith.⁹²⁴ Heinze along the same lines criticises the reduction of the significance of Baptism for the beginning of the Christian life and coming from Baptist tradition he sees the importance of baptismal remembrance not only for the individual Christian but also as important foundation for the fellowship of the local congregation.⁹²⁵

All three authors also acknowledge that the exact relationship of Baptism and faith is difficult to determine, especially as Paul uses faith and Baptism regarding salvation sometimes in parallel or exchangeable ways (e.g. in Galatians 3). Our authors, therefore, exemplify what Schneider describes as exegetical consensus of our days: that for Paul Baptism and faith are complementary, belong together, and are 'two aspects of the indispensable whole of the Christian path to salvation.'⁹²⁶ The complementary nature of Baptism and faith, combined with other NT passages where faith sometimes precedes Baptism, and sometimes Baptism appears to be a foundation for faith, finally, brings all three authors to the acknowledgement of a complex, multi-layered, and multi-dimensional dynamic relationship of Baptism and faith, so that finally even Heinze admits that 'as much as personal faith and Baptism belong together and complement each other in an elementary way, it is not possible to prescribe the order of both.'⁹²⁷

As Scripture only explicitly expresses the necessity of faith for salvation, the complex relationship between Baptism and faith, finally, subjects the question about the necessity of Baptism for salvation to theological reasoning, which expectedly leads to significant influence of tradition. Schneider follows the teaching of the Catholic Church and

⁹²² ZdNG 84; ST 3:293; TuG 92, 139.

⁹²³ ZdNG 84, 88; cf. 4.5.1, Initiation.

⁹²⁴ Cf. 5.5.2, Inclusion of Penance, Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick.

⁹²⁵ TuG 132-33.

⁹²⁶ ZdNG 80-81; cf. TuG 60; ST 3:261, 287. Cf. also Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 151; Klaiber and Thö-nissen, *Taufe*, 22.

⁹²⁷ ZdNG 81, 84-86; ST 3:290, 296, 303; Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 15. In 2004 Heinze tried to resolve the complexity by distinguishing between faith as vertical initiation with God and Baptism as horizontal initiation as foundation for the life in this world. This idea, however is not further developed in his later works. Heinze, 'Initiation', 66-70.

explicitly expresses the necessity of Baptism for salvation, however, like Vatican II he admits that because of God's universal will for salvation there are still possibilities to be saved without Baptism.⁹²⁸ Pannenberg using Lutheran reasoning, expresses that 'faith in the gospel without baptism is not yet Christian saving faith in the full sense,' as it is Baptism that creates the new identity *extra nos* that is grasped in faith, however, also admitting that there will be unbaptised at the heavenly table of God.⁹²⁹ Heinze, as Baptist theologian influenced by Reformed theology, explicitly states that only faith is necessary for salvation and not Baptism, however, he elevates Baptism to an important place as necessity for the assurance of salvation and thus as indispensable foundation for faith in this life.⁹³⁰ So although our three authors approach the question about the necessity of Baptism for salvation according to their traditions from different angles, the actual result is not too far apart: Baptism is necessary but not in an absolute manner, which practically leads to what Sattler describes as 'recent ecumenical unanimity: Baptism is significant for salvation but not necessary for salvation.'⁹³¹

7.3.4 *Baptism, the Individual, and the Church*

Although all three authors are aware of the meaning of Baptism for the individual believer and for the church, both found in Scripture, the way they relate these two aspects reflects their denominational tradition. Schneider appears most balanced in this respect, seen in his definition of the anthropological, ecclesiological and christological-soteriological aspects of Baptism. As the Catholic Church traditionally stressed the necessity of the institutional church for salvation, Schneider explicitly emphasises that the aspect of the individual believer being incorporated in Christ is the necessary corrective for the ecclesiological aspect of being incorporated in the church, thus reminding that the church is not an end in itself but only a means of Christ's presence in this world.⁹³² In Pannenberg's and Heinze's view their denominational tradition surfaces even more obviously, as Pannenberg regards the ecclesiological aspect only as 'side-effect' while Heinze describes the incorporation in the church as 'pinnacle of the New Testament baptismal teaching.'⁹³³ Consequently, Pannenberg's baptismal view reflects an individualisation of Baptism

⁹²⁸ Cf. 4.5.3, Baptism as Necessity for Salvation.

⁹²⁹ ST 3:275, 294, 303-4.

⁹³⁰ Cf. 6.5.3, Baptism is Not Necessary for Salvation.

⁹³¹ 'Heilsbedeutsam, nicht heilsnotwendig ist die Taufe.' Dorothea Sattler, 'Ein Glaube und eine Taufe. Die geistliche Grundlage der christlichen Ökumene (auch) heute', in *Taufe - Zeichen des Lebens: theologische Profile und interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, ed. Günter Ruddat (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2013), 137

⁹³² ZdNG 67-68.

⁹³³ ST 3:266; TuG 93, 133.

often seen in Lutheran theology,⁹³⁴ while Heinze especially emphasises the foundational role of Baptism as foundation for the community of believers, an important aspect of Baptist ecclesiology.⁹³⁵

7.3.5 *Infant Baptism*

All three authors acknowledge that Scripture does not give any conclusive evidence about the practice of infant Baptism, which therefore most likely is a later development.⁹³⁶ Here our three authors illustrate Haacker's observation that 'on the level of NT exegesis the discussion largely came to an end, with the widely acknowledged result that our baptismal practice [infant Baptism] cannot be traced back to the Apostolic Church but has its origins after the NT,' and the reasons for infant Baptism, therefore, are of systematic-theological or pragmatic nature.⁹³⁷ The acceptance of infant Baptism out of systematic-theological reasons is also what we see in all three authors' thought, expectably with nuances coming from their denominational tradition.⁹³⁸ In their basic approach towards the discussion and acceptance of infant Baptism, for example, we see their denominational tradition and also their understanding of tradition surfacing: Schneider sees infant Baptism as historically developed and explicitly mentions infant Baptism as one of the points Trent reemphasised and thus it is not the existence of the practice he questions but only the systematic argument. Pannenberg also describes infant Baptism as historically developed and accepted practice, and therefore he examines whether the theological reasons justify its existence. For Heinze, although he also describes the historical development of infant Baptism, it is not tradition that brings him to finally accept it as valid, but it is rather the ecumenical and practical reality of Christians from other churches seeking membership in Baptist congregations that urges him to consider the systematic reasons.

In their systematic reasoning neither Schneider nor Pannenberg regard the doctrine of original sin as convincing reason for infant Baptism, which demonstrates their critical interaction with tradition. For Schneider the theological reasons for infant Baptism are God's grace that always must precede human acceptance in faith, the dependence and embeddedness of faith in the community of believers, and the understanding of faith as developing and Baptism as being the beginning of a way. Pannenberg also emphasises

⁹³⁴ Cf. 5.5.3, Individualisation of Baptism.

⁹³⁵ Cf. 6.6.3.

⁹³⁶ ZdNG 85-86; ST 3:288; TuG 48-52. Interestingly, it is the Baptist Heinze who admits a certain possibility that infant Baptism was practised in NT times, however, if it was, then out of sociological and not theological reasons.

⁹³⁷ Haacker, 'Taufe', 29.

⁹³⁸ ZdNG 84-89; ST 3:287-296; Heinze, 'Mitgliedschaft (2009)', 9, 14-16.

the passive character of faith in appropriating Baptism step by step in the Christian life, which basically means that Baptism does not require any certain level of faith in the recipient. Heinze, after initially rejecting the validity of infant Baptism, later accepts its validity, however, he dismisses the often ecumenically favoured argument of Baptism being one element in the process of Christian initiation as not expressing the objective character of Baptism clearly enough. Heinze, therefore, emphasises that God's promise of a new existence in Baptism does not depend on any human preconditions, and that it also later can be appropriated in faith.

7.3.6 *Baptismal Practice*

The theological acceptance of infant Baptism, however, has different implications for the baptismal practice of our authors, and clearly reflects their denominational tradition. Schneider still considers infant Baptism, although not ideal in every aspect, as suitable practice if integrated in Christian family and active congregational life, while Heinze although he acknowledges the theological validity of infant Baptism, declines to practise it himself, as the practice is not found in the NT. Pannenberg, finally, acknowledges that the validity of infant Baptism does not imply an obligation to indiscriminate infant Baptism, and therefore, both practices, infant and believers Baptism, should be allowed to co-exist in the church.

Another traditionally debated issue of baptismal practice is the mode of Baptism. Surprisingly, while all our authors just naturally presume that water must be used in Baptism, none of them explicitly discusses and evaluates the mode of the application. Schneider acknowledges that Scripture does not provide much detail about the actual administration of Baptism, and he uses different accounts of tradition describing different modes of Baptism. He does therefore, in a rather indirect manner affirm the validity of different modes of Baptism and only once mentions that Baptism by immersion is implied in Romans 6 and has a certain expressiveness in emphasising the necessity of a new life in faith.⁹³⁹ Pannenberg also only incidentally mentions that Baptism by immersion is especially suitable to express the signified death of the sinner (Romans 6), which he illustrates by additional references to tradition, but he never discusses the validity of other modes.⁹⁴⁰ Similarly, Heinze affirms the deep symbolism of Baptism by immersion, which provides a strong experience of letting oneself fall into the hand of God and of dying and being

⁹³⁹ ZdNG 60-61, 75-76, 84.

⁹⁴⁰ ST 3:270, 272.

resurrected with Christ (Romans 6).⁹⁴¹ Heinze, however, also never discusses the validity of other modes of Baptism. All our authors, therefore, seem not give too much importance to the mode of Baptism, which matches Heller's observation that 'the controversy on immersion, affusion or sprinkling seems to be an issue of past disputes, and has not been a major separating issue in the contemporary official dialogues.'⁹⁴²

Heinze even goes so far to say that other questions of baptismal practice, such as the place of Baptism, the minister, or the baptismal formula are not of fundamental interest, as Baptism does not get its effectiveness from external practice but solely from God's action and the faith of the recipient.⁹⁴³ This might also be the explanation for the marginal importance all three authors give to the mode of Baptism, as they all emphasise the action of God in Baptism that does not depend on human factors, neither on the minister's side nor on the side of the recipient, but only can be received by faith.

⁹⁴¹ TuG 91, 140.

⁹⁴² Heller, *Baptized*, 239.

⁹⁴³ TuG 140; cf. Heinze, 'Tauffragen'.

‘In consideration of the various battlefronts quite different dogmatic statements can be understood as true teaching on the same Baptism or as necessary complementary corrective.’⁹⁴⁴

– Edmund Schlink –

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Prospects

In the baptismal views of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze we have met three views of recent German theology that are all thoroughly based on Scripture while also being grounded but not stuck in their own tradition. In the comparison of selected topics with relevance to tradition (cf. 7.3) we have observed a great degree of agreement, especially concerning the essentials of God’s and man’s role in Baptism. Remarkably, we see here that the core areas of theological controversy about Baptism lined out by Heller, are basically overcome. Heller sees the major historical fault line in the baptismal controversy among the Western churches between infant and believers Baptism, perceived in the theological issues of the hermeneutical question of whether Scripture directly supports infant Baptism, the relationships of Baptism, faith, and original sin, and the role of the church.⁹⁴⁵ Here we have seen convergence in all three authors’ thought, if not in every aspect and detail, but at least in general direction. Similarly, in other areas of theological controversy mentioned by Heller, such as Spirit baptism, the baptismal formula, or the mode of Baptism, we see general agreement among Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze.⁹⁴⁶

This convergence has its reasons in the primacy all authors ascribe to Scripture, combined with the commonly used historical-critical exegetical method, which they all regard as means to methodically give Scripture authority over tradition and the teaching of the church (cf. 7.1.1). The historical-critical method, if one could speak of such in a monolithic way, certainly brings along its own problems, and especially our authors’ claim that

⁹⁴⁴ Edmund Schlink, *The Doctrine of Baptism* (Saint Louis: Concordia publishing house, 1972), 166.

⁹⁴⁵ Heller, *Baptized*, 161–73.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 182–91.

this method returns authority to Scripture is disputable as in reality this method as well might strip Scripture of its authority and submit it to human reason.⁹⁴⁷ As the purpose of this study, however, is not a critical appraisal of the use of the historical-critical method in our authors' thought, but an examination of their use of tradition and church history, it shall be enough for our purposes to determine that all three authors basically embrace the same methodical canon of biblical interpretation, resulting in a very similar shared exegetical foundation, which also has its clear boundaries, seen for example regarding the role of man or the separation of water and Spirit baptism. The influence of tradition and church history, therefore, is alleviated by using the historical-critical method, as one of its general presuppositions is the emphasis on methodical objectivity, which helps to overcome dogmatic predefinitions in scriptural interpretation. Regarding the baptismal discussion, we see here a confirmation of the general assumption that the historical-critical method brought Catholic and Protestant theology closer together, binding them closer to the common biblical testimony.⁹⁴⁸

It is significant, however, that despite this shared exegetical foundation, the resulting baptismal views still clearly reflect the authors' tradition (cf. 4.5, 5.5, and 6.5). While the historical-critical method might create a common foundation, at the same time its objective acknowledgment of development and diversity in the biblical testimony leaves room for the influence of tradition, and thus also enables one to accept different theological views as valid representations of the biblical testimony. Additionally, the ecumenical openness and desire of all three authors, which is also related to their views of church and church history, contributes to a general openness regarding other streams of church history and their theological thought (cf. 7.1.3). None of our authors, therefore, uses a polemical mode of discussion about Baptism but all are interacting with other streams, acknowledging the validity of their thought, resulting in a critical appraisal of their own tradition and other traditions. This we saw in the thorough explicit use of tradition in all three authors' views of Baptism (cf. 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.2.2), whereas the practical engagement with other streams could still be enhanced (cf. 7.2.1).

We also saw that the use of tradition in the baptismal views of our authors reflects their views of tradition and church history (cf. 4.6, 5.6, 6.6, 7.1.2, 7.1.3). Their understanding of tradition and church history on the one hand binds them to their tradition and the teaching of their church, but also sets out the constraints for the critical examination of these,

⁹⁴⁷ Cf. Maier, *Hermeneutik*, 248–61; Carson, *Authority*, 373–78.

⁹⁴⁸ Cf. LV 1:20–22.

where we have seen crucial differences: while Heinze's Baptist heritage does not force him to stick to any tradition and frees him to critically question and dismiss other traditions and his own, Schneider is bound by the missing Catholic possibility to directly criticise and dismiss officially received tradition and the teaching of the church, which forces him to compensate, for example, by historically relativising authoritative teaching. Pannenberg is positioned in the middle and in a traditional Protestant manner engages with tradition while being free to criticise and adjust it according to Scripture. This puts Pannenberg in a comfortable spot in the scope of this investigation's appraisal of the three positions, as our method seems to be inherently biased towards his approach.

In the light of the common features of the in this investigation examined baptismal views and the still visible influence of tradition, and the prevailing differences in the denominational views of tradition and church history, we can agree with Kasper's assessment that despite 'all the gratifying ecumenical consensuses and convergences in the understanding of baptism, profound differences keep appearing, [...] But there are also pointers for overcoming these differences through patient steps, taken on the basis of holy scripture and the tradition of the ancient church.'⁹⁴⁹ If we take the views examined in this investigation as an example, we see that these patient steps on the basis of Scripture and ancient tradition, demanded by Kasper, should look differently for every denomination, depending on its corresponding view of tradition. The steps required for the Catholic side, for example, should be allowing Scripture to really criticise and correct tradition and the teaching of the church, thus giving Scripture real material quality and authority, whereas the Baptist side should interact more seriously with the tradition of the ancient church, not only in an optional way but as common heritage that defines a larger spectrum of what can be regarded as biblical. As for the Protestant side, we would hope to see Pannenberg's ability to value while also criticising his own tradition also in the church in general, as especially in the Lutheran churches the confession writings are often elevated to a place of unchangeable and unquestionable teaching of the church, which in a sense contradicts the traditional Ancillary view of tradition. Hopefully, therefore, remaining difficulties can be overcome in the future, not only in individual views as we have seen in the thought of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze, but also officially between the different denominations with their different baptismal theologies and practices.

⁹⁴⁹ Kasper, 'Implications', 537.

8.1 Prospects for Further Research

Although in this investigation we obtained interesting results that confirmed the close connection between different understandings of tradition and different views of Baptism, obviously, the selection of only three authors is a serious limitation. It would be beneficial, therefore, to conduct similar investigations with other authors, also applying the method of comparison developed in this investigation, to obtain a more solid foundation. Additionally, the method of analysis and comparison of the usage of tradition and church history could be transferred to other controversial theological topics, such as the Eucharist or the role of women in the church, that are also subject to influence from tradition. Finally, in the light of the close connection between different views of tradition and views of Baptism, it would also be worthwhile to examine whether and how ecumenical dialogues and agreements about Baptism pay attention to this issue.

8.1.1 *Widening the Scope*

To confirm and check the results of this investigation, baptismal views of other authors from the same period and denominations could be analysed. Additionally, it would be interesting to look at newer authors to see whether around the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation the trend towards more convergence, which we have observed in Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze continued, or whether the new emphasis of particular identities in recent times also revived old confrontational patterns. Our hope certainly would be that on the relatively stable exegetical foundation we observed in our authors, baptismal views are moving closer towards a common core while still maintaining their denominational features within the boundaries of biblical broadness. Hopefully, we would also see that the trend we observed in the views of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze would continue. For example, that Catholic authors would even clearer distinguish between Scripture and tradition, and consequently allow Scripture to criticise tradition and the teaching of the church, not only in theory but also in practice, and that Baptist authors would not only informatively refer to tradition, but also recognise its value and a certain ancillary authority for systematic argument. These two expectations also have been expressed in the recent ecumenical conversation between the Baptist World Alliance and the Catholic Church, and these two expectations as well describe the tension in which also the Protestant and other churches find themselves.⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁵⁰ Catholic Church and Baptist World Alliance, 'The Word of God in the Life of the Church', para. 34; Cf. Steven R. Harmon, *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future: Story, Tradition, and the Recovery of Community* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 221–22.

Certainly, worthwhile would also be to widen the scope by analysing baptismal views of authors from denominations that do not share in German main stream convergence in exegetical methods, such as Orthodox churches and Evangelical or Pentecostal free churches. Interesting would also be to analyse theologians from other national contexts, such as the global South, who while not directly sharing the German history of denominational confrontation, also did not have part in the manifold ecumenical activities found in recent Germany.

8.1.2 Use of Tradition and Church History in Ecumenical Dialogues and Agreements about Baptism

As views of Baptism are influenced by views of tradition, it is obvious that in the ecumenical discussion about Baptism the different understanding and use of tradition should be considered.⁹⁵¹ For a future investigation, therefore, it would be worthwhile to analyse the use of tradition and church history in ecumenical dialogues and agreements about Baptism. Basic questions could be whether the understanding of tradition is considered at all, and how tradition is used, if used at all. Additionally, it should be examined if the differences in the views of tradition are considered, also in relation to the teaching of the church, as we observed in this investigation that there is still no common understanding about the authority of tradition.

A brief and exemplary look on some recent German ecumenical dialogues about Baptism involving the three denominations of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze confirms the value of such an investigation. In 2004 a symposium about the understanding of Baptism and faith was held between the Catholic Church and some German free churches, including the Baptists (BEFG), in which also Heinze participated.⁹⁵² Hardt observes in his concluding report that in the contributions to the symposium significant differences surfaced in regard to the evaluation of ecclesial tradition and that the connected central and most difficult topic are the questions about the relationship between Scripture and tradition and the revelatory quality of tradition, which all influence the theological discussion about Baptism.⁹⁵³ Similarly, Oeldemann sees in his contribution the reception problems of the BEM document originating from the different evaluation of the normative

⁹⁵¹ Heller, for example, observed that the role of tradition and different understanding of tradition have a profound influence on the ecumenical discussion about infant Baptism. Heller, *Baptized*, 167. Similarly, the analysis of the responses to the BEM document also counted the relationship of Scripture and tradition among the foundational questions that must be discussed. WCC / Commission on Faith and Order, *Diskussion*, 131–41.

⁹⁵² Klaiber and Thönissen, *Taufe*.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 225–26, 238–39.

sources of faith and concludes that differences in baptismal understanding can only be overcome if also epistemological differences in regard to Scripture and tradition are discussed.⁹⁵⁴

In 2007 in Magdeburg several denominations signed the mutual recognition of Baptism agreement, among them the Catholic Church, the Protestant state churches, some Orthodox churches, and some free churches that accept infant Baptism.⁹⁵⁵ The brief text of the agreement does not explicitly refer to different understandings of tradition and simply concludes that despite the differences in ecclesiology ‘there exists between us a basic common understanding of Baptism.’ While the Baptist and Mennonite churches both stress in their responses that they cannot sign because of biblical-theological reasons regarding infant Baptism,⁹⁵⁶ responses from signing churches describe the reason for the rejection of the agreement by some of the Orthodox and Baptist churches not in Scripture but in their different traditions.⁹⁵⁷ The influence of different views of tradition, therefore, is not addressed in the agreement and the mutual acceptance of Baptism is only achieved by churches who through their mere practice of infant Baptism already indicate a basic agreement about the relevance of tradition. For the churches that did not sign, therefore, we do not only see differences in ecclesiology, as the agreement describes regarding the signing churches, but also in their view of tradition and their ability to recognise the influence of tradition.

A surprisingly different result is seen in the 2009 convergence document between the *Lutheran Church in Bavaria* (EKD member) and the Bavarian regional Baptist association of the *Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany* (BEFG).⁹⁵⁸ The basic statement that ‘faith and baptism belong together (Colossians 2:12) but they may be separate

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid., 213–14.

⁹⁵⁵ ‘Wechselseitige Anerkennung der Taufe, Magdeburg 2007’, 2007, http://www.oekumene-ack.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Stellungnahmen/Anerkennung_der_Taufe.pdf; cf. Karl Heinz Voigt, *Ökumene in Deutschland: von der Gründung der ACK bis zur Charta Oecumenica (1948-2001)* (V&R unipress, 2015), 543–45; Best, *Baptism*, 227–29.

⁹⁵⁶ Präsidium des BEFG, ‘Zur aktuellen Diskussion über die gegenseitige Taufanerkennung’, 2007, http://www.baptisten.de/fileadmin/user_upload/bgs/pdf/BALUBAG/Text_zur_Taufanerkennung_2007.PDF; Werner Funck, ‘Grußwort der Kirchen täuferischer Tradition zur wechselseitigen Taufanerkennung’, 2007, http://www.mennoniten.de/fileadmin/downloads/Grusswort_wechselseitige_Taufanerkennung_07_Magdeburg.pdf.

⁹⁵⁷ Friedrich Weber, ‘Wechselseitige Taufanerkennung’, *Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim*, no. 3 (2007): 2; Walter Kasper, ‘Die Taufe als Band der Einheit und als Ruf zur Einheit’, 2011, 3–5; Karl Lehmann, ‘Zur Anerkennung der einen Taufe in der Ökumene’ (Domvorträge 2007: ‘Wiedergeboren aus Wasser und Geist. Christwerden und Taufe’, Mainzer Dom, 31 May 2007), 3, 6–7, http://www.bistummainz.de/bistum/bistum/kardinal/texte/texte_2007/domvortrag07.html.

⁹⁵⁸ ‘Voneinander lernen – miteinander glauben. Konvergenzdokument der Bayerischen Lutherisch-Baptistischen Arbeitsgruppe (BALUBAG)’, 2009; cf. Heller, *Baptized*, 227–30.

in time,⁹⁵⁹ leads to the acknowledgement that the theological emphases in infant and believer's Baptism both are valid and not mutually exclusive,⁹⁶⁰ and, therefore, both understandings of Baptism can be recognised as 'different but legitimate interpretations of the one gospel.'⁹⁶¹ Especially remarkable is that the convergence document explicitly discusses the 'normative authorities for the dialogue' and defines them as Scripture alone while also describing the different authority of confession writings in the two denominations, and finally acknowledging 'their different traditions of faith and doctrine as interpretations of the same Holy Scriptures common to both.'⁹⁶² Despite these bold statements, however, the convergence document has not been officially received till today, mainly due to the congregational structure of the Baptist churches, where the teaching authority is located in the local congregations that were rather critical of the document.⁹⁶³

We might carefully conclude, therefore, that convergence in the understanding of the relation of tradition, Scripture and the teaching of the church, or at least awareness of the differences, is certainly contributing to achieve convergence in the ecumenical dialogue about Baptism. The difficult reception process of the 2009 convergence document, however, additionally exemplifies the observation of Engelbert Paulus that the perception of Scripture and consequently of tradition is not only a crucial task of the ecumenical dialogue itself but also closely related to the acceptance of its results in the churches, as the understanding of tradition also influences the questions about deciding authorities and decision criteria.⁹⁶⁴

⁹⁵⁹ 'BALUBAG-Konvergenzdokument', 14.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid., 16.

⁹⁶¹ Ibid., 18.

⁹⁶² Ibid., 4–5.

⁹⁶³ Erich Geldbach, 'Voneinander lernen — miteinander glauben. Zum Konvergenzdokument der BALUBAG', *ZThG* 15 (2010): 135; Harald Lamprecht, 'Der BALUBAG-Prozess. Ökumenische Diskussionen der Bayerisch Lutherisch-Baptistischen Arbeitsgruppe zur Taufe', *Evangelische Orientierung* 2 (2016): 16; Ökumenischen Studienausschuss der VELKD und des DNK/LWB, 'Stellungnahme der Kirchenleitung der VELKD zum BALUBAG-Konvergenzdokument "Voneinander lernen – miteinander glauben"', 13 March 2014, 7; cf. Voigt, *Ökumene (1948-2001)*, 538.

⁹⁶⁴ Engelbert Paulus, 'Wechselseitige Anerkennung der Taufe und Gemeinschaft der Kirchen', in *Den Glauben nicht beherrschen, doch eure Freude unterstützen*, ed. Erich Naab and Christoph Böttigheimer (St. Ottilien: EOS, 2008), 74.

8.2 Final Conclusions

The investigation of the baptismal views of Schneider, Pannenberg, and Heinze confirmed that Baptism is indeed a topic that is heavily influenced by tradition and different views of tradition. We also saw that the acceptance of a common exegetical method, leading to a similar exegetical foundation, alleviates the influence of tradition but does not neutralise it. This then has implications for the ecumenical discussion about Baptism in general.

First of all, every denomination should be aware and acknowledge that its own baptismal understanding is always influenced by tradition, and that the scriptural testimony allows for different views. As Schneider expresses, in the NT we encounter a rather broadly-defined baptismal theology,⁹⁶⁵ and, therefore, the development of different baptismal views with different emphases depending on the tradition and time of origin might just be a natural consequence. Strübind, therefore, even goes as far as saying that ‘just the variety of baptismal interpretations in a precise sense is to be called biblical,’⁹⁶⁶ so to say that if we do not accept different traditions as valid range of correct biblical understandings, we might cut away parts of scriptural baptismal theology. This, however, does not mean that all views are automatically entirely correct, as there are certainly baselines in Scripture that cannot be given up.⁹⁶⁷

This then poses two tasks to every side in the baptismal debate: first, the acknowledgement of the influence of tradition means to acknowledge that one’s own baptismal view is limited, is only part of the whole, and likely also has its shortcomings. One’s own baptismal view, therefore, should be constantly questioned and reformed to ensure its compatibility with the core of scriptural baptismal theology. Cross, therefore, rightly speaks of *baptisma semper reformandum*, the constant need to reform Baptism, and together with Beasley-Murray and Wright he challenges all ‘traditions alike to reform their theologies and practices of baptism according to scripture.’⁹⁶⁸

Second, the acknowledgement of the influence of tradition on baptismal views should encourage every side of the baptismal debate to acknowledge that other baptismal views are shaped by their distinct tradition, and therefore while being different, still representing

⁹⁶⁵ ZdNG 74.

⁹⁶⁶ Swarat, *Texte*, 150.

⁹⁶⁷ Bickelhaupt, for example, describes the diversity of the NT baptismal theology, especially seen in the relationship of Baptism, faith and Spirit, while also outlining the common baselines. Jörg Bickelhaupt, *Taufe, Glaube, Geist: ein Beitrag zur neueren innerevangelischen Diskussion* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 201–6.

⁹⁶⁸ Anthony R. Cross, *Recovering the Evangelical Sacrament: Baptisma Semper Reformandum* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 324–27; cf. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 395; Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 382–84.

valid but not necessarily flawless expression of scriptural theology of Baptism. Hopefully, such an acknowledgment on all sides would contribute to growing mutual understanding and acceptance, while the mutual exchange then also should help each side in their own reforming task of bringing one's own baptismal practice and theology closer to Scripture.

To achieve more baptismal unity, finally, Heller and Wright both call for a 'common study of the Bible.'⁹⁶⁹ As a result of this investigation we can confirm this demand but it seems equally important to also call for a 'common study of tradition,' as a common study of Scripture only makes sense if the influence of tradition is recognised, as we observed in the brief examination of the baptismal dialogues above. Only if the different traditions can be understood as legitimate diversity, all representing the original Tradition found in Scripture, and only if it is also possible to criticise and correct illegitimate developments, only then more unity in the baptismal question is achievable.⁹⁷⁰ Kasper affirms this direction stating 'ecumenism does not progress by giving up our own beliefs. We should not abandon them, but as is the case with the doctrine of justification, we should penetrate deeper into them, so deep that they can become compatible with the tradition of the other church.'⁹⁷¹ Schlink, therefore, regarding the baptismal debate concluded that the 'quite different dogmatic statements can be understood as true teaching on the same Baptism or as necessary complementary corrective.'⁹⁷²

The goal of the baptismal debate, therefore, must not be to eliminate the influence of different traditions completely and thus to resolve the diverse baptismal views into one unified view, especially as the diversity might just represent the original broadness found in Scripture, and therefore, is accepted or even intended by God.⁹⁷³ The goal, instead, must be the mutual acceptance of different understandings of Baptism, not only practically by accepting Baptisms performed by other churches, for example for pastoral reasons or reasons of personal conscience while rejecting the theological rationale behind the practice, but also an explicit acknowledgement of other baptismal theologies as valid representation of the diverse scriptural testimony is needed, an approach we saw in the BALUBAG convergence document (cf. 8.1.2).⁹⁷⁴ The concept of initiation, therefore,

⁹⁶⁹ Heller, *Baptized*, 239; cf. Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 378–81.

⁹⁷⁰ Cf. Söding, *Rolle*, 267.

⁹⁷¹ Kasper, 'Perspektiven', 10.

⁹⁷² Schlink, *Baptism*, 166; cf. Best, *Baptism*, vii–ix; Klaiber and Thönissen, *Taufe*, 75.

⁹⁷³ Similarly, Bickelhaupt states 'Innerhalb jener in dreieinigen Gott gründenden Wirklichkeit ist eine Vielfalt in Theologie und Praxis der Taufe nicht nur möglich und legitim, sondern vorgeben.' Bickelhaupt, *Taufe*, 694.

⁹⁷⁴ Again, Bickelhaupt expresses 'Anerkennung bedarf keines vollständigen tauftheologischen Konsenses, auch keiner identischen Taufpraxis, jedoch der Bereitschaft, die in der Dialektik von Wahrheit und Barmherzigkeit liegende Spannung auszuhalten.' *Ibid.*, 693.

should not be misused to hide the differences under a theological carpet that everyone can agree with, without acknowledging the other side's self-understanding, but only to relate the different baptismal understandings and to show that they are all valid parts of a more complex scriptural theology of Baptism. Only then Baptism can once again become the foundation of Christian unity instead of being constantly misused as a means of separation. If this is achieved, Baptism is not reduced to a mere blurry foundation of a common practice, but hopefully the results of the baptismal discussion can also influence other areas and make Baptism a real and solid foundation of Christian unity, so that the churches in their diversity honestly can together proclaim with the words of Ephesians 4:5-6 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.'

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Appendix 1

The Discussion about Baptism in German

Church History

Although in the Early Church a variety of views of Baptism developed and coexisted, there was a following period of consolidation, where the majority of Christianity, in the West and the East, shared similar views of Baptism.⁹⁷⁵ As different views of Baptism are influenced by different views of tradition and church history, which radically changed during and after the Reformation, it is natural that in this time the discussion about different views of Baptism also arose. Since the Reformation, therefore, the discussion about Baptism in the context of German theology, especially about infant Baptism, did not end and due to several developments in German church and society periodically rose to new actuality.

1.1 Reformation and Subsequent Time

The new understandings of tradition and church history that developed in the 16th century in the different groups of the Reformation enabled them to critically examine medieval church structure and doctrines.⁹⁷⁶ This finally not only caused radical changes in the ecclesial landscape in Germany but also led to changes in the understanding of Baptism, which, however, also caused conflict and division among the different streams of the Reformation.⁹⁷⁷ Even though the magisterial Reformers all critically examined Baptism, none of them was willing to give up the traditional views completely, and so they all kept infant Baptism. Luther generally maintained a sacramental view of Baptism, however, criticised the Thomistic position and rejected any efficacy of Baptism apart from faith.⁹⁷⁸ Calvin also kept the objective character of Baptism, but emphasised its function as promise and as ‘badge and mark’ of the profession of faith.⁹⁷⁹ Even though Zwingli also retained infant Baptism, he emphasised the commitment and confession of the believer,

⁹⁷⁵ Even though there was no completely unified view of Baptism during the Middle Ages, the different positions were much closer than after the Reformation. The Eastern and Western church, for example, both had a sacramental view of Baptism, and there were only a few minorities tending to extreme views. Cf. Heller, *Baptized*, 83–95; Geldbach, *Taufe*, 13–14; Kasper, ‘Implications’, 531; Heinrich Schlier, *Die Zeit der Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1966), 124.

⁹⁷⁶ Cf. Hubert, *Streit*, 173.

⁹⁷⁷ Heller, *Baptized*, 95; Geldbach, *Taufe*, 14.

⁹⁷⁸ Kasper, ‘Implications’, 534.

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 535.

which is from a Roman Catholic point of view finally a ‘break with tradition.’⁹⁸⁰ The understanding of Zwingli is again found in the Anabaptist⁹⁸¹ movement of the radical Reformation. The Anabaptist view of believer’s Baptism and also their different understanding of church as ‘free association of believers’ with no connection to secular authority, finally led to their condemnation and persecution from the Catholic side as well as from the magisterial Reformers, who maintained the link to political power.⁹⁸² The discussion about the different views of Baptism, especially infant Baptism, therefore caused conflicts and divisions among the different streams of the Reformation and was even utilised by the radical groups to distinguish between right and wrong Christianity.⁹⁸³

With the Peace of Augsburg (1555), which granted the rulers of the German states to choose the religion of their state, the Reformation in Germany consolidated.⁹⁸⁴ This, however, meant neither religious freedom for the rulers nor for individuals. The rulers could only choose between the accepted religions of Catholicism and the Augsburg Confession, which meant Protestantism according to the Lutheran Reformation. Individuals either had to consent to their ruler’s choice or had to leave their state. The Anabaptist groups, therefore, had no place to go in the German states and so they were persecuted or at best tolerated with no right to express their belief, which finally stunted them and only some Mennonite communities survived silently.⁹⁸⁵ With the end of the Thirty Years’ War and the Peace of Westphalia (1648) Protestantism with Reformed characteristic, based on the Heidelberg Catechism, was also tolerated in the German territories. This means for Baptism that in the 250 years after the Reformation only the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed views persisted, whereas the Anabaptist view virtually disappeared. As the churches were on the one hand separated state by state and on the other hand internally unified in their denominational teaching,⁹⁸⁶ there was no significant discussion about different views of Baptism after the Reformation consolidated.

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁸¹ The term Anabaptist is not used as theological evaluation but out of practical considerations to distinguish between the groups of the radical Reformation and the later Baptists.

⁹⁸² Kasper, ‘Implications’, 535; Woodhead, *Introduction*, 211.

⁹⁸³ Geldbach, *Taufe*, 14–15.

⁹⁸⁴ The following overview of the denominational development in Germany is described in detail by Munsonius, who states it as a development from ‘unity of faith’ to ‘twoness of faith’ and then later from ‘twoness’ to ‘threeness of faith’ in the German states. Hendrik Munsonius, ‘Von der Glaubenseinheit zur Glaubensfreiheit: zur Entwicklung der Religionsfreiheit in Deutschland’, *Göttinger E-Papers zu Religion und Recht* 7 (2013): 3–7.

⁹⁸⁵ Whereas the Anabaptist movement in Germany, Switzerland and Austria largely broke down, it was gradually tolerated in Holland and some Northern German areas and later spread to England. Through emigration of Anabaptist groups in the 18th and 19th centuries, the movement also came to Russia, the United States, and Canada. Cf. Warns, *Taufe*, 110–21.

⁹⁸⁶ For the Catholic Church unified teaching is natural. In the beginning Protestant state churches were stricken by doctrinal controversies, however, they also tried to overcome these and to unify their teaching.

1.2 New Protestant Movements in the 19th Century

The discussion about Baptism arose again in England in the 17th century with the emergence of the Baptist Churches.⁹⁸⁷ In Germany, however, the political realities did not allow any Christian movement apart from the accepted state churches. It was not until the Enlightenment in the 18th century provided the rational foundation of individual rights and religious freedom that the German states slowly moved towards more religious freedom.⁹⁸⁸ With the end of the Holy Roman Empire and the establishment of the German Confederation, the German federal act granted individual religious freedom and freedom of conscience, however, no freedom of association and public practice of religion.⁹⁸⁹ As the federal act was gradually implemented by the German states the environment opened for new Protestant movements.

In this new environment, at the peak of the German Awakening,⁹⁹⁰ the first Baptist congregation was founded in 1834 by J. G. Oncken in Hamburg. When the Baptist movement began to spread over Germany, however, it encountered resistance, even persecution, and it was not until the Baptists came together with members of the Protestant state churches in the *Kirchentag* and due to the influence of the Evangelical Alliance that their acceptance grew after 1850.⁹⁹¹ To be accepted by the authorities⁹⁹² and not for themselves,

This can be seen for example in the Formula of Concord (1577) that was set to finally settle the disputes of the Lutheran Reformation but was not accepted by all German state churches of Lutheran conviction and thus even deepened the confessional plurality. Cf. BESLK 1165-1177. The urge to unify the Protestant teaching is also manifest on the Reformed side in the creation of the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) and its accompanying church law, which was first introduced in the Kurpfalz and also adopted by many other states that changed from Lutheran to Reformed conviction in 1578. Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche (Synode Evangelisch-Reformierter Kirchen in Bayern und Nordwestdeutschland), Lippische Landeskirche, and Reformierter Bund, *Heidelberger Katechismus*, 85, 93. An important factor that brought forward unified teaching in the Protestant state churches is the institution of the *Landesherrliche Kirchenregiment* that was introduced by the Reformers who declared the rulers of the Protestant states as emergency bishops with the responsibility ‘in der Kirche die reine Lehre und den reinen Gottesdienst zu erhalten.’ Hermann Waserschleben, *Das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment* (Berlin: C.G. Lüderitz’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Carl Habel, 1873), 8–9.

⁹⁸⁷ Geldbach, *Taufe*, 15.

⁹⁸⁸ See for example the *Preußisches Allgemeines Landrecht* of 1794, that grants in §2 ‘Jedem Einwohner im Staate muß eine vollkommene Glaubens- und Gewissensfreyheit gestattet werden.’ Munsonius, ‘Von der Glaubenseinheit zur Glaubensfreiheit’, 8.

⁹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁹⁰ Cf. David Crouner, Gerald Christianson, and August Tholuck, *The Spirituality of the German Awakening* (Paulist Press, 2003), 7.

⁹⁹¹ Karl Heinz Voigt, *Ökumene in Deutschland: Internationale Einflüsse und Netzwerkbildung - Anfänge 1848-1945* (V&R unipress, 2014), 42–44. The *Märzrevolution* in 1848, even though it had no lasting success, additionally contributed to increased religious freedoms, as seen in the proposed *Frankfurter Reichsverfassung*, in the *Preußische Verfassung* of 1850, and the ecclesiopolitical laws in *Baden* and *Württemberg*. Cf. Munsonius, ‘Von der Glaubenseinheit zur Glaubensfreiheit’, 10.

⁹⁹² Even though there was theoretical religious freedom, the laws in Hamburg, for example, stated that the political authority had the right ‘in Betreff sich etwa einfindender christlicher Sekten aber vorbehalten nach Untersuchung des Einflusses ihrer Lehren, Grundsätze und äußeren Benehmens auf bürgerliche Verhältnisse und Staatswohl, über ihre Aufnahme und Zulassung zu bestimmen.’ M. Baumeister, *Das Privatrecht der freien und Hansestadt Hamburg* (Hoffmann und Campe, 1856), 55.

the Baptist congregations in Hamburg and Berlin also had to formulate their first statement of faith.⁹⁹³ In the process of formulating their statement of faith, however, an important characteristic of the new Protestant movements became manifest. Even though the Baptists agreed on certain core values like believer's Baptism and Baptism by immersion, apart from that they were not that unified in their beliefs, and struggled, for example, with their understanding of what really happens in Baptism. This is due to the fact that Baptists, as well as other Christian groups that arose during that time, are voluntary churches, with the focus on local congregations and egalitarian organisation among the members.⁹⁹⁴ The shift of authority to the individual believer and the independence from state and state churches also weakened this movement's understanding of belonging to the historical and universal church, making them technically to a 'new type of ecclesial community, which can no longer be classified among the 'historic' churches of the Reformation.'⁹⁹⁵ Groups representing this new type of ecclesial communities first were regarded as sects and later called free churches in contrast to the state churches, emphasising the separation of church and state.⁹⁹⁶

In the 19th century apart from the already existing Mennonites and the new Baptist movement, also other free churches emerged in Germany that held the Anabaptist's view of Baptism, like the Brethren, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Free Evangelical Churches (*Freie Evangelische Gemeinde*, FeG), and at the beginning of the 20th century the Pentecostal churches (*Bund Freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden*, BFP). These new free churches brought the mostly polemical discussion of the Reformation about Baptism back to Germany.⁹⁹⁷

The positions in the German discussion, however, were more polarised than, for example, in England where the Baptist churches maintained the understanding of God's active role in Baptism.⁹⁹⁸ The reasons for the strongly polarised discussion are found on the side of the free churches as well as on the side of the state churches. The continental free churches are distinct from their English and American counterparts as they were lay movements that developed in the 19th century civic emancipation out of the 'fundamental

⁹⁹³ For a detailed description of the content and development of the German Baptist's statement of faith see Swarat, *Texte*, 174–81.

⁹⁹⁴ Woodhead, *Introduction*, 221.

⁹⁹⁵ Kasper, 'Implications', 535.

⁹⁹⁶ Cf. Hans J. Hillerbrand, *Encyclopedia of Protestantism: 4-Volume Set* (Routledge, 2004), 448; Graydon F. Snyder and Doreen M. McFarlane, *The People Are Holy: The History and Theology of Free Church Worship* (Mercer University Press, 2005), 199.

⁹⁹⁷ Geldbach, *Taufe*, 15.

⁹⁹⁸ Swarat, *Texte*, 156.

ideological conflict with secularised authority.⁹⁹⁹ The free churches, therefore, opposed the state churches and because of an anti-ecclesiastical and anticlerical thinking they also rejected anything sacramental, focusing on an anthropocentric understanding of Baptism as individual confession.¹⁰⁰⁰ The state churches, however, labelled the free churches as sects and readily applied the Reformation time polemics against the Anabaptists to them, even though the circumstances of the 19th century free churches were completely different.¹⁰⁰¹ These reasons lead to hardened fronts in the discussion about Baptism in Germany that still can be sensed today, and it was not until the second half of the 20th century that, due to the ecumenical movement, the discussion became more peaceful and constructive.¹⁰⁰²

1.3 Inner-Church Discussion in the 20th Century

In addition to the in the 19th century evolved discussion about Baptism between different denominations, in the 20th century new discussion emerged within the German state churches.¹⁰⁰³ This new discussion was carried out in a highly speculative way and, according to Hurley, it was at least in the beginning more academic and historic than ecumenical and pastoral.¹⁰⁰⁴ The origins of the new inner-church discussion are found in liberal theology, especially in the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* that arose around 1900, and whose theological work can be characterised as ‘radical historical critique of the Christian tradition’ and the devaluation of dogmatics.¹⁰⁰⁵ In the beginning of the 19th century, therefore, starting with Heitmüller, several works were published that critically examined the historic development of Baptism and rejected the apostolic origin of infant Baptism.¹⁰⁰⁶ The critical contributions to this new discussion, however, were not only

⁹⁹⁹ James Fulton Maclear, ‘The Birth of the Free Church Tradition’, *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 26, no. 02 (1957): 99; Swarat, *Texte*, 156.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Swarat, *Texte*, 156.

¹⁰⁰¹ The Reformation condemnations of the Anabaptists, such as article 9 of the *Confessio Augustana*, which reads ‘Derhalben werden die Wiedertäufer verworfen welche lehren, daß die Kindertaufe nicht recht sei,’ were readily applied to the new free churches. Voigt, *Ökumene (1848-1945)*, 43.

¹⁰⁰² Cf. Geldbach, *Taufe*, 15.

¹⁰⁰³ At the beginning of the 20th century the inner church discussion about Baptism, according to Hubert, was a ‘genuin reformatorisches, nicht katholisches Problem,’ which, however, changed after the second Vatican council. Hubert, *Streit*, 176. In the latter part of the century also Roman Catholic theologians began to discuss and question their baptismal practice, as seen in Kasper, *Christsein ohne Entscheidung*.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cited in Hubert, *Streit*, 179.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Rüdiger Vom Bruch, Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, and Gangolf Hübinger, *Kultur und Kulturwissenschaften um 1900: Krise der Moderne und Glaube an die Wissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1989), 114; cf. Matthias Wolfes, *Protestantische Theologie und moderne Welt: Studien zur Geschichte der liberalen Theologie nach 1918* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 49, 69.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Heitmüller, for example, states as a matter of course ‘Nur wer glaubte, ließ sich taufen. Und Kindertaufe gab es noch nicht. An dem sakramentalen Charakter der Taufe ändert indes das Vorhandensein des Glaubens gar nichts, auch nicht an dem Urteil, daß sie ex opere operato wirkt.’ Wilhelm Heitmüller, *Taufe und Abendmahl bei Paulus: Darstellung und religionsgeschichtliche Beleuchtung* (Göttingen:

from liberal theologians, but the critical thinking of liberal theology and the readiness to question traditional beliefs influenced all theological camps.¹⁰⁰⁷

Even though the inner-church discussion started at the beginning of the 20th century, it was Karl Barth who made it prominent and raised it ‘to an adequate theological level.’¹⁰⁰⁸ Through the crisis of the two world wars, showing the cruelties of entire nations consisting of baptised people, and the collaboration of parts of German Protestantism with the Nazi regime, Barth concluded that the close connection between church, state, and society is problematic and infant Baptism as a part of this system is a ‘profoundly irregular’ practice.¹⁰⁰⁹ Besides his critique of infant Baptism, Barth also reduced Baptism to an act of obedience and discarded any sacramental understanding.¹⁰¹⁰ Hubert, therefore, concluded that Barth delivered a full range critique against tradition, which naturally provoked strong responses.¹⁰¹¹ Two noteworthy responses are Oscar Cullman’s book about Baptism,¹⁰¹² which Barth later opposed in his *Church Dogmatics*,¹⁰¹³ and the historical-exegetical debate between Joachim Jeremias and Kurt Aland.¹⁰¹⁴ Generally the academic publications in the inner-church discussion about Baptism can be summed up in three groups: (1) proponents of infant Baptism and an effective sacramental view; (2) adversaries of infant Baptism, mostly connected to a denial of any effectiveness in Baptism; (3) and a mediatory position regarding infant Baptism as unbiblical but potentially acceptable, which can be found in both sacramental and purely symbolic views.¹⁰¹⁵ For the rejection of the sacramental understanding of Baptism, however, we must distinguish between liberal theologians, who denied anything supernatural per se, and conservative theologians, who rejected the sacramental understanding out of theological considerations.¹⁰¹⁶ The

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903), 22. Beasley-Murray also mentions Franz Rendtorff, Paul Feine, Hans Windisch, and Franz Leenhardt as contributors of the newly emerging discussion. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 307.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Aland, for example, observed that this new development cannot only be attributed to liberal theology, as also non liberal theologians like Feine were involved. Aland, *Säuglingstaufe*, 7.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Kasper, ‘Implications’, 536; cf. Hubert, *Streit*, 19.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, Vol IV.4, The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969), 194; Hubert, *Streit*, 19.

¹⁰¹⁰ Cf. Kasper, ‘Implications’, 536.

¹⁰¹¹ Hubert, *Streit*, 27.

¹⁰¹² Cullmann explicitly states in his foreword that Barth’s book compelled him to publish his baptismal view. Cullmann, *Die Tauflehre des Neuen Testaments*, 3.

¹⁰¹³ Cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics, Vol IV.4, The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, xi, 47, 182.

¹⁰¹⁴ Jeremias and Aland both were proponents of infant Baptism. Jeremias, however, argued for apostolic origin, whereas Aland saw it as a later development. The two main works in the Jeremias-Aland debate are Joachim Jeremias, *Die Kindertaufe in den ersten 4 Jahrhunderten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958); Aland, *Säuglingstaufe*. For an elaborate examination of the positions of Jeremias and Aland see Hubert, *Streit*, 34–60.

¹⁰¹⁵ Peter Zimmerling defined these groups in the foreword of the new edition of Schlink, *Taufe*, XII.

¹⁰¹⁶ Kasper, ‘Implications’, 536; Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 308.

merit of this mainly academic discussion about Baptism, with no immediate consequence to church practice, is the reintroduction of the baptismal doctrine of the free churches into serious debate and also the significant realisation that infant Baptism cannot be proved by Scripture alone, therefore, laying the foundation for the ecumenical discussion later in the century.¹⁰¹⁷

The paradoxical fact of the broad acceptance of infant Baptism among unchurched people on the one hand, the growing rejection of religious conservative families to have their children baptised on the other hand, and also a new interest in rituals caused Baptism to become a popular theme also outside of the academic sphere at the end of the 20th century.¹⁰¹⁸ This shift in the discussion towards a more pastoral and practical dimension is also illustrated by the recent pluralisation of baptismal age in the Protestant state churches.¹⁰¹⁹

1.4 Ecumenical Discussion in the 20th/21st Century

The modern ecumenical movement has its roots in 19th and early 20th century Protestantism, where many affiliations and ecumenical organisations were established in order to overcome the divisions between the Christian churches.¹⁰²⁰ Even though in Germany after WWI a first Catholic-Protestant dialogue emerged, called the *Una Sancta movement*,¹⁰²¹ it was not until WWII that a broader ecumenical movement came into being.¹⁰²² In WWII Christians of all denominations, fighting side by side in the trenches or suffering in the concentration camps resisting an evil regime, became aware that their similarities were more important than denominational boundaries.¹⁰²³ Due to the population

¹⁰¹⁷ Kasper, 'Implications', 536.

¹⁰¹⁸ Schlink, *Taufe*, XVII. Landesbischof Sorg of the *Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, for example, described the reason for his booklet about Baptism with the many critical requests about the baptismal practice that he received from the churches. Theo Sorg, *'Nicht ihr habt mich erwählt ...' - Die volkskirchliche Taufpraxis als Herausforderung an die Gemeinden* (Imatel-Mediengesellschaft, 1991). The recent books of Grethlein and Kaul show the new interest in the ritual of Baptism in the Protestant and Roman Catholic state churches and also describe the different expectations and views about Baptism between the members and the leadership of the churches. Grethlein, *Taufpraxis*; Kaul, *Taufpastoral - zwischen kirchlicher Tradition und menschlicher Erfahrung*.

¹⁰¹⁹ Cf. Geldbach, *Taufe*, 18.

¹⁰²⁰ Important organisations established in that time are, for example, the World Evangelical Alliance, the International Missionary Council, the World Conference on Life and Work, and the World Conference on Faith and Order, whereas the latter two organisations were merged to the World Council of Churches in 1948, which again merged with the International Missionary Council in 1961. Joseph Schumacher, *Das II. Vatikanische Konzil und der ökumenische Dialog - Das Unaufgebbare in der Ökumene*, vol. 40, Schriften des Initiativkreises katholischer Laien und Priester in der Diözese Augsburg e.V. (Augsburg, 2002), 6; WCC, *JWG between the RCC and the WCC 8th Report*, 102.

¹⁰²¹ Leonard Swidler, 'In The Beginning There Was the Thought', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies (JES)* 49, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 7.

¹⁰²² Cf. Martin Friedrich, *Von Marburg bis Leuenberg: der lutherisch-reformierte Gegensatz und seine Überwindung* (Waltrop: Spenner, 1999), 187.

¹⁰²³ Kasper, 'Perspektiven', 2.

movements after the war also the clear distinction between the Catholic and Protestant areas in Germany blurred and people of all denominations found themselves living and working together, which led to an increasing mutual acceptance on a personal and religious level.¹⁰²⁴ The growing ecumenical interest and cooperation in Germany finally led to the foundation of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland* (ACK) in 1948, as a result and instrument of the ecumenical movement.¹⁰²⁵ Today in the ACK all major German Christian churches are represented, either as member or as guest.¹⁰²⁶ The Roman Catholic Church, however, did not join until 1974, as only the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) marked the official entrance of the Roman Catholic Church in the ecumenical dialog.¹⁰²⁷ When the majority of the German churches, including the Mennonite and Baptist (BEFG) Churches, acknowledged ‘a common commitment to dialogue and co-operation’ by signing the *Charta Oekumenica* in 2003, the foundation for further ecumenical engagement in the new millennium was laid.¹⁰²⁸ An interesting recent development in the ecumenical landscape is also the orientation of the traditionally anti-Catholic thinking free churches towards the Roman Catholic Church, as they are attracted by the Catholic conservative ethic values, which are eroding in the Protestant state churches.¹⁰²⁹

In the first half of the 20th century Baptism was mainly a subject of confrontation between the different denominations in Germany and of tense discussion inside the state churches. In the ecumenical movement, however, the discussion about Baptism became an important foundation, as Baptism provides a common ground for dialogue.¹⁰³⁰ In the last decades many dialogues, bilateral as well as multilateral, have contributed to mutual understanding, theological convergence, and agreements on Baptism.¹⁰³¹ The bilateral dialogues especially show that today not only the traditional Protestant churches but also free churches and the Roman Catholic Church are actively involved in the discussion about Baptism.¹⁰³² Multilateral dialogues with special relevance for the German Baptism

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰²⁵ Wilhelm Rees, *Ökumene* (Münster: LIT, 2014), 149–50.

¹⁰²⁶ For a complete list of the member churches and guest member churches of the ACK see <http://www.oekumene-ack.de>.

¹⁰²⁷ WCC, *JWG between the RCC and the WCC 8th Report*, 99; Kasper, ‘Perspektiven’, 3.

¹⁰²⁸ CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES, ‘CHARTA OEKUMENICA - Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe’ (Strasbourg, 2001), 1, http://www.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/cec/CEC_Documents/Charta_Oecumenica.pdf. For the signing German churches see ‘Urkunde - Annahme der Charta Oekumenica’, 2003, http://www.oekumene-ack.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Grundlagen_der_Zusammenarbeit/Urkunde_Charta_Oecumenica_ACK.pdf.

¹⁰²⁹ Kasper, ‘Perspektiven’, 8.

¹⁰³⁰ Cf. Best, *Baptism*, vii.

¹⁰³¹ Cf. WCC, *JWG between the RCC and the WCC 8th Report*, 19.

¹⁰³² Geldbach, *Taufe*, 126.

discussion are the *Leuenberger Konkordie* (LK, 1973), the document on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM, 1982) and the *Mutual Recognition of Baptism Agreement* (2007).

The *Leuenberger Konkordie* (today *Community of Protestant Churches in Europe*, CPCE) outlined an ecumenical model for Protestant churches and is especially significant as it ended the 450 years of separation between the Reformed and Lutheran state churches of the *Evangelische Kirche Deutschland* (EKD).¹⁰³³ With the description of the common baselines of Baptism in the LK and the subsequent process leading to the *On the Doctrine and Practice of Baptism* statement, the opposition between the two baptismal views of the magisterial Reformation has been mostly overcome.¹⁰³⁴ The BEM convergence text combined 50 years of previous discussion on Baptism by stating the common understandings of Baptism, outlining the remaining differences, and proposing ways for their reconciliation.¹⁰³⁵ The whole process of BEM, including its numerous responses, ‘provided significant material for the churches to study each other’s points of view,’¹⁰³⁶ and thus led to increased mutual understanding and more discussion about important theological questions.¹⁰³⁷ BEM has been received in many bilateral dialogues and the ‘practical reception of BEM’ can be seen in the renewal of baptismal practices and in the growing acceptance of Baptism performed by other churches.¹⁰³⁸ The locally already present steps towards mutual recognition of Baptism in Germany finally found their climax in the national *Mutual Recognition of Baptism Agreement* in Magdeburg in 2007, signed, for example, by the EKD, speaking for the Protestant state churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and different Orthodox churches.¹⁰³⁹ This agreement shows on the one hand the progress that has already been achieved, but on the other hand the absence of churches that exclusively practise believer’s Baptism also displays the still existing dissent and that the ecumenical discussion about Baptism in Germany has not yet come to an end.¹⁰⁴⁰

¹⁰³³ Cf. Friedrich, *Von Marburg bis Leuenberg*, 230–31.

¹⁰³⁴ Kirchenamt der EKD, *Die Taufe*, 28; cf. ‘On the Doctrine and Practice of Baptism’ published in Wilhelm Hüffmeier, ed., *Leuenberger Texte 2: Sakramente, Amt, Ordination* (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck, 1995), 8–17.

¹⁰³⁵ BEM v; Heller, *Baptized*, 109.

¹⁰³⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁰³⁷ Cf. Best, *Baptism*, 208.

¹⁰³⁸ John Gibaut, ‘The Work of Faith and Order Thirty Years after BEM: Perspectives on Reception; Perspectives for the Future.’, 2011, 5–8, <http://strasbourginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Seminar2011-The-Work-of-Faith-Thirty-Years-after-BEM-Gibaut.pdf>.

¹⁰³⁹ ‘Wechselseitige Anerkennung der Taufe, Magdeburg 2007’; cf. Best, *Baptism*, 227.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Cf. Geldbach, *Taufe*, 18.

Appendix 2

Meeting with Theodor Schneider in Armsheim on 20 July 2015

On 20 July 2015 I had the opportunity to personally meet with Theodor Schneider and to discuss some questions about his life and work. The transcript is divided in two sections: the first section describes general topics that arose during our conversation and the second presents Schneider's answers to my specific questions. It was a privilege to meet Schneider and to learn from him personally, and not only from his writings. This meeting especially confirmed several of the topics that are most important to him.

Schneider reviewed, corrected, and signed the transcript. Out of consideration for the privacy of third persons some discussed topics are excluded from the transcript below.

2.1 General Topics

2.1.1 *Hermeneutics*

Herr Schneider mahnt, dass man vorsichtig sein muss, wenn man versucht, direkt von der Bibel in die heutige Zeit zu springen. Die Jahrhunderte der Überlieferung und die veränderten Lebenssituationen dürfen nicht ignoriert werden. Die Geschichtlichkeit, die uns prägt, muss auch bei der Weitergabe des Glaubens ernst genommen werden. Dadurch entsteht aber laut Herrn Schneider auch immer das Problem, dass man evtl. zu sehr an zeitlich geprägten Positionen festhält und versucht den Fluss, in dem man steht anzuhalten, was besonders im ersten Vatikanum zutage trat. Diese Tendenz wird in der Neuscholastik im 19./20. Jhd. auch sichtbar.

2.1.2 *Ecumenical Involvement*

Herr Schneider erzählt, dass eine der Früchte seiner Ökumenischen Arbeit die Freundschaft mit evangelischen Kollegen sei, was über alle Texte, Glaubensaussagen und Debatten hinweg ein ganz großer Gewinn für ihn ist.

Die Ökumenische Bewegung hat etwas an Dynamik verloren, was so Schneider, von der Sache her auch erklärlich ist. Die leichteren Dinge wurden möglichst schnell bearbeitet und von den verbleibenden Differenzen machen einige Knackpunkte fürs Theologische Gespräch doch viel Mühe und da steckt man dann auch immer wieder fest. An diesem Punkt, so Herr Schneider, kommt die Tradition, auf allen beteiligten Seiten, oft als Last zum Tragen und hindert am Weitergehen. Bei den Studierenden der Theologie, die entweder sozialisiert aus ihren eigenen Gemeinden kommen oder keinen großen christlichen Hintergrund haben, spielt Ökumene bei Wenigen eine Rolle.

Dass der christliche Glaube kirchlich konkret werden muss (z.B. durch Zugehörigkeit zu einer Konfession), so Schneider, das ist in Ordnung, aber dadurch kommen auch konfessionelle Färbungen ins Spiel. Laut Herrn Schneider darf das natürlich auch so bleiben, deshalb ist das Schlagwort von der versöhnten Verschiedenheit auch wichtig. Verschiedenheit ist nichts Schlechtes, solange die Verschiedenheit nicht so weit geht, dass man einander ausschließt.

Der Bereich der Ökumene in dem sich Herr Schneider immer bemüht hat, ist auch nur ein Teilbereich in dem theologische Hindernisse aufgearbeitet werden und man versucht scheinbare Gegensätze als nicht stichhaltig aufzuweisen. Herr Schneider erwähnt dazu, die in Straßburg erarbeitete Methode des ‚Differenzierten Konsenses,‘ welche beinhaltet das man zunächst das Gemeinsame auf der Basis der Schrift aufarbeitet und dann schaut wo Unterschiede sind und bewertet, ob diese so groß sind, dass sie das Gemeinsame gefährden können. Herr Schneider betont aber, dass die Theologie nur Hilfe leisten kann bei einem Prozess, der viel mehr auch von den Leitungen der einzelnen Kirchen getragen werden müsste. Die Leitungen müssten die Ergebnisse wahrnehmen, rezipieren und umsetzen, was so Schneider, nur sehr unzureichend geschieht. So bleibt einerseits nur Beten und Hoffen, und andererseits betont Herr Schneider aber auch, dass wir sehr froh sein können über das was in der Ökumene schon erreicht wurde, und dass manches was zu seiner Jugendzeit unvorstellbar war nun möglich ist: z.B. gemeinsame Gottesdienste, soziale Aktionen, politische Erklärungen, Taufanerkennung, Lieder, und auch gemeinsames Vaterunser, und gemeinsames Glaubensbekenntnis; wo die Traditionen früher nicht einmal im Gebet zusammen waren.

Auch die Sicht auf das Papsttum hat sich von evangelischer Seite zum Positiven gewandelt durch authentische Päpste, die so Schneider, natürlich auch ihre Macken oder Blickverengungen hatten, aber doch würde heute niemand in der Evangelischen Kirche den Papst mit dem Antichristen gleichsetzen, wie es Luther tat. Herr Schneider ist auch davon überzeugt, dass wenn die kirchliche Situation zur Zeit der Reformation nicht so verfahren gewesen wäre, die Anstöße von Martin Luther auch für den ganzen Bereich der Kirche fruchtbar hätten gemacht werden können und es nicht zur Spaltung hätte kommen müssen.

Auch im Verhältnis Ost-West hat sich laut Schneider einiges aufgelockert, wenngleich es auch inner-Orthodox zu neuen Spannungen gekommen ist, z.B. zwischen den Baltischen Staaten und Russland.

Herr Schneider erzählt auch, je mehr man in die Einzelheiten auf der ganzen Welt schaut, desto eher kann einen der Mut verlassen, wenn man also wahrnimmt wie kompliziert das ganze Feld ist. Annäherungen auf der einen Seite führen oft zu neuen Rissen auf der anderen Seite, und oft ist auch das Ökumenische Bemühen als solches nicht eindeutig, und nicht nur die Ausgangspositionen. Herr Schneider kann deshalb Ratzinger auch verstehen, der sinngemäß während seiner Papstzeit gesagt hat, dass sich das Ziel der Ökumene erst in der Ewigkeit erfüllt, was so Schneider, eine ‚positiv formulierte Resignation‘ darstellt.

2.2 Specific Questions

2.2.1 General Questions

- a. *Gab / gibt es Personen, die Ihrer kritischen Treue / offenen Ansprache von Problemen in der Kirche nicht wohl gesonnen sind?*

Herr Schneider sieht sich an dieser Stelle nicht als Einzelner, sondern es gibt viele Leute in der Katholischen Kirche, die wie er Dinge kritisch sehen. Wenn er sagt ‚kritische Treue‘ sieht er sich auf jeden Fall nicht als Einzelgänger. Manche seiner Kollegen sind auch ab und an angeeckt und hatten Auseinandersetzungen mit dem örtlichen Bischof. Er selbst hatte nie mit solchen Problemen zu kämpfen, sagt aber, dass manche seiner Schüler bei der Berufung auf Professorenstellen Schwierigkeiten hatten, die Lehrerlaubnis zu bekommen aufgrund von Dingen, die sie lehrten, die Herr Schneider auch so gesagt hätte. Die Lehrerlaubnis für eine öffentliche Hochschule kann nur erteilt werden, wenn der Bischof eine Unbedenklichkeitserklärung abgibt (Nihil Obstat). Laut Herr Schneider neigen die römischen ‚Zentralisten‘ dazu, alles kontrollieren zu wollen. Daher dürfen die deutschen Bischöfe seit 1983 die Unbedenklichkeitserklärungen nur noch mit Zustimmung des Vatikans abgeben. Einem von Herrn Schneiders Schülern wurde ohne genaue Begründung attestiert, dass er sich nahe am Traditionsbruch bewegen würde, was Herr Schneiders Meinung nach zum einen keinesfalls so ist und zum anderen ein Traditionsbruch nicht grundsätzlich falsch ist, wenn an die Stelle etwas Neues, Besseres tritt. In den Fällen wo die Lehrerlaubnis für die Schüler von Herrn Schneider gefährdet war, haben sich die jeweiligen deutschen Bischöfe, die die Kandidaten auch persönlich kannten, dann aber persönlich eingesetzt und die Zustimmung des Vatikans erreicht.

- b. *Sind Sie bei gemeinsamem Abendmahl mit Evangelischen Kollegen aus der Überzeugung sitzen geblieben, dass das außerhalb der katholischen Kirche gespendete Abendmahl ungültig ist oder wegen der Ordnungen / Erwartungen der Kirche?*

Herr Schneider erzählt, dass im ÖAK nur die Mitglieder der Konfession des Vorstehers kommunizieren, er mit dieser Absprache aber nicht glücklich sei. Bei verschiedenen Gelegenheiten (z.B. in Jerusalem, Schwanberg, Armsheim) nahm er auch am Evangelischen Abendmahl teil. Allerdings ist er kritisch gegenüber dem nachlässigen Umgang mit den übrig gebliebenen (konsekrierten) Gaben in manchen Evangelischen Gottesdiensten. Er sieht aber auch manche Formulierungen in den katholischen Messtexten kritisch, die eine theologisch fragwürdige Opfertheologie ausdrücken. Zu diesem Thema hat er auch einiges geschrieben in der Hoffnung ein fragwürdiges Opferverständnis in der Theologie und in den Köpfen zu korrigieren.

2.2.2 Church History

- a. *An mehreren Stellen scheint in Ihren Veröffentlichungen eine eher kritische Sicht auf die Kirchengeschichte durch, z.B.:*
- o KT 323, Auswüchse "contra Evangelium", Verfehlungen durch Verfälschungen, Hinzufügen oder Weglassen
 - o KT 343, Aufzählung der Einseitigkeiten, Willkür, Auswahl... in der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche

- o Mann und Frau, 19-20, Würzburger Synode: Bereitschaft zur Selbstkritik, Geschichte darf nicht halbiert werden (nur gute Seite ansehen)
- o DTV 57, Kirche verfälscht oder verschüttet Evangelium

Kann man das so offen sagen in der Katholischen Kirche?

Laut Herrn Schneider ist die Atmosphäre in der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche heute viel offener als früher, besonders unter Papst Franziskus. Papst Johannes Paul II. hatte noch versucht die Behandlung mancher Themen (z.B. die Ordination von Frauen) zu untersagen, aber laut Herrn Schneider zeigt die Kirchengeschichte, dass das nicht funktioniert, was man am Beispiel des Umgangs mit der Aristotelischen Philosophie im 13. Jhd. sieht. Herr Schneider sagt, wir müssen zu unserer eigenen Geschichte inklusive ihrer Schattenseiten stehen. In der Geschichte, so Schneider, kann man immer wieder menschliche Fehlentwicklung aber auch Gottes korrigierendes Eingreifen sehen.

- b. *Ist diese offene Kritik, bzw. das beim Namen nennen der Schattenseiten der Kirchengeschichte ein deutsches Phänomen in der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche?*

Laut Herrn Schneider gibt es auch Beispiele aus dem außerdeutschen Raum (Frankreich, Belgien, Niederlande, sogar aus Italien), und es kann deshalb nicht als deutsches Phänomen bezeichnet werden. Besonders das zweite Vatikanum hat hier einen Wandel bewirkt. Dieser Wandel kann z.B. auch in der Akzeptanz der historischen Bibelforschung in der Katholischen Kirche gesehen werden. Heute ist es laut Schneider so, dass sich die Alt- und Neutestamentler nicht mehr so sehr nach Konfessionen, als nach Positionen unterscheiden.

- c. *Verschiedene Sichten von Kirchengeschichte?*

Laut Herrn Schneider ist die Sicht auf Kirchengeschichte sehr eng verbunden mit dem Verständnis von Traditio / Überlieferung: In der röm. Kath. Auffassung, Offenbarung erreicht uns in ‚Schrift u. Tradition,‘ meint Tradition lebendige Weitergabe der Schrift, bezieht sich also mehr auf die Art und Weise der Überlieferung und meint nicht (zur Schrift) zusätzliche Inhalte.

Zu den von Jaroslav Pelikan definierten drei verschiedenen Sichten auf Kirchengeschichte, ‚Authoritarian Reference,‘ ‚Critical Reverence,‘ und ‚Utter Contempt,‘ meint Schneider, dass sich darin vermutlich alle Parteien nicht richtig wiederfinden. Dies wird von Schneider auch als Gefahr in der Ökumenischen Debatte gesehen, dass oft von der Gegenseite die fremde Position (falsch) wiedergegeben wird anstatt, dass man sie darstellen lässt von dem, der die Position eigentlich vertritt. Man muss vorsichtig sein, wenn man die Position von Anderen richtig wiedergeben möchte. Deshalb ist man in den neuern theol. Lexika dazu übergegangen, Positionen direkt von Vertretern der jeweiligen Konfessionen wiedergeben zu lassen.

Zum Thema einer Sicht von ‚Authoritarian Reference,‘ einer Sicht die die Kirchengeschichte als durchweg gut bezeichnet, erwidert Schneider, dass der Verlauf der gesamten Kirchengeschichte zum Teil katastrophal war und dass es ein Wunder ist, dass es immer wieder ins Lot kam, z.B. die christologischen Streitigkeiten im 4. und 5. Jhd. oder die Aufarbeitung des Skandals von Zeitweise 3 Päpsten auf dem Konzil von Konstanz (1414-1418).

Laut Schneider hat es lange gedauert, bis die Theologen in den Kirchen der Reformation die vorreformatorische Geschichte als ihre eigene akzeptiert und dargestellt haben. Diese Akzeptanz zeigt sich z.B. in vielen Evangelischen Arbeiten im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert die sich mit mittelalterlichen Positionen beschäftigten.

2.2.3 *Dogmatics and Doctrine*

a. *In einigen Artikeln gehen Sie auf die zwei verschiedenen dogmatischen Methoden ein:*

(i) *Neuscholastik: Dogma -- Bibel / Tradition -- spekulative Durchdringung*

(ii) *Nach zweitem Vatikanum: Bibl. Ursprung -- hist. Entfaltung -- spekulative Durchdringung*

In DTV 70 beschreiben Sie die Dogmatische Methode als:

„Themen der Schrift -- Interpretation im Laufe der Geschichte -- Versuch innere Zusammenhänge zu verstehen -- All das mit Blick auf die heutige Glaubenssituation“

Ist dies dasselbe wie die nachvatikanische Methode (ii)?

Die ergänzte Formulierung meint, so Schneider, dasselbe und der letzte Teil spiegelt noch einmal eines der großen Anliegen des zweiten Vatikanums wider. Durch das zweite Vatikanum wurde die Notwendigkeit des Bezugs der Theologie auf den Glauben der Menschen hervorgehoben, dass die gesamte Theologie Dienst am Glauben sein muss. Dogmatik soll nicht zum Selbstzweck und zum systematischen Gebäude werden. Es geht laut Schneider um die Vermittlung des überlieferten Glaubens in die Gegenwart hinein.

b. *Was bedeutet spekulative Durchdringung?*

Spekulative Durchdringung bedeutet für Herrn Schneider, wie kann man die Aussagen des Glaubens, die man vor sich hat, verstehen: Was heißt das für den lebendigen Glaubensvollzug, das Kirchenverständnis, das Verhalten zum Mitgläubigen. ‚Spekulieren‘ ist nachdenken um zu verstehen.

Die Neuscholastik hatte im Gegensatz zu vorhergehenden Zeiten (zur Scholastik des Mittelalters) den starken biblischen Bezug fast ganz verloren. Man begann, so Schneider, mit Thesen aus Konzilsbeschlüssen, hat dann um die These zu stützen mühsam kleine Bibelzitate hinzugefügt und wenige Sätze aus der Patristik/Überlieferung. Aber die Thesen waren durchweg Konzilsformulierungen aus einer bestimmten Problemsituation und durch ihre Entstehungszeit bedingt. Wenn man das außer Acht lässt kann es laut Schneider schnell zu Verkümmern und Verfremdung kommen. Die Thesen müssen daher immer wieder geprüft und zurückgebunden werden an den Ursprung der Heiligen Schrift.

c. *Gehören die Konzilstexte zur historischen Entfaltung?*

Schneider betont, dass die Konzilstexte Glaubensweitergabe sind und deshalb in besonderem Maße zur historischen Entfaltung gehören, insbesondere da sie ja nicht nur Meinungen einzelner Theologen, wie z.B. Augustin, weitergeben, sondern den Konsens der gesamten Kirche. Laut Schneider sind besonders in der Frühzeit die

Konzilstexte in schweren Situationen entstanden, aber spiegeln trotzdem oft großen theologischen Sachverstand wider und sind sehr erhellend und wegweisend. Die Konzilsausagen sind daher die eigentlich wichtigen Punkte im Überlieferungsprozess bis in die Neuzeit. Bei den Konzilstexten, so Schneider, muss auch deren Genese betrachtet werden, was dazu führen kann, dass manche in Spannung oder im Gegensatz zueinanderstehenden Sätze (z.B. in Vatican II, LG) viel Freiheit lassen für eine sorgfältige Interpretation.

Auf dem zweiten Vatikanum wurden auch manche vorherigen päpstlichen Beschlüsse, z.B. zu den Themen Religionsfreiheit, Gewissensfreiheit, Ökumene, Verhältnis zum Judentum, ins Gegenteil verkehrt, was auch ein wichtiger Gesichtspunkt für die Auffassung von Überlieferungsgeschichte ist. Es geht laut Schneider in der Geschichte des Glaubens nicht immer nur vorwärts und aufwärts, sondern auch hinauf und hinunter, und es muss manchmal auch Vergangenes (Verfremdungen, Fehleinschätzungen und Verfälschungen) beseitigt werden um das ursprüngliche Glaubenszeugnis wieder zum Leuchten zu bringen.

2.2.4 *Scripture and Tradition*

- a. *Entwicklung von Lehre: In DTV 45 schreiben Sie man ‚kann nicht von sich aus neues zur Botschaft des Anfangs hinzufügen‘ -- Wie sehen Sie das mit den 2 mariologischen Dogmen, ist das nicht in gewisser Weise eine Hinzufügung?*

Unbefleckte Empfängnis: Das Dogma der unbefleckten Empfängnis, d.h. Marias Bewahrung vor der Erbsünde, so Herr Schneider, ist nur sinnvoll verstehbar, wenn man es vom Christusmysterium her sieht als eine Art Vorbereitung für das Christusereignis. Seine komplizierte Entstehungsgeschichte lässt sich in wenigen Sätzen kaum darstellen. Die Rede von der Sündlosigkeit Marias kann leicht missverstanden werden. Auch Maria war erlösungsbedürftig. Nur auf dem Umweg der Zuhilfenahme des Gedankens von einer Vorauserlösung konnte dieses Dogma, so Schneider, im 19. Jhd. formuliert werden. Herr Schneider betont die Zurückführung des Dogmas von der unbefleckten Empfängnis auf die Auserwählung ‚vor Grundlegung der Welt‘ (vgl. Eph. 4,1-6 sowie Röm 8,28-30): Dieses Dogma soll dem einzelnen Gläubigen die Auserwählung durch Gott verdeutlichen.

Marias Aufnahme in den Himmel: Herr Schneider, und viele seiner Kollegen, deuten dieses Dogma in der Weise, dass es nicht in erster Linie nur um Maria geht, sondern um den gläubigen Menschen allgemein. Es geht um die Hoffnung auf leibhaftige Auferstehung aller und darum, dass der ganze Mensch und nicht nur seine Seele vollendet wird (entgegen der griechischen Sichtweise, in der Leib und Seele getrennt betrachtet werden, ‚anima separata‘). Dies sollte, so Schneider, vor allem an der zentralen Gestalt des Menschen Jesus Christus und an seiner Auferstehung festgemacht werden. Es geht nicht primär um Maria als Einzelperson, sondern um Maria als Typus der Kirche (‚Maria-Ecclesia‘, vgl. LG 52-65). An Maria sieht man, laut Schneider, was Glauben an Vollendung bedeutet und was erlöstes Menschsein heißt.

Schneider sieht die ‚Himmelfahrt‘ (offiziell ‚assumptio‘ = Aufnahme Marias in den Himmel) von Maria nur analog zur Himmelfahrt Jesu, warnt deshalb davor die Mutter vor den Sohn zu stellen, wie es in manchen volkstümlichen Frömmigkeitsformen geschieht. Er warnt auch davor Maria als ‚Vermittlerin der Erlösung‘ zu bezeichnen.

- b. In DTV 61 beschreiben Sie die Methode der Einfaltung, d.h. das strittige Dogma wird auf einen guten Ursprung reduziert (,eingefaltet'). Was bedeutet der gute Ursprung dann aber für das strittige Dogma? Ist das heutige Dogma damit falsch entfaltet, oder bedeutet der gute Ursprung, dass das heutige Dogma richtig ist? In DTV 44, schreiben Sie von ,Wildwuchs, Verkümmern, Verkrüppelung.' Kann man also sagen, dass die Tradition der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche auch falsche Lehre enthält?

Laut Herrn Schneider ist das Anliegen des Begriffs ,Einfaltung,' dass ein entsprechendes Dogma auf den Keim, die Wurzel zurückverfolgt wird. Wenn der gute bzw. richtige Ursprung gefunden wird, dann kann man auch das, was fragwürdig erscheint besser erkennen. Herr Schneider macht das am Beispiel des Baumes deutlich: Wenn der Wurzelstock gefunden wird, dann stören der krumme Ast oder die komische Blüte einer späteren geschichtlichen Ausfaltung nicht mehr so sehr. Die Entwicklung bzw. den Prozess der Entstehung der Dogmen zu beachten, d.h. ihre Geschichtlichkeit ernst zu nehmen, ist für Schneider sehr wichtig.

Herr Schneider verweist deshalb auf Walter Kaspers Rede von der ,doppelten Relativität der Dogmen,' was seiner Meinung nach eher doppelte ,Relationalität' genannt werden sollte, da es um die doppelte Bezüglichkeit der Dogmen geht. Jede konkrete Formulierung in der Glaubensgeschichte, so Schneider, muss sich erstens daran messen lassen wie sie zum biblischen Ursprung steht, ist also immer bezogen auf die Heilige Schrift, und ist zweitens bezogen auf eine bestimmte geschichtliche Situation bzw. ihr Problem auf, das sie vom Glauben her zu antworten sucht.

- c. Was denken Sie darüber verschiedene Sichtweisen des Verhältnisses von Schrift und Tradition zu definieren?

Die Zwei-Quellentheorie wurde, so Schneider, auf dem zweiten Vatikanum verworfen. Die Überlieferung ist keine zweite Quelle, sondern so Schneider, das Bemühen die einzige Quelle sprudeln zu lassen und weiterzuleiten.

Eine Drei-Quellen Sicht mit dem Lehramt als dritter Quelle sieht Herr Schneider als vom zweiten Vatikanum eindeutig abgelehnt. Das kirchliche Lehramt dient – wie die gesamte dogmatische Überlieferung – der einen und einzigen Quelle der Offenbarung, der Heiligen Schrift. Herr Schneider stimmt aber zu, dass es vom Verhalten einzelner Päpste her erscheinen kann, als ob ihr Lehramt faktisch eine weitere Quelle von Offenbarung wäre.

Eine Sicht des Verhältnisses von Schrift und Tradition, die die Überlieferung komplett ausblendet, ,sola scriptura' wörtlich genommen, ist ein Phänomen das Schneider als die ,Zuspitzung und Verabsolutierung eines einzelnen wichtigen Gesichtspunktes' bezeichnet.

Herr Schneider verweist auf den Einigungstext des Ökumenischen Arbeitskreises (in *Verbindliches Zeugnis*), in dem seiner Meinung nach der Gegensatz der verschiedenen Sichten des Verhältnisses von Schrift und Überlieferung (traditionell: ,sola scriptura' gegen ,scriptura et traditio') geklärt wird. Laut Schneider geht es in der Überlieferung nicht um zusätzliche Inhalte, sondern um die Weise der Vermittlung der Inhalte, was also auch bedeutet, dass alle wesentlichen Glaubensaussagen in der Schrift enthalten sind. Tradition als lebendige Überlieferung ist für Schneider eine aktive, lebendige Wiedergabe des Schriftinhalts. Diesem habe auch die evangelische Seite in besagtem Einigungstext zugestimmt. Auf evangelischer Seite sind zum Beispiel die Predigt und Katechese sowohl die Bekenntnisschriften ein Element der lebendigen Überlieferung, dass nicht einfach übersprungen werden kann. Herr Schneider sieht in der Bestimmung des Verhältnisses von Schrift und Tradition

in der katholischen und evangelischen Kirche nur noch Unterschiede in Nuancen, aber nicht im Wesentlichen.

Herr Schneider ist also der Überzeugung, dass die historischen Gegensätze in der Bestimmung des Verhältnisses von Schrift und Tradition inzwischen überholt sind. Außerdem ist er der Meinung, dass die Aufteilung in verschiedene Kategorien mit Vorsicht zu verwenden ist, da sie nur Hilfskonstruktionen darstellen. Er empfiehlt die Kategorien soweit einzuführen, als sie hilfreiche Aspekte enthalten und sie keinesfalls zu absoluten Sichtweisen zu erheben.

Er empfiehlt die einzelnen Kategorien eher an Positionen von Theologen bzw. Einzelpersonen festzumachen als sie kompletten Kirchen zuzuordnen. Besonders bei der Darstellung von geschichtlichen Phänomenen durch bestimmte Theologen ist Vorsicht geboten, sie einfach auch als eigene Position zu präsentieren, wenn man nicht ganz sicher ist, dass man alles Relevante wahrgenommen hat. Wenn man auf engem Raum formulieren muss, dann darf man auch knapp und pauschal formulieren, so Schneider, aber man muss sich seiner Knappheit und Unvollständigkeit bewusst sein.

- d. *Lässt sich die Römisch-Katholische Kirche auf bestimmte Sichten zuordnen? Gibt es Veränderungen: Vor der Reformation, nach Vatican II? In Trient wurde z.B. zuerst von ‚partim – partim‘ gesprochen was dann aber in der endgültigen Fassung zu et wurde.*

Bei einzelnen Thesen, kann man sagen, so Schneider, dass sie typisch sind für eine bestimmte Zeit. Laut Schneider ist die ‚partim – partim‘ Formulierung eindeutig eine Zwei-Quellen Sicht. Diese entspricht auch der, bis in die Zeit des zweiten Vatikanums hineinreichenden, Neuscholastischen Position, was sich auch im ersten (abgelehnten) Entwurf von DV widerspiegelte in der Überschrift ‚Von den Quellen der Offenbarung.‘

In der heutigen römisch-katholischen Theologie, so Schneider, kann man auf keinen Fall von zwei Quellen reden. Die neuere katholische Sichtweise deckt sich im Wesentlichen mit der Sichtweise des Einigungstextes des Ökumenischen Arbeitskreises.

In der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche ist es anscheinend einfacher durch den institutionellen Apparat, durch den, so Schneider, auch viel Unheil angerichtet wurde, falsche Lehrmeinungen unter Kontrolle zu bringen. Schneider betont die Wichtigkeit von Charismen und Freiheit in der Kirche, aber trotzdem ist er der Meinung, dass eine große zahlreiche Bewegung ohne Strukturen der Leitung nicht bestehen und überleben kann. Dies sieht man auch an der Entwicklung der Ämter in den ersten Jahrhunderten der Kirche.

2.2.5 *Baptism*

- a. *Wann wurden Sie getauft?*

Herr Schneider wurde am 22. Mai 1930 geboren und die Taufe erfolgte noch im Monat Mai in der Pfarrkirche in Essen. Damals musste die Taufe möglich schnell passieren angesichts der hohen Kindersterblichkeit. Seine Mutter konnte deshalb nicht bei der Taufe dabei sein da sie noch im Wochenbett lag und der Vater und die Paten gingen mit dem Kind in die Kirche. Teilweise wurde sogar in den

Krankenhäusern getauft, fast immer ohne die Mutter, was man, so Schneider, heute glücklicherweise geändert hat.

- b. *Gibt es eine Predigt zum Thema Taufe von Ihnen (z.B. über Röm 6)? Haben Sie selbst Taufpredigten gehalten?*

Herr Schneider erzählt, dass er selbst relativ wenig aktiv getauft hat. In seiner 3-jährigen Tätigkeit als Kaplan taufte er, aber danach nur gelegentlich auf Einladung bei befreundeten Familien. Im Zusammenhang mit Taufe ist Herrn Schneider der Gedanke von Römer 6, mit Christus sterben und wiederauferstehen, sehr nahe, er weiß aber nicht, ob er noch eine konkrete Predigt dazu zur Hand hat.

2.2.6 *Baptism in 'Zeichen der Nähe Gottes'*

- a. *Traditionsreferenzen in Ihrem Taufkapitel in Zeichen der Nähe Gottes sind eigentlich immer Erläuterung oder Beispiel zu Schriftstellen, außer Seite 60 Zeile 29, da wird nur Tradition verwendet, aber kein Schriftzeugnis:*

,Auch das Taufbekenntnis in seiner ursprünglichen Frage- und Antwortform, die sich bis in die Gegenwart hinein erhalten hat, macht deutlich, wie hier eine Anrede geschieht, eine Entscheidung einfordernde Anrede, die eine Antwort in Freiheit und Selbstverpflichtung anzielt.'

Dann kommt direkt ein Beispiel von Hippolyt, aber kein Schriftbeleg für das Taufbekenntnis oder eine ursprüngliche Frage- und Antwortform.

Herr Schneider betont, dass er den Anspruch hat nach der neuen Dogmatischen Methode zu arbeiten und es ihm wichtig ist von einem Schriftzeugnis auszugehen. Ihm ist daher nicht klar, warum er kein Schriftzeugnis an dieser Stelle hinzugefügt hat.

Herr Schneider überlegt, ob die Taufe des Kämmerers durch Philippus (Apg 8:35-39) eine geeignete Schriftstelle darstellt für die Begründung der ursprünglichen Frage-Antwortform des Taufbekenntnisses, wobei sich die Schwierigkeit ergibt, dass in dieser Schriftstelle die Frage nicht vom Taufenden ausgeht, sondern vom Täufling. In Apg 19:2-5 trifft Paulus auf Leute, die er fragt auf was sie getauft sind, sie antworten, dass sie mit der Taufe des Johannes getauft sind und als Paulus ihnen den Unterschied zwischen der Johannestaufe und der Christlichen Taufe erklärt lassen sie sich auf den Namen Jesus taufen. Laut Schneider ist dies auch ein Zeugnis dafür, dass zwischen dem Taufenden und dem Täufling ein personaler Kontakt, auch in Form von Frage und Antwort naheliegt. Dies ist, so Schneider, kein direkter Beweis, aber auch von der Funktion der Taufe als Aufnahme in die Gemeinschaft und Bekenntnis des Glaubens liegt Frage und Antwort eigentlich nahe: ‚Glaubst Du? Ja ich glaube!‘, selbst wenn man zu dieser späteren direkten Fassung keinen biblischen Beleg findet.

Was den Schriftbezug für den Inhalt des Taufbekenntnisses angeht, empfiehlt Herr Schneider an dieser Stelle hinzuzunehmen, was er über Taufe in seiner Auslegung des Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses geschrieben hat (siehe sein Buch ‚Was wir Glauben‘). Schneider betont, dass sich alle Sätze des apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses als Sätze der Schrift darstellen lassen. Damit ist auf jeden Fall der Inhalt des Taufbekenntnisses, so Schneider, biblisch fixiert, d.h. zu den einzelnen Sätzen lassen sich die entsprechenden Formulierungen in Briefen und Evangelien finden.

Herr Schneider betont noch einmal, dass er auf keinen Fall den Eindruck erwecken möchte, dass das Taufbekenntnis nur aus der späteren Tradition kommt und dass Herr Schmid in seiner Arbeit doch auch das Gespräch mit Herrn Schneider und die daraus hervorgehenden Klarstellungen mit erwähnen möge.

Herr Schneider erwähnt auch noch in diesem Zusammenhang, dass es interessant ist im Denzinger die frühen Taufbekenntnisse der einzelnen Ortskirchen anzuschauen, dort sieht man wie sich die größere spätere Form aus kleineren Ansätzen entwickelte, was dann das Bindeglied darstellt zwischen Einzelsätzen des biblischen Gottes- und Christusbekenntnisses und der späteren Form des ausformulierten Taufbekenntnisses.

Auch bei der Taufe, so Schneider, gibt es einen engen Zusammenhang zwischen dem was wir Schrift und Überlieferung nennen. Die Schrift selbst ist ja das Ergebnis eines Überlieferungsprozesses. Die frühe Praxis der Taufe hat das Bekenntnis zur Grundlage, es geht um das Wort, das zur Handlung des Übergießens mit Wasser tritt (vgl. Mt 28,19). Das entsprechende Wort ist Satz der Schrift, Glaube der Schrift. Dies ist ein ganz konkreter Beleg dafür, dass die Sätze die als ursprüngliches Evangelium aufgeschrieben worden sind durch lebendigen Vollzug, durch Weitergabe, durch Anfragen, Antworten, und Vollziehen geprägt sind. Man sieht also, so Schneider, dass die Praxis des Glaubens und die Grundlagen des Glaubens sehr eng ineinandergreifen.

b. Inwieweit unterscheidet sich die erste Auflage von Zeichen der Nähe Gottes von der Neubearbeitung im Jahr 1998?

Laut Herrn Schneider gibt es erhebliche Ergänzungen, vor allem im Bereich der Ökumene. Es sollte auf jeden Fall die Ausgabe von 1998 bzw. eine der nicht wesentlich veränderten Folgeauflagen verwendet werden.

Es gab, so Schneider, auch eine DDR Ausgabe, die z.T. überarbeitet werden musste da manche Formulierungen für die DDR Politik nicht tragbar waren.

Es gibt auch eine Spanische, Italienische und Polnische Ausgabe von ‚Zeichen der Nähe Gottes,‘ und außerdem auch eine Italienische Ausgabe der kleinen Sakramentenlehre ‚sieben heilige Feiern.‘

Englische Ausgaben seiner Bücher gibt es nicht, so Herr Schneider, weshalb er im englischen Sprachraum weitgehend unbekannt ist. Er selbst hat sich nie um englische Übersetzungen bemüht und Verlage kamen auch nicht auf ihn zu. Deshalb war es Herrn Schneider wichtig, dass die unter dem Titel ‚Binding Testimony: Holy Scripture and Tradition‘ 2014 erschienene Englische Übersetzung des Einigungstextes des Ökumenischen Arbeitskreises zum Verhältnis von Schrift und Tradition (aus ‚Verbindliches Zeugnis‘), unter seinem Namen und unter dem Namen von Wolfhart Pannenberg herausgegeben wurde, da dessen Name durch seine langjährige Mitarbeit im Ökumenischen Rat der Kirchen (Genf) im englischsprachigen Raum bekannt ist.

Appendix 3

Erroneous or Inconsistent References in Pannenberg's chapter on Baptism (ST 3, chap. 13:3:1)

3.1 Mistakes in References to Tradition

p.279, fn.481	Reference to Jerome epistle 8:6 is wrong and contrary to the other references in the footnote for this one is no MPL reference given. The correct reference is epistle 84:6 (MPL 22:748) .
p.284	Reference to <i>Apologia Confessionis Augustanae 11:35-37</i> is wrong. The 11 was meant to be the roman numeral II, and the correct reference, therefore, is <i>Apologia Confessionis Augustanae 2:35-37</i> (Article II, <i>Von der Erbsünde</i>).
p.298, fn.538	Pannenberg asserts that Kretschmar's reference of <i>Summa Halensis 4:9:1</i> needs to be corrected according to the reference in footnote 740 on page 371 that says <i>Summa Halensis 4:28:1</i> . This is wrong and the correct reference for the institution of Confirmation by the Council of Meaux and the latin quote of footnote 740 is indeed Kretschmar's reference to <i>Summa Halensis 4:9:1</i> .
p.298, fn.538	Pannenberg states that Bonaventure said that the apostles instituted confirmation. This is not correct as Bonaventure said that neither Christ nor the Apostles instituted confirmation but the Apostles' successors (cf. Bonaventure, Commentary of the Sentences, 4:7:1).
p.309, fn.570	The given quote is not from Sentences 4:3:6 but from Sentences 4:3:7 (<i>De forma in qua baptizaverunt apostoli ante passionem Christi</i>).
p.309, fn.570	Pannenberg refers to <i>Glossa Ordinata on Luk 3:21</i> . The given reference to CCL 120:83 , however, is not to <i>Glossa Ordinata</i> but to Bede's <i>In Lucae Evangelium Expositio</i> . This is correct insofar as Bede's commentary on Luke is embedded in the <i>Glossa Ordinata</i> , but incorrect as the CCL reference does refer directly to Bede and not to the <i>Glossa Ordinata</i> .

p.310, fn.577	The given reference for the quote from Luther's Baptism song WA 35:468:36-469:5 is not correct as there is no line 36 on page 468. WA 35:469:1-5 is enough.
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3.2 Inconsistencies in References to Tradition

Inconsistent references to Luther's Large Catechism:

- Some references are only given as BSELK¹⁰⁴¹ number without adding anything else (e.g. p.294, fn. 532: 'BSELK 702,45-47'; Cf. p.278, fn.479).
- Some references provide BSELK number and also add the WA number (e.g. p.278, fn.478: 'WA 30/1,220 = BSELK 704, 28-35').
- Some references mention the Large Catechism and the BSELK number (e.g. p.306, fn.564: 'Großer Katechismus BSELK 692 f.').
- Some references also include the Large Catechism's section number (e.g. p.294, fn.529: 'Der Große Katechismus 1,2 (BSELK 560, 16f.)').
- Some references even add the WA number (e.g. p.307, fn.565: 'Großen Katechismus IV,3 BSELK 691,22-30 (WA 30/1, 212)').

The omission of the Large Catechism's name in the footnote is mostly consistent with already mentioning it in the main text. The decision of when to add the section number or when to supplement the WA reference, however, seems rather random; maybe it reflects the referencing habits in used secondary literature.

Inconsistent references to Luther's *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae*:

- Most references are only given as WA number without indicating the work (e.g. p.279, fn.483; p.280, fn.485; p.285, fn.499).
- Some references also include the name of the work (e.g. p.291, fn.521; p.301, fn.550).

3.3 Other Mistakes

p.269, fn.457	The reference to Pt 3,21 must be 1.Pt 3,21 .
p.271, fn.465	The reference to chapter 12:2, fn.53 (<i>s.o. Kap. 12,2 bei Anm. 53</i>) must be chapter 13:2, fn.53 .

¹⁰⁴¹ In ST Pannenberg uses the abbreviation BSELK but he does refer to the old version of the Lutheran confession writings normally abbreviated as BSLK.