

A short Biography

Peter Konstantinov Deunov (In the original version of the work, the family name was transliterated as Dunoff; recently, however, the name has been spelled mainly as Deunov or Dunov.) was born on July 11th, 1864 in the village of Nikolaevka (previously Hadarch), not far from Varna, Bulgaria. He was the third child in the family of Konstantin Deunovski, a priest and Dobra Georgieva. His maternal grandfather was Atanas Georgiev (1805-1865), a prominent figure in the struggles for an Independent Bulgarian Church during the National Revival period. His father was the first teacher and priest in Varna to teach and conduct services in the Bulgarian language.

Peter Deunov was a pupil at Varna School for Boys. In 1887 he finished the American Theology School in Svishtov and from the autumn of 1888 he was a teacher at Hotanza, near Russe.

In August 1888 he left for the USA where he studied at the Methodist Seminary in Drew, Medison, New Jersey. He graduated in 1892. During the summer of the same year he enrolled in the School of Theology at Boston University and the next year he finished his thesis on the migration of the Germanic tribes and their Christianization. He graduated in June 1893. For a year he also attended the School of Medicine.

In 1895 he returned to Bulgaria and settled in Varna. He was offered to become a methodist and a theosophical preacher but he refused. In 1896 he published *Science and Upbringing* which describes the foundations of a new culture to come in the next century. In 1896 he became one of the founders of the community cultural centre P. R. *Slaveikov*, was elected as a librarian and during the next several years he lectured to Varna community.

In 1897 at the age of 33, Peter Deunov and his followers founded the *Society for Raising the Religious Consciousness of the Bulgarian People*. The same year he published a leaflet with a mystical text called *Huo-Eli-Meli-Mesail*. The events of 1897 put him in the centre of a spiritual society which later on grew into *The Chain* (1906) and *The Universal White Brotherhood* (1920). He was confirmed as the *Teacher*.

In 1898 he wrote down and delivered the lecture *An Address to My People* at Varna spiritualistic society. The lecture was an appeal to a social and spiritual self-assertion. The next year he wrote down *Ten God's Pieces of Evidence* and *God's Promise*. In 1899 he started organizing annual meetings in Varna which he first called Meetings of the Chain. Between then and 1942, every year in August the annual meetings of the Universal White Brotherhood were held at various locations: in Varna (1899-1909), in Veliko Tarnovo (1910-1925), in Sofia (1926-1941), in Rila and Vitosha.

Between 1901 and 1912 he travelled around Bulgaria delivering lectures and doing phrenological research. From 1904 onwards he stayed longer periods in Sofia where he preached through his lectures.

In 1912 in Arbanassi (near Veliko Tarnovo) he worked on the Bible and wrote down *The Testament of Light's Colour Rays*, which was published in September the same year. On the title page there was the motto: *I shall always remain a devoted servant to Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, 15th August, Tarnovo, 1912.*

On 16th of March 1914, in Sofia, he delivered the first stenographically recorded Sunday lecture *Here is the Man*, which marks the beginning of the *Strength and Life* cycle. There he laid out the founding principles of his teaching which he called *The New Teaching of the Universal White Brotherhood*. During World War I Vasil Radoslavov's cabinet forced him into exile in Varna, claiming that his teachings weakened the soldiers' spirits at the front. After the war the number of his followers grew quickly and during the 30s of the 20th c. they were about 40 000.

On February 24th, 1922, in Sofia, Peter Deunov founded an esoteric school called *The School of the Universal White Brotherhood*. It had two classes of pupils: general and special.

The lectures there continued for 22 years until December 1944.

In 1927 Deunov set up the settlement called *Izgreva* (the Sunrise), which is the modern residential area *Izgreva*, and there he gathered his listeners, followers and pupils. He settled there permanently and in a purpose-built hall he delivered series of his Word.

In the summer of 1929 for the first time he took his followers to a camp near the seven Rila lakes. On the 21st of September 1930 he began a new series of lectures called *Sunday Morning Words*. In 1934 he began work on *Paneurhythmia*, a cycle of twenty eight exercises, containing music, text and movement. Later he added the exercises called *Sun Rays* and *Pentagram*.

At the beginning of 1944 during the air raids on Sofia Deunov organized the evacuation of *Izgreva* to Marchaevo (south west from Sofia) and moved into the home (now museum) of his pupil Temelko Giorev. He returned to *Izgreva* on the 19th of October 1944. On the 20th of December 1944 he gave a lecture called *The Last Word* to the general class. On the 27th of December 1944 he left the physical world. His body was laid to rest in *Izgreva*.

Peter Deunov, the first Bulgarian Scholar to study the Goths & other Germanic peoples

Von Rossen Milev

As in many other aspects of his spiritual and research work, Peter Deunov is a pioneer, a forefather, and a founder - this time of the Bulgarian research into the history of the Goths and other Germanic peoples. The present essay, written during his studies at the School of Theology at Boston University between 1892 and 1893, makes him the first Bulgarian to address and discuss this topic. Its length was limited by the requirements for a degree thesis at the time. Nevertheless, the essay is clear, precise and concentrated. He outlines all the major points in this area, reviews the most significant publications at the time and suggests his own original interpretation, generalization and heuristics. There is all the evidence of a short but magnificent contribution to this research area. At that time the history of the German peoples had already been researched for centuries, mainly in Western and Northern Europe. Thus Deunov is the first Bulgarian to have worked extensively on this topic. (Only Gavriil Krustevich before him mentions the Gothic presence in what is now Bulgaria, in his „Bulgarian history“, volume 1, published in Constantinople in 1869.)

Deunov's pioneering work acquires even greater significance in the context of the enormous delay among Bulgarian scholars in studying Gothic and other Old Germanic cultural and historical heritage in Bulgaria. Systematic and comprehensive analyses have just started. Various factors, mainly ideological, have prevented whole generations of Bulgarian scholars from studying the history and culture of the Goths on Bulgarian territories and in the rest of Europe, their part in Bulgarian ethnogenesis, their role and position in the formation of early medieval Bulgarian Christianity. It was as late as 2002 when a group of Bulgarian scholars - historians, archeologists, linguists, theologians and others, decided to put their efforts together and to begin interdisciplinary studies of the Gothic cultural and historical trail on the Bulgarian territories. As part of the Gothic Research Project (2002 - 2001) an international research centre „Ulphilas“ was established in Sofia in 2004 and I have the honour to be its director. It also has a library - „Bibliotheca Gothica“. The centre gathers many Bulgarian scholars as well as colleagues from Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia, the Ukraine, the USA, Spain, Romania, etc. When, in the summer of 2007, we learned of P. Deunov's work on the history of the Teutonic migration and christianization, we were amazed that Bulgarian scholarly circles had forgotten or disregarded the topic for such a long time. Our foreign colleagues were particularly amazed. Now we have the very great pleasure of rediscovering P. Deunov's work. The embarrassment, almost shame, of the Bulgarian backwardness in the area of gothology has been cleared „post scriptum“ - we do

have a Bulgarian contribution as early as the 19th c. and by a thinker and enlightener of whom every nation can be proud.

It is remarkable that in his essay on German migration and christianization Peter Duenov discusses the life and work of Ulphilas (311-383), a Gothic bishop who translated the Bible into the Gothic language near Nicopolis ad Istrum (what is now the village of Nikjup, near Veliko Tarnovo), thus marking the beginning of the first German literary language. Ulphilas had encyclopaedic knowledge, a missionary talent and great spirituality which were highly appreciated by his contemporaries and later conveniently „forgotten" by the official church as he had been suspected of being an Arian heretic. He also created the Gothic Christian alphabet, and a centre of learning and spirituality in Moesia, which lasted for centuries. Later on it gave impetus to the development of the official Bulgarian Christianity and the Bogomils, a kind of inherited „faith laboratory". Until the 13th c., in addition to the Gothic saints, officially respected by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church until now (St. Nikita Gotski, St. Sava Gotski, etc.), „got", „gotin" and other related ethnonyms had often been used also as a synonym of „heretic" in official ecclesiastical documents.

Such attitudes could hardly be taken for granted by a broad-minded person like Duenov. On the contrary, he notices and focuses on a quality which Ulphilas had and which made him so successful among the Goths: „He gained their love and reverence by his blameless Christian life". The moral integrity and purity of Ulphilas in particular and of the Goths in general were recognized and pointed out by Silvanus, a chronicler in the Frankish Empire in the 5th c. He says that „in spite of being heretics, Ulphilas' Goths are morally purer than more of today's Christians". These Goths, also called by their contemporaries Moesian Goths or Minor Goths remained on Bulgarian territories and became part of the Bulgarian ethnogenesis. The written source mentioning them has been deliberately hidden for centuries and has been re-discovered through the interpretation of Gothic Christianity as late as the 20th c. Duenov did not cite it; the source must have been inaccessible at his time but he was the first one to notice a quality of Ulphilas' which unfortunately is not mentioned even today - his moral righteousness. This is such a simple and natural insight into the personality „of the Apostle of the Goths", yet it needed a person like Deunov to be able to state it clearly and categorically in gothology for the first time. This is considered to be his original contribution to the modern studies on Bishop Ulphilas.

In his essay P. Deunov points out yet another fact which has often been analyzed by researchers. When Ulphilas translated the Old Testament he omitted the Books of Kings as he feared that they might „excite their warlike minds" (i.e. of the Goths). The Moesian Goths were extraordinary peace-loving people and this quality was noticed centuries after Ulphilas, at the beginning of the 7th c. by Isidor of Seville. He writes that they are well known for their love of peace and also that they do not drink wine, only milk. In the context of the militaristic attitudes at the time we can only imagine the utmost energy with which Ulphilas exerted himself to perpetrate among his people such a stable value which lasted for centuries. Perhaps the life style of the Moesian Gothic communities rejecting war and dissipation inspired P. Deunov and served as a model for the organization of his White Brotherhood. This could only be a hypothesis. When he wrote his work in Boston he was still being trained as a Methodist pastor in Bulgaria. The fact that the Methodist church first stepped in Moesia, Northern Bulgaria, its centre being in Svishtov (the ancient Nove was the capital of the Gothic king Theodoric the Great in the 5th c.) could also have provoked P. Deunov's interest in the Goths.

In his article P. Deunov concentrates on the migration and the following christianization of the main Germanic tribes - Goths, Vandals, Franks, Swabians, etc. during the Great Migration, outlines the major events in the clashes between the Late Roman Empire and the invading Germanic tribes and finally the collapse of the Western part of the empire. This is the area where during the 5th - 6th c. the first early medieval states in Europe were formed - the Kingdom of the Ostrogoths, which existed on the territory of modern Italy, and the Kingdom of the Visigoths, which existed on the territory of modern Spain.

Nowadays Deunov's study can be useful to researchers, students and history lovers as a brief, clear and factually reliable introduction to the topic of the Germanic migration and Christianization at the border line between the Classical Age and the Middle Ages, between heathen and Christian times in European history. As its length shows, it was not designed as a comprehensive study. We should also keep in mind that it was written a century ago when more facts about this historical process were yet to be discovered. Deunov himself points out that „much history concerning the earlier development of the human family is obscure". However, measuring his work not only with the criteria of his time but also from the point of view of modern research on the topic, which has just started in Bulgaria, Peter Deunov has left a new and distinct mark on the history of research on the Germanic migration and Christianization.

Peter Deunov & Methodism

Von Harrie Salman

When the 28-year-old Peter Deunov, in 1893, wrote his essay on the migration of the Teutonic tribes and their conversion to Christianity, he was a student of theology at the Methodist University of Boston in the United States. A year before, he had completed a higher education in theology at the Methodist Seminary of Madison, New Jersey. Six years earlier, in 1887, he had received his licence to preach after finishing his first theological studies at the Methodist Scientific Theological School in Svishtov (Bulgaria).

It may seem strange that Deunov, born in 1864 as the son of a Bulgarian-Orthodox priest, wanted to become a Protestant minister. He never wrote or told of why he took the path of Methodism. In her biography of Peter Deunov, Milka Kraveva writes that he lived in the family of his sister Maria (who was some seven years older), while he was a pupil at the gymnasium in Varna.¹ Her husband, Penko Stamov, a weaver and tailor by profession, was a devout Methodist and in their home people came together for prayer.²

In this introduction to Peter Deunov's essay, which is published for the first time in this book, we will discuss the development of Methodism, the coming of Methodist Protestantism to Bulgaria, Deunov's years as a student at Methodist schools, the content of his essay, and the reasons he may have had for dedicating it to the migration and the conversion of the Germanic tribes. Finally, the question will be posed how the spiritual impulses he discovered in Methodism were transformed in his work for the White Brotherhood.

Methodist Protestantism

The rise of Protestantism at the end of the Middle Ages is related to the development of individual consciousness. The founders of Protestantism stressed the personal relationship of the believer to God, without the mediation of a priest and the hierarchy of the Church. They propagated the reading of the Scriptures by the believers and saw the Bible as the only source of Christian religion. They also criticized the lack of dignity among priests and the wealth of the Church of Rome.

Methodism began as an evangelical movement within the Church of England. It traces its origin to the activity of John Wesley (1703-1791), an Anglican minister and theologian. Wesley promoted the idea of 'Christian perfection', which he saw as the holiness of heart and life. The 'methods' for developing this perfection were practised in regularly receiving communion, fasting, leading a modest life, supporting each other in intimate groups, but also in visiting the poor and sick, as well as prisoners. Wesley and his friends had a strong sense of social justice. They reacted against the apathy in the Church of England and the lack of enthusiasm among believers. As itinerant preachers they had a strong missionary zeal. To them the Methodist Church owes a tradition of enthusiastic congregational singing of hymns. Theologically, Wesley was influenced by the moderate ideas of the Dutch theologian

Arminius, who defended the free will of humankind against the views of fundamentalist Calvinism on predestination, which say that God has already before the birth of a man decided whether he will be saved or go to hell.

A second influence came from the Moravians. In 1735 Wesley travelled by ship to Georgia in America. During a heavy storm, everybody panicked, but a group of Moravians was calmly singing hymns and praying, which deeply impressed him. He even visited their centre Herrnhut, near Dresden in East Germany, in 1738. The Moravian Church, originally known as the Unity of the Brethren, was founded in the 15th c. in the Czech Countries as an offshoot of the repressed Hussite movement.

Although Wesley broke with the Moravians in 1739, this contact created a link between the new Methodist Church and the movement of Jan Hus that, together with the English Lollards and the Dutch Brothers and Sisters of Common Life, carried an essential element of the Bogomil-Cathar stream into the future. It is the attempt to realize the qualities of a truly Christian life within human society. This sanctification of daily life was central to the whole Manichean stream. For Rudolf Steiner, the task of Manichaeism (including the Bogomils and the groups they influenced) is to prepare the forms of the social life of the future, in which Christ can be present among people.³

Protestantism meets the Orthodox Church

In 1804 a Bible Society was founded in England, and in 1810 a Calvinist missionary society in America. They became active in the Ottoman Empire, but when missionary activity among Muslims and Jews proved to be impossible they turned to the Orthodox Christians - in Greece, Armenia and Bulgaria. In Turkey itself, American missionaries founded nine schools in the second half of the 19th c., as did missionaries from Western European countries. A well-known school was Robert College, an American high school founded in 1863 in Constantinople by the Congregational missionary Cyrus Hamlin and the philanthropist Christopher Robert. Many Bulgarian graduates of the school became important political leaders after Bulgaria's independence.

The initial purpose of the English and American Societies in Bulgaria was to contribute to a reform and revitalization of the Orthodox Church, first of all by spreading the Bible and preaching the Gospel, but they had no clear idea of how the Orthodox Church could be reformed. They supported the struggle of the Bulgarian Church for independence from the Greek Patriarchate and they initiated the full translation of the Bible into modern Bulgarian. During the long Ottoman occupation, the language of the liturgy was Greek and the Bible was only read by priests, in a translation into Church Slavonic (Old Bulgarian) that was very different from the spoken Bulgarian language of the 19th c.

The first proposals for a new Bulgarian Bible translation date back to 1818.⁴ Its realization contributed significantly to the National Revival of Bulgarian culture in the 19th c. The British Bible Society organized the translation of the New Testament, its printing in Smyrna (Izmir) in 1840 and its distribution. The translation into the Western Bulgarian dialect was made by Neofit Rilski, who had been recommended by the Greek archbishop of Veliko Turnovo. After its publication, however, the Greek Patriarchy immediately organized a campaign to destroy every copy of this translation.

Some twenty years later, it was decided to revise this translation and to publish it in the Eastern Bulgarian dialect, together with a translation of the Old Testament. This whole project was organized by Elias Riggs and Albert Long. They asked the writer Petko Slavejkov to revise Neofit Rilski's translation. According to the writer Ivan Vazov, Slavejkov's work established the official Bulgarian language. The complete Bulgarian Bible translation was published in 1871 in Constantinople, a year after the Ottoman Sultan allowed the creation of an independent Bulgarian Church.

After the establishment of the autonomous Bulgarian Church, the work of the societies became more difficult. Their long-term vision of reforming the Orthodox Church and turning

all its members into Protestants was replaced by the short-term goal of converting Orthodox believers and founding local congregations. It became clear how huge the differences between these two forms of Christianity actually were. In the Orthodox Church, the believers have a passive role - there is no sermon, no appeal to the human intellect, no singing (only as member of a choir) and no gathering of the believers for the communion around the Table of Christ.

The Methodist mission in Bulgaria

In 1856 the American missionary society, which was run by the Congregational Church, made an agreement with the American Methodist Episcopal Church to organize the missionary work in Bulgaria together. The Methodists would work in the northern part of Bulgaria, between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains and the Congregationalists would open their missionary stations in southern Bulgaria.⁵

In 1857 the Methodist missionaries Albert Long and Wesley Prettyman made a tour through northern Bulgaria. Shumen became the first missionary station. Other foreign missionaries followed and stayed for some years, but also Bulgarians were educated as preachers. Small congregations were founded in a number of towns and villages, the most important of them being Svishtov, Varna (in 1885) and Ruse. In these towns, the first churches were built.

The Methodist mission experienced strong resistance from the side of the Orthodox Church. Its future was precarious and several times the abandonment of the mission was discussed. In 1910, after fifty years of missionary work, the Methodist Church had only 482 members and some 1000 adherents. The Protestant Churches found a better way to reach the Bulgarians through their publications of religious books, their philanthropic and their educational activities, but this brought them few members.

In 1863 Albert Long founded the first periodical in the Bulgarian language, *Zornitsa* (The Morning Star), which became very popular. In 1880 the Methodist missionaries opened two high schools, one for girls and one for boys. Between 1883 and 1894, the boys' school, which had moved from Veliko Turnovo to Svishtov and was officially called 'The American Scientific Theological School', offered a high school education of five years. The courses of the first three years were prescribed by the Bulgarian government. In the last two years, Bible studies were added to the general courses. In its theology Department, preachers were educated in a one-year program. Some of them were sent to Drew Theological Seminary in New Jersey (USA), to become ministers. In 1894 the school of Svishtov was set on fire by enemies of the Methodist mission. The school moved to Ruse and became a theological seminary.

Peter Deunov in Methodist schools (1884-1895)⁶

Probably in September 1884, but certainly before the spring of 1885, Peter Deunov came to Svishtov. He was 20 years old and had not finished the Ferdinand I Gymnasium of Varna, because he had been ill between February and June 1884, in the final school year. He had become a pupil of this three-year high school in September 1880.⁷

His long illness may have been a time of inner transformation in which he found his life mission and probably decided to become a Methodist preacher. The spiritual atmosphere in the Stamov family, where he had lived since 1880, may have supported this step.

For three years, Peter Deunov remained in the school of Svishtov. He finished its first three-year part by taking the examinations he had missed in Varna because of his long absence. And then he did the following two-year part and his preacher's education. His diploma from the school's Theological Department lists 12 regular subjects and six theological subjects, most of them with good or very good marks. His skills in preaching were, according to Pastor Tsvetan Tsvetanov, one of his former classmates, unrivalled. The school diploma did not give him the right to become a teacher in a state school or to go to the university. In the early

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autumn of 1887, Deunov became a teacher in the Methodist primary school in Hotantsa, a village to the east of Ruse. In 1888 this school had 20 pupils. He served in the local congregation as a preacher.

After one year of teaching in Hotantsa, Peter Deunov was sent to Drew Seminary in Madison, New Jersey, where candidates for the Methodist ministry had been trained since 1867. On September 19, 1888, he enrolled in a two-year course, of which the first year was preparatory and the second year was more practical and focused on preaching. It seems that most preachers from Bulgaria took this two-year training to become a pastor. After finishing it, Deunov was allowed to stay for two more years. He completed his studies at Drew Seminary on May 19, 1892.

The schedule of studies for the regular three-year bachelor program included Greek, Hebrew, Anthropology, Church History, Theology, Practical Theology, Canon and Criticism, Bible Interpretation, Soteriology, and Elocution. Deunov took all these courses in a special program. He did not receive the bachelor degree in theology, because it was only conferred upon students who already had the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

After the summer of 1892, Peter Deunov became theology, he was enrolled at Boston University's School of Medicine for a one-year special course for missionaries. In 1895, probably after a student at the School of Theology of the Methodist University of Boston. Because of his earlier studies at Drew Seminary he was able to finish the three-year course within one year on June 7, 1893. After his graduation in going the usual pastoral work in a Methodist congregation, he left the United States after a stay of seven years.

During his studies in Boston, Peter Deunov was in the heart of Protestant America, in a world of intellectual discussions on theological but also philosophical questions. Boston had excellent libraries, where he could satisfy his thirst for knowledge. He was seeking a new understanding between science and religion, necessary to transform both a one-sided materialistic science and a narrow-minded conception of religion.

At Boston University, Peter Deunov attended the lectures of Professor Borden P. Bowne (1847-1910). As a preacher and journalist, Bowne applied his philosophy to social and religious issues. In his view, both scientific and theological explanations were incomplete. Boston was also the centre of American Transcendentalism, a philosophy created around 1836 by the writer and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and his friends. Rejecting the intellectualism of Harvard University in Boston and inspired by German Idealism, English Romanticism and Vedic thought, they searched for transcendental principles deriving from the spiritual essence of man. To this movement also Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) belonged. He became widely known by his book *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854), in which he described his experiences of living in natural simplicity for two years in a cabin on the shores of Walden Pond, near Concord, about 30 km from Boston.

Peter Deunov must have heard of this spiritual philosophy, in which the experience of nature was so important. At the same time, another spiritual movement will not have escaped his attention - the Theosophical Society, founded in 1875 in New York by Madame H. P. Blavatsky (1831-1891) and others. As a medium, she received information from spiritual teachers, published in *Isis Unveiled* (1877), which has esoteric Christian sources, and in other books that were influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism. It is unlikely that Deunov had contacts with so-called Rosicrucian groups that were founded at that time in America and were usually connected to Masonic lodges.

Peter Deunov often made excursions into the countryside around Boston. On one occasion he took with him his friend Velichko Grablashev, who later told the story of this excursion. He had to promise that he would not speak about it to others, because they would go to an important place where a secret society of very developed people gathered. They travelled to a farm in the forests, where they met people who did not have the appearance of farmers. They prayed and sang, a talk was given and they engaged in spiritual conversation. After Deunov's return to Bulgaria, Grablashev returned to the area, but could no longer find the

occult society.⁸ Apparently, they had visited one of the Utopian agricultural communities, maybe the *Fruitlands*, which were inspired by the Transcendentalist Movement, by religious ideas or ideas of the Utopian socialist Fourier. Usually, they only existed for a short period.

Peter Deunov's essay on the Germanic tribes

In the academic year 1892-93, Peter Deunov took a course in Practical Theology. It was taught by Luther T. Townsend (1838-1922), professor at the School of Theology of Boston since 1867. For this course he had to write an essay, which he finished on April 15, 1893. This essay on the original topic of the migration of the Germanic tribes and their conversion to Christianity is of moderate length (48 pages) and does not have footnotes or a bibliography. As was usual in those days, the text is handwritten, in a very readable and regular handwriting.

In the essay, some 39 pages are dedicated to a description of the migrations of the Germanic tribes and only seven pages to their conversion to Christianity, creating a certain imbalance in the treatment of the two topics. Peter Deunov himself remarked that there is a lack of information on the second topic. Professor Townsend was probably satisfied with an assignment in which a few books on a topic of the student's choice were interpreted intelligently. Deunov did this and wrote an essay in which he presented the essential elements of the story of the Germanic migrations and finished by pointing to the special role of the Gothic bishop Ulphilas (Wulphila) in the conversion of the Germanic tribes.

Most of the information on the Germanic migrations and many quotations in this part come from the book *An Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages*, written by the historian Ephraim Emerton (1851-1935), a professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Harvard Divinity School, also in Boston. Peter Deunov followed the first seven chapters (pp 1-72) of this excellent book closely. He also consulted *The History of France*, written by Parke Godwin (1816-1904), an American lawyer and journalist, and *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, written by the English historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794).

At the beginning of the second part, Peter Deunov makes some personal remarks that link the essay with the course on Practical Theology. He says that Christianity has an 'intrinsic value' and is 'well adapted to all relations of human life'. Secondly, behind it stands 'divine power and agency'. Thirdly, Christianity's divine spirit places its teaching in the depth of the human soul and brings life to the human spirit. And finally he remarked that Christianity spread among the Germanic tribes through 'preaching and personal influence'. It spread because there were good preachers, among them the apostle of the Goths and translator of the Bible, Ulphilas, a man who led a 'blameless Christian life'.

The message of the essay

The last part of the essay would have deserved more elaboration, because the Goths and through them all the other Germanic tribes mentioned in the essay, except the Franks, were adherents of Arian Christianity. Peter Deunov avoided a discussion of the doctrinal differences between Arianism and the dominant stream in the Church, as well as an analysis of the destruction of this so-called heresy by the Church. Among the differences in doctrine, we find in the teaching of Arius (250-336), a theologian living in Alexandria, an emphasis on the human side of Jesus Christ, while his opponent Athanasius (293-373), Patriarch of Alexandria, stressed His divine side. The theology of Arius speaks of an ascending man who develops himself spiritually in order to meet God, whereas the theology of Athanasius speaks of a descending God who comes to save a passive man. These different positions we find again between esoteric Christianity on the one hand and the official Church, including the Orthodox Church, on the other.

Peter Deunov limits the story of the conversion of the Germanic tribes to a short biography of Ulphilas (311-383). Around 348 he fled with his fellow Christians among the Goths from

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Dacia (Romania) to Moesia (northern Bulgaria), where they settled between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains. This was exactly the area of the Methodist mission! Here we see the reason why Deunov chose the subject of his essay. As a Bulgarian Methodist preacher, he wanted to write about the historical destiny of the area he came from and about its new destiny related to the transformation of Orthodox Christianity that was the goal of the Protestant mission.

Ulphilas was bishop of Nicopolis ad Istrum (near present-day Nikyup, 20 km north of Veliko Turnovo) and the area of Gothic settlement also comprised Svishtov, the spiritual centre of Bulgarian Methodism. According to Rudolf Steiner, Ulphilas was the first Christian initiate of Europe. For his Bible translation he created the new personal pronoun *ik* (I) from the Old Germanic root *eko*. Its two letters stand for Iesus Krist (Jesus Christ).⁹ This word developed into the German *Ich*, the Dutch *ik* and the English *I*.

The name of bishop Ulphila was also later mentioned by Peter Deunov and it was well known and honored among his close pupils. In a conversation, one of them, Boris Nikolov, said that Ulphila also did spiritual work south of the Balkan Mountains, near Tulovo, Stara Zagora (a site of an ancient Celtic capital).

To support the Christian mission among the Goths and the other Germanic tribes, Ulphilas translated the Bible into Gothic in Nicopolis and the Methodist mission also began with a Bible translation. There is clearly a connection between the mission of Ulphilas and the Methodist mission. This seems to be the hidden message of the essay.

The spiritual mission of Peter Deunov

Peter Deunov was born into a family in which the impulse of the Bulgarian Enlightenment had taken strong roots. His father, the orthodox priest Konstantin Deunovski (1830-1918), was the first Bulgarian teacher in the region of Varna and he is considered to be the first priest in the area of Varna to celebrate the orthodox liturgy in Bulgarian. Also, his maternal grandfather, Attanas Georgiev, was active in the National Revival of Bulgarian culture.

Between the ages of 16 and 20, Peter Deunov discovered the spiritual meaning of Methodism and its possible contribution to the reawakening of the Bulgarian nation after the liberation of northern Bulgaria by the Russian army. This liberation took place in 1877-78, after five centuries of Ottoman rule. He saw the need for a reformation of the Orthodox Church and had his own experience of the way Methodist preachers brought Christ closer to the people. His confidence in Wesley's 'methods' of attaining 'Christian perfection' brought him to the Methodist school in Svishtov, to the seminary in Drew and to the School of Theology in Boston.

In America, Peter Deunov experienced the positive aspects of American Protestantism and in his extensive reading he began to value the meaning of science for the discovery of truth. He also became familiar with new spiritual movements, such as Transcendentalism and Theosophy, and with the agricultural communities of spiritual seekers. He must also have heard of the influence of the Moravians upon John Wesley. All this had a deep impact on Deunov, especially the realization that American spirituality has very practical qualities and brings spiritual impulses into the will.

Back in Bulgaria in 1895, and perhaps earlier, he may have realized that the mission of Methodism could not succeed. The reformation of the Orthodox Church required stronger spiritual impulses than American Protestantism could offer. In the spiritual atmosphere of Methodism, Peter Deunov had discovered his personal mission to be a messenger of the living Word of God, but he did not see his future in the Methodist Church. Various Methodist congregations invited him to become their pastor, but he declined. In 1896 the Congregational Church of Yambol invited him, but he made clear that he could only accept a position as a pastor if it would be without payment. Also the Theosophical Society of Bulgaria invited him to give lectures, but he declined. He went his own way, to work for his life's mission. He had meetings with Protestant pastors, spiritists and theosophists; he wrote

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his book *Science and Education* in 1896, and he began to give lectures, sometimes of a scientific nature, but also of a mystical-spiritual kind.¹⁰

Peter Deunov's spiritual diary and the spiritual messages he wrote down show the depth of his inner transformation in the first years after his return from America.¹¹ In the archives of Boyan Boev we find the following text: *A sister visited the Teacher and he told her*. "I have been inspired and that happened on March 7, 1897 (in the Gregorian calendar on March 19). Then I received a mission from heavens, it was revealed to me that I am a teacher for the whole humanity. The mission assigned to me is connected with the new path of the Slavs and with the coming of the sixth race (the new cycle of cultures – *remark by the author*)."¹² In 1899 a small circle of circle of friends who saw him as their teacher began to gather around him. His mission found an earthly form, after 1900, in the foundation of the White Brotherhood, in which his followers came together in order to receive, through their teacher, inspirations from the heavenly White Brotherhood.

The White Brotherhood

In a number of aspects, Peter Deunov's work in the White Brotherhood can be seen as a transformation of the Methodist mission in Bulgaria. The Methodists were not able to reform the Orthodox Church. In his work, Deunov was able to connect on a deeper level with the spiritual traditions of the Balkans and with the spiritual mission of the Slavs. He created a new spiritual path for Eastern Europe, directed at the liberation of the living spiritual impulse of Christianity from the outer forms of the Church. This would be the creation of an 'invisible Church' or a 'spiritual Church', which corresponds to the vision of the Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev – it is human society organized as a brotherhood.

In Methodism, Peter Deunov found an impulse that represents a pure form of Protestantism - the service of the Divine Word through Bible reading, praying, singing and preaching. This impulse is also to some extent connected with the mission of Manichaeism, which ran through Bogomilism – the creation of living Christian communities. The White Brotherhood can be seen as a metamorphosis of the Bogomil traditions, but it also incorporated elements from the Protestant traditions of Methodism.

In the White Brotherhood, the Methodist Church services, with their praying, singing and listening to a sermon, were transformed into the Brotherhood's meetings with their singing and listening to the talks of its teacher Peter Deunov. Some of the early religious songs he composed may have been inspired by Methodist hymns. In other aspects of the White Brotherhood's methods of spiritual development no Methodist roots can be found. Paneurythmy, harmonious music and the excursions into nature have another source, which can be found in the mystery traditions, such as the School of Orpheus.

In his historical studies, Peter Deunov discovered behind the mission of the Methodism in Bulgaria the figure of the Gothic preacher Ulphilas, as he showed in his essay. Ulphilas created new Gothic words and a new alphabet for his Gospel translation that inspired the Germanic tribes to find their way to Christ. Deunov brought a new Gospel, especially but not exclusively for the Slavic nations of Europe, of which his talks are a substantial part. In them, the moral qualities of the Living Word could be heard again, which will inspire people, as he saw it, to do inner work and to prepare for the beginning Second Coming of Christ.

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