

## **PETER ACCORDING TO PAUL. PAUL AND PETER IN PAUL'S LETTERS AND IN THE BOOK OF ACTS AND THE PROBLEM OF PLURALITY IN THE CHURCH**

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**Abstract.** The apostles Peter and Paul are prominent as the two leading figures in early Christianity as well as in the history of the church through the centuries. They also function as focal for Christian confessions in particular ways until today. In historical approaches to the origins of Christianity following the direction of the "Tübingen School" (F. C. Baur) both Peter and Paul were considered two opposite powers that pushed ahead the historical development. In contrast, the following essay argues that, read in a canonical perspective as well as in a historical perspective that is critical against its own prejudices, the two key apostles can be valued much more in agreement to each other, notwithstanding their differences with regard to their particular function and mission in the beginnings of the early Jesus-movement. Therefore, Peter and Paul can be regarded as a model for ecumenical encounter and search for communion between the churches today.

**Keywords:** Peter/Kephas – Paul – apostles – doctrine of justification – canonical approach – communion of churches – apostolic council – incident at Antioch.

The theology of Paul the Apostle, and his doctrine of justification in particular, have been of special concern for Protestant theology and Protestant churches since the Reformation period. Moreover, according to Martin Luther and those who follow Luther's theological teaching, Holy Scripture must play the foundational and decisive role in forming and shaping any theological doctrine that claims to be authoritative in the church.<sup>1</sup> One may call this Lutheran understanding of Scripture the "Formalprinzip" of Lutheran hermeneutics that finds its realization the doctrine of justification according to Paul as its "Materialprinzip." Therefore, in

<sup>1</sup> See Ulrich H. J. KÖRTNER, „Legt die Schrift sich selber aus? Interpretation und Geltung in der Bibelhermeneutik Martin Luthers“, in: Andreas MAUZ / Christiane TIETZ (ed.), *Interpretation und Geltung, Hermeneutik und Interpretationstheorie*, Bd. 3, Paderborn 2022, 83-106. For my own understanding of the role of Scripture in the church see Karl-Wilhelm NIEBUHR, „Schriftauslegung in der Begegnung mit dem Evangelium“, in: Friederike NÜSSEL (ed.), *Schriftauslegung, Themen der Theologie* 8, Tübingen 2014, 43-103.