A theologian is always in trouble when the mysterious notions of post-modern and post-Christian are on the table. Bruno Latour’s remark deepens the hesitation of a theologian when he exposes the falsity of the myth by saying that there are direct fracture lines in cultures throughout time. The notion of post-modernism is a very complex and uncertain notion. It is complex because pluralism and relativism are its main internal parts. It is uncertain because post-modernism suggests that we have a common viewpoint according to which our age is homogeneous enough to say that modernism is over. We can see that the Western culture is very far from that uniformity. Deconstruction, as a critical method, is one of the main features of postmodernism. This becomes the fertile soil for many options. We have less certainty in our existential questions, but more choices. By giving up the task of a systematic construction, even in theology, we either lose a hermeneutical basis and our identity, or we arrive at a deformed view that is close to subjective relativism, and where we absolutize our own persuasion. We define what our conditions are in relation to life or church-community according to our measurements.

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1 Latour claims that the different movements in cultures are not irreversible. He gives a number of examples from the Middle Ages to the early modern period to show that certain aspects of the late medieval theological thoughts, in fact, underpin later characteristically ‘modern’ ideas. B. Latour, We have Never Been Modern (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 1–10.
The peculiarity of our age can be detected in its irony. “In virtually every corner of the globe human beings spin around and around, living out their lives as individuals paradoxically compelled in their ‘private’ lives to make choices from a range of options that are enumerated and managed by institutions they cannot see and people they never meet face-to-face.”

Kärkkäinen makes an important point on the basis of Harvey; namely, that in the post-modern context Christian (traditional) denominations (churches) consist of a majority of those “who still call themselves Christians but their lives are distinctively secular, with the experience of God in worship and prayer not figuring very prominently in all that they do.” This is also one of the key issues for the understanding of the Hungarian situation.

While trying to find itself in the rapid changes of the world, Christianity has to face many challenges. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the church confidently looked forward to a ‘Christian century.’ In the second half of the twentieth century, in a variety of ways, Marxism (Communism), positivism, modern sociological-religious views (such as by Max Weber) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s writings all predicted that religion would disappear. Their prophecy never happened, but the new age of our time broke into the plurality of all sorts of religions.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it seems to be more appropriate to ask whether this century’s religious market will have any place for Christianity at all. More precisely, will it be possible for people to call themselves Christians? The term ‘Christian’ indicates an identity of something we attach ourselves to that defines who we are. Answering the question from the point of the individual does not necessarily present great difficulties because we can come to an agreement with Harvey’s observation. Christianity’s identity seems to be more acute if we turn our attention to the direction of the church and its power. The symbolic net of Christianity interwove the religious and cultural life of the West more than any other religious or intellectual movements.

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7 In the Hungarian context, we can find a more complex picture that is still interwoven with unstitched threads from our recent past of Communism.