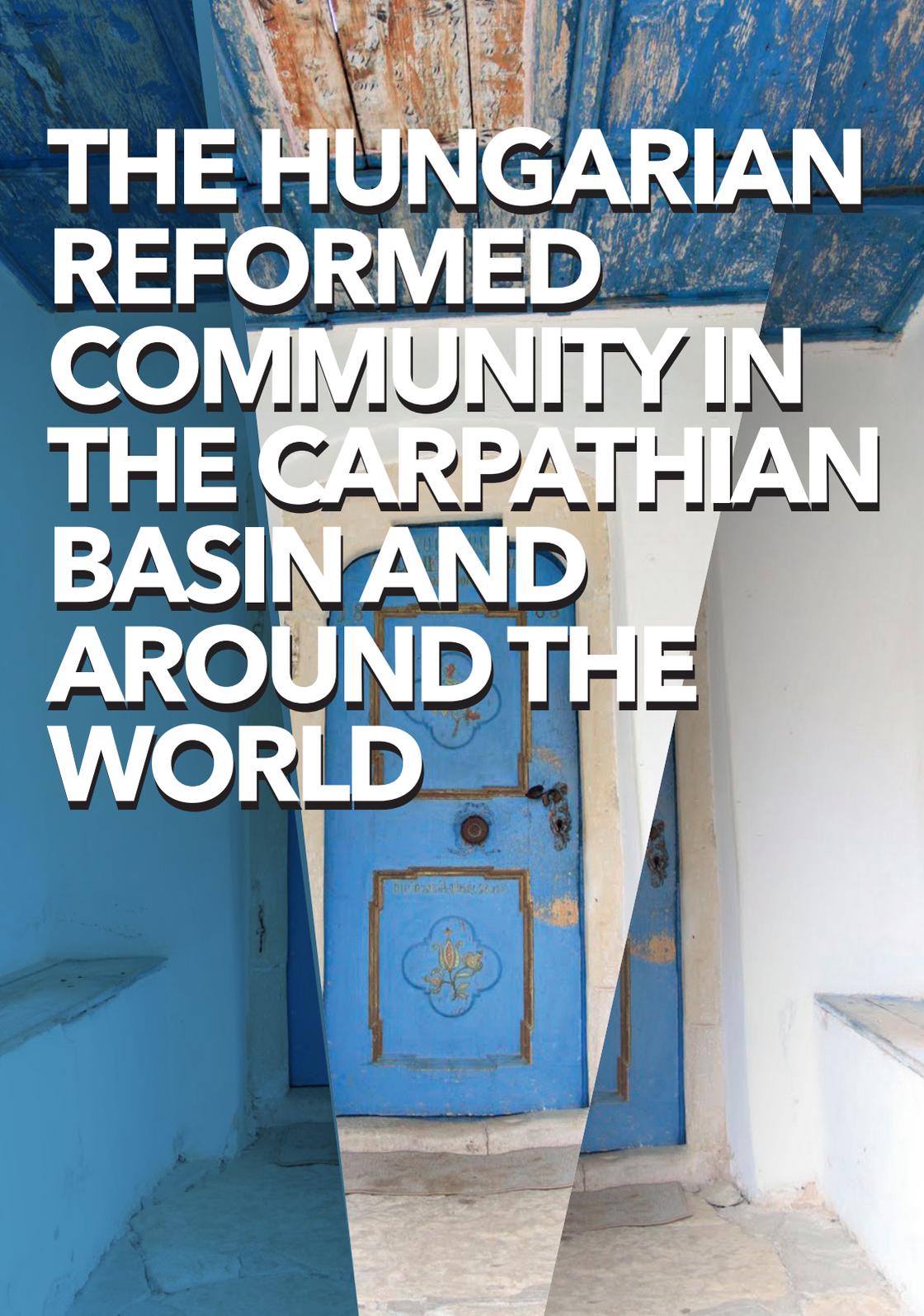
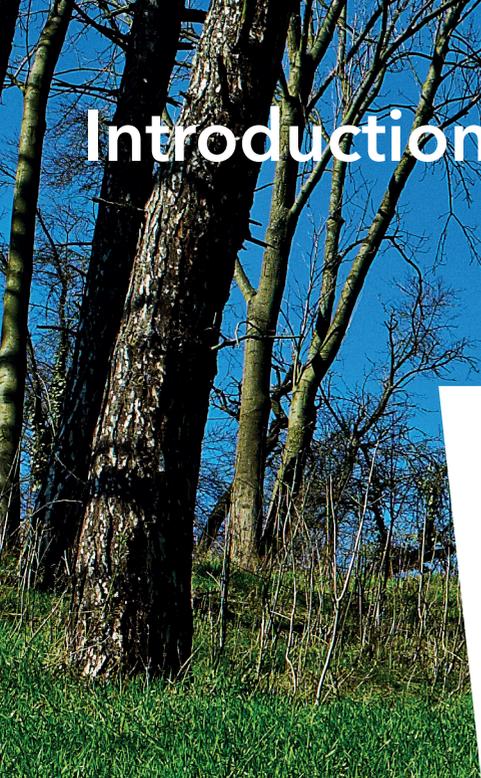


THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED COMMUNITY IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN AND AROUND THE WORLD



Introduction



Church where two confessions were adopted: the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession. The vast majority of Hungarians became followers of Calvin by the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, while the Lutheran Reformed movement gained ground more among the German and Slovak speaking population of the Carpathian Basin.

At this time the region was heavily divided not only ethnically and religiously, but also politically. Following the victory of the Turks near Mohács (1526) and the fall of Buda (1541) the Kingdom of Hungary was divided into three parts: the central parts of the country were under Turkish occupation, the northern and western territories came under the rule of the Habsburgs, while Transylvania had its own principality with a Hungarian ruler. For historical reasons, originating in the partitioned state of the country as well as the Habsburg's oppression and ambitions of re-Catholicization, the Hungarian Reformed Church was unable to develop within a standard structure. In the century of Reformation, six church districts were formed, but the foundations of our church constitution were only laid out at the General Synod of Debrecen in 1881, convened after the political compromise with Austria (1867), marking the beginning of the uniformly structured Hungarian Reformed Church.

THE REFORMATION IN HUNGARY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH ORGANIZATION

In the 16th century, at the same time as the European Reformation (indicating the tight relations between the Kingdom of Hungary and Europe), the impact of the Reformed movement made its influence felt in Hungary too. The Swiss Reformation, particularly Calvin's teachings, rapidly gained ground in the Carpathian Basin. The General Synod of 1567 marks the birth of the Hungarian Reformed



Hungary itself, nearly 1.2 million people claimed a Reformed religious affiliation in the 2011 Census. Of this 1.2 million, 600,000 are active members of a Reformed congregation. In addition, there are around 1 million Reformed Hungarians living in Hungary's seven neighbouring countries (the so-called Carpathian Basin) as well as in the diaspora predominantly in Western Europe, North America and Australia.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED COMMUNITY

The Treaty of Trianon following World War I resulted in Hungary losing two thirds of its territory and a large number of members belonging to the Hungarian Reformed Church finding themselves outside the borders of the country. As a result, the Hungarian reformed community today is scattered over three areas: the motherland, successor states in the Carpathian Basin and in global diaspora. In

Following World War I, a great number of Hungarian parishes found themselves outside the country's reduced borders. They continue to live in their original areas, but with foreign languages and in foreign religious environments. As a result of emigration - at first for economic reasons, later political reasons (as political refugees) - there are about 100 Hungarian Reformed congregations living solely in the United States. Besides the States, there are also Hungarian Reformed Christians residing in Canada, Western Europe, Australia and Latin America.

THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

During the 150 years of Turkish occupation in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Reformed Church, being in the majority, took the responsibility for public education instead of the weakened state. Through the translation of the Bible into Hungarian, preaching and prayers in the native language, the adoption of printing and the development of the school network in the 1530s, the Reformation made a lasting impact on the development of Hungarian literature, language, and thought. Protestantism in Hungary was culturally so strongly embedded that even the thoughts of the Enlightenment could only shake it partially. The Church lost ground in this area only in the 20th century, especially due to the nationalization of the schools (1948).

One of the most important strongholds of the Hungarian Reformation was the northeastern region of the country, and inevitably, the language spoken in this region provided the foundations for the emerging Hungarian literary language. The language of the Bible of Vizsoly, completed in 1590, proved to be very



powerful. The expressions and phrases of Gáspár Károli, the translator, left an indelible mark on Hungarian vernacular and common thinking.

The translation of the Psalms into Hungarian is of similar significance in terms of the development of the history of the Church and culture. The translation of the Genevan Psalms of Theodore de Béze and Clement Marot is the work of the scholar Albert Szenczi Molnár (1574-1634; *Psalterium Ungaricum*, 1607), and to this day Hungarian Reformed churchgoers use these texts with the Genevan tunes all over the world. However, it was primarily Hungarian reformed ministers or teachers who published the first Hungarian language lexicons, dictionaries and spelling books in the Early Modern Period. The most important strongholds of the Reformed

culture in Hungary for centuries were the famous colleges (Debrecen, Sárospatak, Pápa, Kecskemét, Nagyenyed, Kolozsvár, and Marosvásárhely). Many excellent Hungarian poets, scientists and politicians were educated in those colleges, including, inter alia, 17th-century encyclopedist and educator, János Apácai Csere, the world-famous Tibetologist, Sándor Körösi Csoma, the author of the Hungarian national anthem, Ferenc Kölcsey, the grand master of the Hungarian poetic language, János Arany, the most popular novelist, Mór Jókai, and the reformer of the modern poetic Hungarian language, Endre Ady. These colleges educated the ministers and theologians of the Reformed Church for centuries, whom by means of their university studies abroad were constantly in intellectual contact with the core areas of the

European Reformed Movement (Wittenberg, Geneva, Heidelberg, Oxford).

Given the position of the Reformed Community in Hungary, it was the keeper of national independence of Hungary as opposed to the Catholic Vienna. It was not at all a coincidence that in 1849, during the most significant war for independence in Hungary, the traditional center of the Reformed Community in Hungary, Debrecen, became the capital of the country for a few months. What is more, the dethronement of the Habsburg dynasty was announced in the prayer hall of the Reformed College in that city. Besides the strict Biblicism, the main feature of Hungarian reformed thinking to note has been the adherence to schools as tools of missionary activities as well as patriotism.

The Reformed Community in the Motherland

BIRTH OF A UNIFIED NATIONAL CHURCH

The desire to belong to a unified Church was a permanent element of the Hungarian Reformed public thinking. After four years of preparation, the General Synod of Debrecen opened its session on 31st October 1881. This Synod laid the foundations of the new church constitution. The three fundamental principles in establishing a unified church were: a majority system of decision-making, collective government and the parity principle. Two central authorities were established: the General Synod held every 10 years as the supreme legislative assembly of the Church, and the Universal Convent, representing the national church between the meetings of the General Synod. In organizational terms therefore this was the beginning of the Reformed Church in Hungary which was unified as a whole but still comprised autonomous districts.





THE CHURCH IN THE YEARS OF COMMUNIST OPPRESSION

After World War II the state made efforts to regulate its relations with Churches through a convention passed in 1948. The practice of fair relations with Churches was completely inconsistent with Communist ideology and power politics. The land of the Church was seized, its schools were brought under state control and religious education in schools was repressed. Public and internal life of the Reformed Church was marked by a great number of decisions made by the state party following communist ideology that was brought to power with Soviet support amid the political conflicts after the war. Until the revolution of 1956, the Church and its members were openly exposed to daily atrocities, just like any other citizen of the country who was not willing to conform

to the official, “victorious” state ideology at the time. Following the suppression of the war for independence of 1956, Church revolutionaries were also hit hard by retribution and punishment. Later, the social effects of political consolidation were felt in church life as well.

From the perspective of state power, retiring within the church walls was considered a virtue, while public appearance was only recommended if asked. The image of the Church as well as the membership and composition of individual congregations went through substantial changes in the years of dictatorship. The intention of the state since 1948 was to undermine the social base of the Churches, educate the young as atheists and strive to hinder the administration of Church institutions. Applying the principle of “oust the shepherd and the flock will disperse” led to a series of show trials against the church people.

THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH TODAY

In 1989, the regime change freed Eastern European nations and their Churches from the Soviet system of Communist state-party oppression and isolation. In Hungary, the State Office for Church Affairs, the regulatory authority established by the former state party, was shut down. By 1990, Act IV on the freedom of conscience and religion and Churches was passed. Section 1 in the first chapter of the Act provides that “The freedom of conscience and religion is a basic human right granted to every human, the unobstructed practice of which is ensured by the Republic of Hungary.” Act CCVI (passed in 2011, effective from January 2012) on the right to freedom of conscience and religion, and on the status of Churches, religious denominations and communities replaced previous regulations.

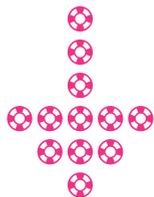
This has brought about new regulations concerning the recognition of Churches by the state.

Following the political changes, Church activities have become more intense and thriving; the number of meetings fostering relations between congregations has been on the increase, various conferences, camps, meetings, festivals and fraternal relations have been organized. Religious life is again freely practiced outside the church building.

The Reformed Church in Hungary currently owns a number of diaconal institutions including a hospital, many educational institutions and conference facilities. Minister training takes place in four cities (Debrecen, Budapest, Sárospatak and Pápa). The institutional work of the Church is supplemented by the work of pastors, elders, educators, church musicians, and in addition, by that of representatives of non-governmental organizations engaged in various branches of missionary activities and youth associations.



Institutions



The RCH has around 400 Reformed diaconal services, helping 22 800 people in need.



The RCH has 7500 employees, of which 1550 are ministers.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY

The 1,249 congregations that make up the Reformed Church in Hungary today are organized into 27 presbyteries. Each presbytery is led by a pastoral dean and lay president. Presbyteries assist the service of local congregations, organize their missionary, educational, diaconal and financial activities, and also act in a supervisory and controlling capacity as superior Church authorities. The presbyteries are organized into four church districts, the Danubian, Transdanubian, Cistibiscan and Transtibiscan districts. The leadership of each district consists of a bishop and a lay president.

The 100-member General Synod is the supreme legislative and executive body of the Reformed Church in Hungary elected on a 6-year basis. The Synod elects its pastoral and lay president from the leadership of the church districts.



Hungarian Reformed Believers in the Diaspora



EMIGRATION AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, POLITICAL REFUGEES AND MIGRATION

Beside the originally Dutch, German or Scottish Calvinist Churches functioning in the United States, as a result of emigration there are some Hungarian Reformed communities too. From the late 19th century until the beginning of World War I,

approximately 1.5 million people emigrated to North America from Hungary in hope of a better life. A new wave was sparked by the Great Depression in the 1930s, followed by an increase in the number of political refugees during the Communist dictatorship. The suppression of the 1956 revolution and war for independence led to yet more Hungarians fleeing the country giving rise to an unparalleled wave of solidarity in the host countries. Since then an increasing number of Hungarian emigrants have been residing in Western Europe, Australia and South America. Recently – since 2004 in particular when Hungary became a member of the European Union – the number of young adults and experts moving to Western Europe in search of jobs has considerably increased. Migration poses new challenges communities must face in terms of their missionary activities.



ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES OF CHURCH LIFE

Care for the Hungarian Reformed community in the diaspora is supported by several organizations. The composition of communities operating in Western Europe in various legal forms follows the religious affiliation of the mother country. The majority of the members and serving pastors in Protestant communities belong to the Reformed Church, but Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists and members belonging to other denominations also play an important role in these communities. An organized pastoral care for Hungarian Protestants in the huge Western European diaspora started in 1944. The life of the Hungarian Reformed community living in 15 Northern and Western European countries is coordinated by Federation of Hungarian Protestant Congregations in Western Europe and the Reformed pastoral service. The associations serving as a frame were established to foster pastoral care, boost intercommunal relations and advocate their common interests. In some countries like Switzerland and Germany, communities also form association on a national level.

In North America, several Church organizations include Hungarian Reformed congregations. In the United States, the most important of these is the autonomous Calvin Synod belonging to the United Church of Christ. The Hungarian Reformed Church in America is an independent organization, whereas several congregations of Hungarian origin operate within Presbyterian Church communities.

Hungarian Reformed communities in Canada, although belonging to three different church sections, are organized into the Hungarian Ministerial & Elder's Association of Canada. Of the three church sections, the group belonging to the Canadian Presbyterians is the largest.

MAJOR CONCERNS OF THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED COMMUNITIES LIVING IN THE DIASPORA

Belonging to a Church community plays an important role in adopting the culture and customs of a foreign country. This is particularly true of political refugees, whose emigration was not primarily motivated by economic factors. The greatest problem

is often presented by the fact that members of the diaspora are dispersed, living great distances not only from the motherland but also from each other. Due to the difficulties with maintaining relations, these communities have in many cases developed and evolved in different directions.

The question may arise whether allegiance to national culture, traditions and language hinders integration in the new homeland. Generations raised in the language environment of the host country often do not speak Hungarian, making bilingual congregational events important to them, and very often they only insist on their Hungarian identity as part of a cultural tradition. Under such circumstances, self-sustenance is becoming increasingly difficult for Hungarian congregations; moreover, upon the retirement of pastors congregations are disbanding or seeking urgent financial support.

RELATIONS WITH THE REFORMED COMMUNITY IN HUNGARY

At the end of the 19th century following the emigration waves, the Reformed Church in Hungary tried to help the Hungarian Reformed communities abroad by maintaining ministerial positions. After World War I, the shaky financial position of the Hungarian Church made this more difficult, yet theology scholarships always brought students who helped congregational life or were able to communicate the needs and demands to church leaders upon their return.

The borders were closed during the communist dictatorships, thus keeping official contacts was difficult. The continuous influx of political refugees gradually filled up the diaspora, the majority of who were from highly-qualified social classes, and therefore played important roles in Church communities. By this time, the Hungarian Reformed congregations in the diaspora had become completely self-sustaining, and in fact, they endeavored to help the Hungarian Reformed churches stuck under dictatorship.

Equal relations were only restored in the 1990s, after the fall of Communism,

when it was again possible for the Hungarian Reformed communities in the motherland and those dispersed around the world to meet again.

Ties between the Mother Church and the Diaspora were strengthened by the so-called Diaspora Conference organized by the Reformed Church in Hungary in 2008. At this conference, representatives from all over the world discussed new possibilities for cooperation and summarized the needs of congregations in form of a declaration. It declares that „*Reformed and Lutheran Hungarian congregations and Churches living in diaspora and the Mother Churches residing in the Carpathian Basin hereby declare that it is their common duty given by Jesus Christ to seek mission amongst believers living in various countries, advocate the glory of God with their full devotion and act on behalf of followers they are in charge of.*”

As a result, a comprehensive program was drawn up to help the Western European Diaspora. This program involves permanent consultations concerning the future of congregations, putting students and interns on scholarship in charge, exchanging pastors on a regular basis and providing financial support. In this field, the Reformed Mother Churches in the Carpathian Basin have closely been collaborating with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary.



Hungarian Reformed Communities in the Successor States

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As a consequence of the Peace Treaty of Trianon after World War I, Hungary lost two-thirds of its original territory and half of its population. Although the newly-born states (Romania, Yugoslavia, Austria and Czechoslovakia) became ethnically more homogenous than they had been in Austria-Hungary, the several million ethnic Hungarians constitute the largest ethnic minority in Central Europe in the successor states today.

As opposed to the dispersion, a significant difference resulting from emigration in this case is that part of the population came under the rule of another state, not as the result of a voluntary and personal decision but based - completely neglecting Wilson's principle of nations' autonomy - on a political decision of the major powers winning the war. International law at this time barely recognized minority protection norms; measures included in the Peace Treaty were hardly implemented. Examining the disintegration of Yugoslavia (originally the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom) in the last decade of the 20th century,

which was accompanied by bloody warfare and where in spite of language similarities different religious traditions (Christianity, Islam as well as Eastern and Western Christianity) gave rise to tensions, it is easy to picture the position, both in terms of language and religion, of the minority Hungarian-speaking Reformed Churches living in successor states.

CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

In 1881, the Hungarian Reformed Church bodies were united, before being separated again after World War I. From that point on, Reformed Churches in successor countries evolved in isolation in terms of liturgy and Church Law. Since whole parts of the Church and groups of communities found themselves on the other side of the motherland's borders, the Church needed to be restructured, which was often only grudgingly recognized by the successor states. The states frequently and unlawfully nationalized Church properties in several places and abolished the well-developed organization of Church education. Yet still, in spite of severe oppression these Churches went through a spiritual revival between the two World Wars.

IN DUAL MINORITY

Today Hungarian Reformed communities reside in each of the neighboring countries of Hungary. The fewest live in Austria and Slovenia with one congregation each, while the largest number of Church members live in Romania, organized into two districts. Those in Romania had a very similar life to that of Church members in Hungary after World War II due to the similar historical situation, however, circumstances arising from the linguistic and religious dual minority often made the Soviet-type Communist oppression even worse.

The only exception to this was the congregation in Oberwart, Austria, which played a key role in taking care of political asylum seekers, because this was the only community in the Carpathian Basin which had not come under the rule of Communist dictatorship after World War II. The congregation became highly renowned within the Austrian Reformed community and became well-known for the so-called "Oberwart-Conference". Later, it became a forum for the free exchange of views in theology for the Reformed Churches of Europe for over 30 years.



World War II and the Yugoslav wars of 1990s brought bloodshed to the Hungarian Reformed community. The Yugoslavian Communist regime permitted Churches relatively more freedom, but the lack of institutional background (e.g. its own theological education) and growing nationalism made Church's life increasingly difficult, too. By the time the artificial state disintegrated, the Yugoslavian Reformed Church had also disintegrated into several congregations with only a few members.

The Sub-Carpathian Reformed Church belonged to Czechoslovakia until World War II when it became part of the Soviet Union; since its collapse it belongs to Ukraine. Compared to the position of Churches taken over by other countries, its position was perhaps the worst of all the Churches in the successor states. More than one-third of the pastors fled at the end of the war, and many were imprisoned or deported to Siberia. The question was not how the church would live under oppression, but whether the church could survive and preserve its basic functions at all and whether or not there would be Reformed preaching, Reformed Churches and ministers ever again. The 20th-century Russian „Empire“ with its orthodox cultural heritage knew no Protestantism, which is why it was questionable whether the Sub-Carpathian Reformed Church could obtain any legal status. It was not until 1990 that it received legal status.



Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), Budapest

RCH, Transdanubian Reformed Church District, Pápa
 RCH, Danubian Reformed Church District, Budapest
 RCH, Cistibiscan Reformed Church District, Miskolc
 RCH, Transtibiscan Reformed Church District, Debrecen

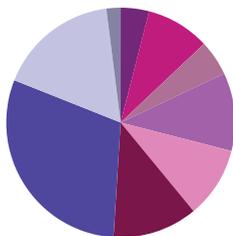
Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia, Komárom (Komarno)
 Reformed Church in Sub-Carpathia (Ukraine), Beregszász (Berehove)

Reformed Church in Romania (RCR)

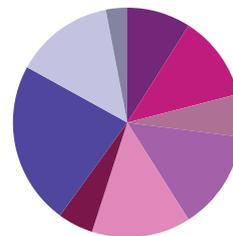
RCR, Transylvanian Reformed Church District, Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca)
 RCR, Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District (Oradea)

Reformed Christian Church in Serbia, Hertelendifalva (Pančevo-Vojlovica)
 Reformed Christian Church in Slovenia, Szentlászló (Motvarjevci)
 Reformed Christian Calvinist Church in Croatia, Laskó (Lug)

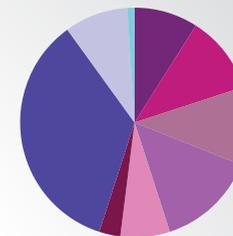
ACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP



NUMBER OF PRESBYTERIES



NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS



■ Pápa	47 302	6	284
■ Budapest	96 920	8	303
■ Miskolc	50 871	4	301
■ Debrecen	121 041	9	411
■ Komárom	110 000	9	210
■ Beregszász	130 000	3	95
■ Kolozsvár	326 000	16	1 091
■ Nagyvárád	170 000	9	278
■ Hertelendifalva	17 000	2	15
■ Szentlászló	400	-	4
■ Laskó	4 000	-	18

Today's Slovakian Reformed Christian Church went through the hardest times after World War II in Czechoslovakia, which also disintegrated in 1993. This is because the country that took sides with the winners after World War I planned to establish a purely Slavic nation state. To achieve this, the country needed to get rid of millions of Germans and hundreds of thousands of Hungarians. To this end, the two ethnic minorities – one-third of the country's population – were collectively declared war criminals, deprived of their citizenship and attempts were made to obtain the consent of the major powers to deport them.

The Germans were fully deported, but Hungary managed to bargain that Hungarians could only be deported officially in a number equaling the number of Slovaks in Hungary willing to relocate. In the course of forced exchange of population and as a result of other measures, hundreds of thousands of Hungarians in Upper Hungary had to leave their homes behind. The situation was only settled to the satisfaction of all parties after the regime change in 1990, however, Slovakian public

life is still not entirely free of measures imposed on minorities. Ministers were primarily educated and trained at the Charles University in Prague for decades. Recently the Hungarian University in Komárom has taken over this role.

Outside Hungary, the largest Reformed community lives under the guardianship of the Reformed Church in Romania. The work done in its two districts is harmonized by a joint synod. Their joint minister education and training takes place at the Protestant Theological Institute based in Kolozsvár (Cluj). After the Treaty of Trianon, the development of the two Reformed districts diverged. The state recognition of the existing Transylvanian Reformed Church District was not problematic: minister training in Kolozsvár continued and work in educational institutions – though under stricter state control and supervision – resumed. The situation of the newly-formed Királyhágómellék Reformed Church

District – along the Hungarian border – was much worse. The process of legal recognition was considerably hindered by the fact that its congregations had formerly belonged to the Transtibiscan Church District based in Debrecen. Two decades of uncertainty drew a considerable amount of energy from congregation-building and Church-run education.

With Communists coming to power in 1948, the most severe persecution of the Church in modern history started in Romania. During the 1950s several churchmen belonging to various denominations were arrested. Most of them were released in 1964 after general amnesty had been announced. This was the time when Romania received a loan from the United States. One criterium for the loan was the release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. Then history repeated itself. A new era of silent and growing oppression followed

with the systemization plans (elimination of small villages) of the Ceausescu regime. These plans sparked harsh international protests. After the regime change in 1989, the organization of the Church and community building could finally start. The repossession of the previously confiscated Church properties is fundamental. Since all members of the Reformed Church belong to the Hungarian ethnic minority, it is immediately affected by any failure to observe minority rights. Frequent manifestations of anti-Hungarian sentiment have urged the Church to protest against any violation of human dignity.

In spite of a number of difficulties, community and congregation building is under way. Today, congregational work is not restricted to the church building. Institutions facilitating educational, diaconal and missionary work undertaken by the Reformed Church have already been formed or have begun to revive.

Reformed unity in the Carpathian Basin

NEW FORMS OF RELATIONS

After the political changes of the 1990s, several organizations were established with the purpose of facilitating cooperation with the dispersed Hungarian Reformed community. The World Association of Hungarian Reformed Churches, established in 1991, sees its mission in the building and world-wide co-ordination of Reformed spiritual life. The Consultation Synod of Hungarian Reformed Churches, established in 1995, aims to operate as a consultative, representative and demonstrative organ of the Hungarian Reformed community.

The General Convent has been in operation since the summer of 2004. This is a consultative and proposal-making body comprising the appointed presidia of the presbyteries and church districts of the Reformed Churches in the Carpathian Basin. Major goals the General Convent set are the mutual exchange of information, united and agreed upon representation of interests towards worldwide Church organizations and charity organizations, a more devoted practice of fraternal solidarity toward one another, unified liturgy and legislation, the unification of organizational matters and the content of pastoral and theological education. These have been supplemented by the following: *“We hope that as a result of our mutual work, prayer and service in the grace of God, the unified Hungarian Reformed Church will be reborn in the foreseeable future.”*



SOLIDARITY, COOPERATION AND UNITY IN FAITH

After 5 years of preparation, on 22 May 2009, the Constitutional Synod adopted the Constitution of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Debrecen. With this decision, the constitutional unity of all Reformed Churches in the Carpathian Basin was declared. The Constitution was signed by the representatives of the Hungarian Church Districts, the Reformed Church in Romania, the Reformed Church of Sub-Carpathia (Ukraine) and the Reformed Christian Church in Serbia. During the session the American Reformed Church also joined.

Although the representatives of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia did not sign the Constitution with respect to 13-14% of Slovak-speaking church members, they expressed their willingness to cooperate. In May 2011 the Church Synod finally decided to join. The accession ceremony took place in the session of the General Convent held on July 21, 2011 in Temesvár (Timișoara). After the signing procedure, the Presidium of the General Convent stated that with the accession of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia one of the major goals of the unified Church can be attained, according to which *„we, Hungarian and Slovak Reformed Christians following Jesus Christ, together, as parts of the same body, are looking into the future.”* They added *„it is a unique responsibility of the Reformed community living in the Carpathian Basin to foster dialogue and peace among nations living in the region.”*

The establishment of the united Hungarian Reformed Church does not mean a complete merger, because the various member Churches retained their legal autonomy. The Constitution – similar to the Charter of the European Union adopted by the member states – is adopted by the individual Churches and integrated into their own sets of rules and regulations. The Joint Synod cannot make decisions on its own. In decision-making it needs the authorization of its Church bodies. So it was not at all about the creation of a ‚super church‘ standing above existing Churches. Instead, it was about the restoration of unity lost due to historical reasons by the existing Church bodies. This does not only mean legal unification, but also involves fraternal community based on confessions. The practice of communal services has manifested itself in closer cooperation in many fields ranging from education to diaconal services. This can make Church’s service in the society more credible and fruitful.

FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

The constitutional and legislative body of the Hungarian Reformed Church is the Joint Synod; its representative body is the General Convent.

According to the Constitution, unity applies in all matters that the Constitution and the authorization of the national Churches consider liable to joint regulation. Individual Churches



retain their autonomy in terms of their own election system, Church-governing activities, internal regulation of services and missions, Church discipline and management; in addition, they reserve the right to create their own organizational structure. They, however, cooperate in legislation, joint representation, the building and organization of ecumenical and external connections and in the fields of ecumenical services, missions, press, communication, education, youth work, IT and management of retirement pensions.

REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN

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Transdanubian Reformed Church District

H-8500 Pápa, Árok u. 6. Hungary
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Website: www.refdunantul.hu

Danubian Reformed Church District

H-1092 Budapest, Ráday utca 28. Hungary
Tel: 00 36 1 218 0753, Fax: 00 36 1 218 0903
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Website: www.raday28.hu

Cistibiscan Reformed Church District

H-3525 Miskolc, Kossuth u. 17. Hungary
Tel: 00 36 46 563 563, Fax: 00 36 46 508 884
Email: phivatal@tirek.hu
Website: www.tirek.hu

Transtibiscan Reformed Church District

H-4026 Debrecen, Kálvin tér 17. Hungary
Mailing address: 4001 Debrecen, Pf.: 65
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Fax: 00 36 52 414 400
Email: hivatal@ttre.hu
Website: www.ttre.hu

Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia

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Fő tér (Hlavné námestie) 23, Slovakia
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Email: reformata@reformata.sk, office@reformata.sk
Website: www.reformata.sk

Reformed Church in Sub-Carpathia

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karpataljairefegyhaz@gmail.com
Website: http://www.reformatus.com.ua
Reformed Church in Romania

Transylvanian Reformed Church District

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Website: www.reformatus.ro

Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District

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