

THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY'S 2013 WORKING AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary's 2009-2014 working plan formulated the basic mission of the church based on the scripture passage 2 Corinthians 5: 9-20. Paul's main thought was emphasized later on as "Ambassadors for Christ," which was chosen as the mission motto for the RCH in 2011, defining the direction of the church's mission during that year. This guiding statement is still applied as the overarching concept for the church. The Synod kept and appointed the motto as the biblical and thematic basis for the national church. It emphasizes the direction of the national church's work and gives a guideline for the service of congregations. Paul's message fit well into the highlighted initiatives defined in the working plan, and also corresponds well with the theological thought of the current international church and their thematic guiding principles.

The year 2013 – like in our partner churches – will be the anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. The schedule for the European region of the World Communion of Reformed Churches contains a Reformed interpretation of the connection between Scripture and Confession, as well as the responsibility of the church as a confessing community in a secular society. At the same time as other European Protestants, we commemorate the 40th jubilee of the Leuenberg Agreement unifying the European Protestant churches in full communion, unity in reconciled diversity.

The gathering of the systematic Synod in the autumn of 2011 and the foundation of the Church Revision Committee, strengthened the principal thought of the theological work, following Paul's example, essentially, the question of the church's current identity and its accurate role in society, both of which cannot be separated. The theological reflection does not want illustrate something new, but follow the framework of the Holy Scripture, shown through the Confession, and give attention to its current instruction. Rediscovering the Heidelberg Catechism as one of our most important confessions, and defining its current message concerns the essential identity and service of a church as an "Ambassador for Christ."

Our church considers the years 2009-2014 the "Remembrance of Calvin." This also gives a possibility and enables the church to rethink the Reformed characteristics of our church's identity. The question of interpretation aims to show the way for our church as it searches for an ecclesiastical direction. The continuously changing and forming of our church's image leads to the examination of its problematic role as a people's church and/or confessing church.

The motto "Ambassadors for Christ" not only applies to the prior initiatives in the working plan and topics of 2011, but as a biblical guiding principle in 2013. The apostle Paul defines his role as an Ambassador for Christ in 2 Cor. 5:19-20: the ambassador should not just give his message but must be an instrument of accurate "communication" of the Gospel. Those churches who work as ambassadors for Christ need to continuously examine the way, content and place of its self-identity and confession in the mirror of the Gospel, in order to be strengthened and renewed.

Because of the above mentioned, we recommend, besides keeping the Ambassadors for Christ motto from Paul, which shows the RCH's self-identity, that the other thematic guiding principle of 2013 be the role of the confession in our church and the responsibility of the RCH as a confessing community (Year of Confession). (One of the basic functions of the Heidelberg Catechism, the question of confirmation, connects strongly to this, and the European Protestant unity by the Leuenberg Agreement gives a frame for it.)

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RCH General Synod, 13th Synod Cycle, 11th Session

The following events and tasks define the guiding principles of the RCH's service in 2013:

- We gather a common Reformed Hungarian Synod in June 2013, where we plan to accept the new Hungarian universal text of the Heidelberg Catechism. This meeting will also be the Hungarian Reformed community's thanksgiving and celebration of the Heidelberg Catechism publication.
- "Who am I?" is the theme of the Reformed youth festival, Csillagpont (Starpont), which will help the church, its members and the young people of the church to find their identity.
- We continue to collect and announce church and institutional "good practices" to help each other in confessing service.
- The Confirmation Committee works to find ways to invite the younger generation into the church and keep them involved. An international survey, which follows the Hungarian characteristics, helps the committee complete this work.
- The Roma Council continues to work on the RCH's Roma Strategy as a priority mission of our church, which, after a broad discussion within the church, will be presented at the Synod next spring.
- The Church Revision Committee (CRC) initiates a broad discussion concerning central issues of mission renewal. After this discussion, the CRC will take its recommendation to the Synod in November.
- It is important to examine the relationship between church and state, mainly the fields of corporation such as healthcare, social ministry, diaconia, family, education, social-ethic questions, culture and art.
- The Conference of European Churches (CEC) organizes its General Assembly in Budapest in July 2013. At the Assembly, it will close the process of its structural and operational revision, and the representative of member churches of the CEC will accept its new constitution.
- We continue to work on the biblical topic of reconciliation, which includes understanding and verbalizing the truth, one of the most important aspects of the seven years of reconciliation. This initiation reflects the motto of the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in November, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace." This Assembly is the most important event in 2013 for the global Christian community.