

Absztraktok

A kötet tanulmányainak absztraktjai szintén megtalálhatóak a *Studia Universitatis Babeş–Bolyai Theologia Reformata Transylvanica* folyóirat 69. évfolyamának 2024-es 1. különszámában (DOI: 10.24193/subbtref.69.suppl1)

István Bogárdi Szabó: Pathfinders. István Török (1903–1996) in the Church – Against the Church – For the Church

The life and theological work of István Török (1903–1996) clearly illustrate the alternations of Protestantism in the 20th century and at the same time reflect the changes in the circumstances of the Hungarian Reformed Church. From the beginning of his career, first as a teacher at the Papal Reformed Theological Academy and then as a professor at Tisza István University of Debrecen, he participated in the theological debates. These reflections helped the orientations of the Church. During the years of communism, his publishing activities were limited, and after 1956 he was suspended from his teaching position. Nevertheless, he delivered many lectures to his former students at the so-called “black conferences”. In the period around the regime change (1989–1991), he rejoined the public life of the Church with several writings. Significant theological turns require freedom, when the Church paves the way for the eternal, even at the cost of conflict or self-restraint.

Keywords: Protestantism in the 20th century, dialectical theology, ethical dimensions of Christian life, freedom of the church

Ferenc PAP: “Unity and Refinement”. Paths and Quests for Organizational and Ceremonial Unity in the First Half of the 20th Century

This article explores the efforts of the Hungarian Reformed Church in the first half of the 20th century to achieve uniformity and refinement in its worship practices. The desire for a unified Hungarian Reformed worship service had been a hallmark of previous centuries, leading to a long journey of development in the 20th century. The standardization of the liturgical praxis aimed to create a sense of shared identity and eliminate historical variations in regional worship practices and customs. The movement for liturgical unity had been ongoing for centuries, with earlier attempts including church district agendas published in the 19th century. The publication of the Liturgical Book [Istentiszteleti Rendtartás] in 1930, which is the first official Agenda for the whole Reformed Church in Hungary, marked a culmination of efforts towards liturgical unity. The paper highlights the tension between achieving uniformity and preserving diversity within a religious tradition.

Keywords: liturgics, history of liturgy in the Reformed Church in Hungary, liturgical book, 20th century, worship practices

Zoltán BÁRÁNY: The Youth Inner Mission and the Soli Deo Gloria

From the 19th century, as a parallel field of foreign missionary work, the Hungarian inner mission followed Western (English, German) models and established associations to revive the stagnating religious life and to help those less fortunate in a miserable situation. The urbanisation of the period affected greatly the families moving to the capital, where some of them had become disconnected from their church roots, and the lack of a social safety net led to a high level of poverty and the moral decay that accompanied it. In the first half of my study, I looked at the beginnings of the Hungarian inner mission and then I wrote about evangelising and educating associations for youth and children, such as the Protestant Orphans' Association, the Sunday School Association and the Christian Youth Association, which was modelled on the YMCA. In the second part, I discussed the social and faith-based activities of the specifically Hungarian Reformed Soli Deo Gloria Student Movement.

Keywords: inner mission, youth ministry, Reformed Church, SDG, communism

Dániel TÓTH-GYÓLLAI: Debate on the Initiatives of the Faculty of Theology in Debrecen. The Theological Education Designed by Sándor Csikész and Imre Révész

This study examines the reform initiatives for theological education in the Reformed Church in Hungary during the early 20th century, focusing on the period between 1912 and 1940. Central to this examination are the reform plans developed by Sándor Csikész and Imre Révész, particularly their 1937 draft aimed at unifying pastoral training. The research contextualizes these reforms within the broader historical and ecclesiastical framework, analysing the efforts and challenges faced by the Faculty of Theology in Debrecen. The study highlights the various debates and controversies sparked by the proposed reforms, particularly the opposition from other theological academies and the broader church community. Through detailed exploration of historical documents, this paper sheds light on the motivations behind the reforms, the resistance they encountered, and their lasting impact on theological education within the Hungarian Reformed Church.

Keywords: curriculum, Reformed Church in Hungary, theological education, pastoral training, reforms

Róbert RIGÓ: The Confiscation of the Landholdings of the Reformed Church in the Kecskemét Reformed Church County (1945–1952)

In my study, I examine how the newly established communist government in the Kecskemét Reformed Church County, located in the central part of Hungary, deprives the congregations of their landholdings, which are one of their most important financial bases. As a result of increasing pressure from the party-state, the “nationalization” of the church lands took place gradually, up until 1951, when all remaining areas had to be offered to the state for “purchase”, under strictly fixed conditions. During the process, congregations lost their financial independence and became vulnerable to state funding.

Keywords: forced nationalization of landholdings, confiscation of church lands, abolition of the financial independence of churches

Gábor LÁNYI: Viable Cooperation or Unscrupulous Service? Motivations for Albert Bereczky's Activity in Church Governance

Albert Bereczky is one of the controversial figures in the 20th-century history of the Hungarian Reformed Church. Bereczky was a genuine and authentic leader of those who fought for the inner spiritual renewal of the church between the two world wars, a church organizer, a well-known and respected preacher, who saved many by risking his life during the deportation of Hungarian Jews to extermination camps, for which he was posthumously awarded the honorary title “Righteous Among the Nations” from the Yad Vashem. However, the communist state apparatus established after World War II found in him the person who, by placing him at the head of the Reformed Church, could bring about a radical reduction of the public and social role of the Church almost without any resistance. So, the question arises: how and why could Bereczky, whose Christian commitment was hard to question, become the servant of the dictatorial state apparatus with its atheistic ideology? Our study attempts to record the possible intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that might explain this dilemma, while also providing a general insight into Albert Bereczky's life.

Keywords: Bishop Albert Bereczky, Zoltán Tildy, Church–state relationship, communist persecution of Christians, collaboration

Szabolcs SZETEY: “We Must Participate with the Fruits of Our Faith in Building Socialism”. The Preaching Committee in the Danubian Reformed Church District in the Mid-20th Century

As a result of the communist takeover in 1948, the Bishop of the Danubian Reformed Church District, László Ravasz was deposed, and Albert Bereczky took his place. In the end of 1951, Bereczky wrote a report to the general meeting of the Reformed Church in which he requested the authorization to set up a “preaching committee” with the aim of supervising sermons. He believed it was important for the pastors to talk about issues of their time in sermons because “we don’t preach in a vacuum space but to real people”. In reality, the committee’s function was the full control over pastors and the search for the ideological/theological content (which is called “narrow-road” theology) in preachings. That is why every pastor was asked to send in one sermon that was to be delivered between 1/01/1952 and 25/02/1952. József Bodonhelyi, head teacher of practical theology at the Faculty of Theology of the Reformed Church, who was also member of this preaching committee, wrote notes about these received texts and sermons where he probably appeared in person. We could find certain qualifications in his notes that seriously affected the careers of the pastors (for example, “he doesn’t address the issues of our time”; “his teaching is dangerous”; “he must urgently retire”).

Keywords: Albert Bereczky, Reformed homiletics, history of preaching, preaching, Church history

András CSÜRÖS: The “Hungarian Barmen”. The Impact and Reception of the Declaration of Confession and the Barmen Declaration in Hungary

Finding a way out by confession. In 1955, the Declaration of Confession, inspired by the Barmen Declaration, was drawn up in great secrecy and became one of the necessary documents of 20th-century Hungarian Reformed Christianity. In this study, we examine its reception and impact in Hungary. We will look at how the Barmen Confession appeared in Hungary and what influence it had on the 1955 Declaration of Confession.

Keywords: Declaration of Confession, Synod of Barmen, Confessing Church, Martin Niemöller, totalitarianism

Réka Kiss: Mosaics: Traces of Protestant Social Networks in the Resistance during the Second World War. Additions to the Career of Géza Soos

On 9 December 1944, the leaders of one of the most important resistance groups, the Hungarian Independence Movement, stole a German-registered plane and flew secretly to the headquarters of the Anglo-Saxon allies in Southern Italy, taking with themselves a considerable amount of confidential military information and data on the activities of the Hungarian resistance to help the British and American forces. According to a summary by the US intelligence organization, the OSS, the resistance group represented by Géza Soos was ‘predominantly Hungarian and Calvinist in character.’ Another summarizing report on Hungary, also prepared by the OSS, also mentioned a Protestant resistance network that operated illegally during the German occupation. The two documents raise a number of issues related to the so far little known history of the Calvinist and Protestant resistance networks during the Second World War. Focusing on the person of Géza Soos, I would like to sketch up how the revealed documents point out the directions of further research concerning the Calvinist aspects, social network, path-finding and dilemmas of the Hungarian resistance movement during the Second World War.

Keywords: Anti-German Resistance, History of the Reformed Church in Hungary during WW2, Geza Soos, Soli Deo Gloria Student Movement, Office of Strategic Services (OSS)

Szilvia KÖBEL: The Significance of Relations between Hungarian and Dutch Reformed Congregations under the SingleParty State – With a Special Emphasis on the Dutch Connections of Dezső Szabó, Pastor in Káloz, in the Focus of the State Security Services

The study provides a glimpse into the ministry of Dezső Szabó, the Reformed pastor in Káloz (Hungary) in the 1960s, when he rebuilt informal church relations independent of church leadership – with Dutch congregations. Prior to the war, Dezső Szabó studied in the Netherlands on a scholarship. The party-state authorities, however, did not approve of inter-church relations with Western churches, but in the changed environment of church politics and church law brought on by the 1960s, Dezső Szabó seized the opportunity to rekindle old ties through his former theological acquaintances. Dezső Szabó's activity was monitored by state security, and the records also provide information on the situation of the Dutch Reformed Church. The study draws attention to dilemmas of wayfinding and identity, full of challenges, during the second half of the 20th century.

Keywords: neo-Calvinism, identity, surveillance, single-party state, Káloz

Péter NAGY: The Path of the Reformed Church in Elizabeth

The Hungarian Reformed Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey operated for about sixty years. The congregation was established by Hungarian immigrants to the United States of America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. On 21 May 1914, the church became member of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The close-knit community had an active religious and social life and became an important meeting place for local Hungarians. The congregation, which had become financially independent, organized a number of charity events to finance their own expenses, missionary goals, and fundraising activities. It was also important for the congregation to cultivate its Hungarian roots. In the 1970s, it had to cease independent operation partly due to the assimilation of the second and third generations and partly because of urban planning due to the change in the social composition of the town. Rev. Bertalan Szathmáry, a pastor who had previously served in the Elizabeth congregation for several years, gathered the leaderless Newark congregants and founded a new congregation in Union.

Keywords: Hungarian Reformed Church, Elizabeth (New Jersey, USA), Presbyterian Church

Gergely HANULA: Changes in the Language of the Reformed Church in the Second Half of the 20th Century: The Convergence of Oral History and Big Data

The author's journey begins with a deep immersion in his traditional Protestant faith, where he was taught to thoroughly know both the Old and the New Testament. As he reflects on his faith, the concept of being a "stranger and sojourner" comes to the forefront, highlighting the feeling of alienation within the secular world. The narrative takes an interesting turn when the author discusses the impact of changing political language on his perspective. The introduction of new political ideas and discourse challenges the previously straightforward worldview, leading to a sense of uncertainty in decision-making. Believers find themselves in a world with a multiplicity of perspectives that require a re-evaluation of what it means to "deny" or to make choices. In a changing social and political context, the narrative continually explores the intricate connection between faith and language. The author's experiences and reflections provide a compelling insight into the complexities of navigating a shifting spiritual landscape while grappling with the ever-evolving meaning of words and beliefs. The second half of the article presents the results of a computer analysis of the vocabulary of two Bible translations that defined the language usage of the Reformed Church in the second half of the 20th century: the 1908 Károli and the 1975 New Translation. The analysis focuses on words that present difficulties in understanding due to their archaic or religious nature. As a point of comparison, it also showcases the vocabulary of the Gospel of John, where a mere 199 word roots constitute 80% of word occurrences.

Keywords: language of the church, Bible translation, vocabulary of the Bible, letter and soul, protestant language use