

# THE COOPERATION IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN FOR TEN YEARS

The Thirteenth Synod Cycle  
Fifteenth session of The  
Reformed Church in Hungary

**12<sup>th</sup> of november 2014**

- We celebrated two important anniversaries of the Carpathian Reformed cooperation this year
- ten years ago, the **General Convent** was founded on the **9th of July in 2004**
- five years ago, the constitutional council, held on **22 May 2009**, said the **Hungarian Reformed Church's** establishment

# ANNIVERSAIRES

In addition to the other mentioned we can also commemorate three other anniversaries:

- the dismemberment of the country after the outbreak of the **First World War 100 years ago** terminated the Agreement Gospel According to Christian Reformed Church in Hungary unity in 1881
- **25 years ago**, in 1989 the **fall of the Iron Curtain**
- **10 years ago**, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia - then later Romania and Croatia - joined the European Union → in a way never experienced before: it has made boundaries permeable and facilitated maintaining relationships and cooperation

# ANNIVERSAIRES

- Council decision (1992) the subject of convening the **Universal Hungarian Reformed Synod**:
- „The Synod [...] considers it necessary on its part created by the 1881 Synod , and never canceled in canonical sense Hungarian Reformed Synod unit's reorganization in legal continuity.” (detail of the resolution)
- **Hungarian Reformed World Federation** is created as **an association** (1991) „for the building of the protestant spirituality and worldwide coordination” and the **Deliberative Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Churches** (1995) „as the Hungarian protestant's consultative, representative and demonstrative body”

## UNIT EFFORTS AFTER THE CHANGE OF REGIME

- The General Convent is the Hungarian Reformed Churches, **in office** of the Reformed Districts within the Carpathian Basin, as well as bishops and first elders in office of the Church Districts **deliberating and proposing operational body**
- It's novelty is: operates on an **internal ecclesiastical laws and agreements of the church**
- Later on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2009 a common constitution was adopted and set the rules of the organization and operation

# THE FOUNDATION OF THE GENERAL CONVENT

- The final declaration of the 2004 inaugural meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July also formulated several important **objectives**:
- „Our goal was to remedy the harmful effects caused by decades of fragmentation of our Church.”
- Following the example unfolding and intensifying regionals evolved in the European Union economic interests, we think necessary and timely to construct the spiritual regions too.

# THE FOUNDATION OF THE GENERAL CONVENT

- The principle objectives won too the wording in the concrete action plan:
- **Mutual information** with each other/the exchange of information
- Unified and coordinated **business federation**
- Our **fraternal solidarity's** towards one another in a more determined way
- **Unified liturgy and legislation**
- The **Pastor and Theology training**, as well as the **unification of** public education and higher education the institution structure, as well as **standardising content**

# THE FOUNDATION OF THE GENEREAL CONVENT

- **Universal church membership**
- „ 1. § [...] (2) The Hungarian Reformed Church considers anyone a member of the church that lives in any part of the world, and declares themselves Hungarian Protestant and enunciate this”.
- (3) [...] **To this actual enunciating exercise, Hungarian Reformed Unity**, with the full consensus of the Church Body , **across the motherland’s borders organizations could be created.**” (l. law in the year of 2005)

# TOWARDS THE UNIT

- **Declaring the unification process**
- „We are committed ourselves to **re-create the unity of the Hungarian Reformed Church** with the objective to **provide a common >>Reformed Church Act Fund<<. [...]**
- We hope to rely on God's grace as the common work, the common prayer and the common service's result of the **unified Hungarian Reformed Church will be come into place in the foreseeable future.**” (details of the General Convent's final declaration of Debrecen the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of July in 2005)

**TOWARDS THE UNIT**

- Festive proclamation of the year 1881, the 125th Anniversary of Debrecen Constitutional Council
- „Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary and is committed to the spiritual unity preserved by maintaining the external and cultivation of the visible church located next to the department's work faith
- canon creative work takes into account the separated parts of the operative laws of the Church and seek to working in harmony in their own legislation; **urge** in the new European community the construction of the canonical **community parts of the church that came close to each other again [...].**” (23<sup>rd</sup> of November in 2006, Budapest)

# TOWARDS THE UNIT

## Constitution-making process

- **The General Convent's seat in Sárospatak from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of July in 2007:**
  - Principles, schedule
- **The General Convent's papal seat from the 18th to the 20th of June in 2008:**
  - propose of the draft constitution for discussion and acceptance for the church bodies
  - Prior ratification part from the connecting churches
- **Convocation of the Constituent Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church** delegated by representatives of the church bodies and the adoption of the constitution on **the 22nd of May in 2009**

TOWARDS THE UNIT

- **constitutional unit** → the Hungarian Reformed Church is the community council of the connecting churches (1. paragraph of the 19<sup>th</sup> § of the constitution of the Hungarian Reformed Church)
- „The Hungarian Reformed Community from the Century of the Reformation kept their **spiritual, intellectual unity**. Historical vicissitudes and political intentions could not even disrupt our unity...].” (from the read message of the constitutional council in the presence of fifteen thousand people)
- **Unit profession of faith** → „Christ is the future, together we follow him” (the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church and Thanksgiving feast's slogan)

# ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH

- **Slovakian Reformed Christian Church** joined on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June in 2011 on the seat of the General Convent in Temesvár
- **Croatian Reformed Christian Calvinian Church** joined on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June in 2013 on the seat of the Common Synod
- Outside of the Carpathian Basin - due to the possibility of the common constitution - the **American Hungarian Reformed Church** joined at the very beginning
- Last year the **Canadian**, this year the **Luxembourg Hungarian Reformed Community** initiated their connection

# UNFOLDING COMMUNITY

- „Today's live Reformed Christians' historical responsibility to **fill with life the Hungarian Reformed Church given frames**” ( from the closing statement of the General Convent's seat in Komárom on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May in 2010)
- "It is in **flourishing cooperation, enriching twinning relationships, and in the carrying of each others' burdens that we live out the joy of unity, solidarity and community**[...] Time and energy, but especially God's Holy Spirit leadership is vital for the church life that was created, ago and confirmed 130 years but reinforced in 2009 **redefines and strengthens our daily, our churches life.**" (from the General Convent's circular 22nd May in 2011)

AFTER THE 22<sup>nd</sup> of MAY

- Looking back Looking back at the Hungarian Reformed Church is one of the most outstanding years experienced by the unit Hungarian Reformed Church in the **Common Synod** in June of last year:
- The „second meeting” → there's a **continuation**
- The same common synod, which stated the foundation of the Hungarian Reformed Church, **accepted and in a new translation confirmed by their creed the text of the Heidelberg Catechism**

AFTER THE 22<sup>nd</sup> of MAY

- increasing number of recurring **events** whose labels and objective are „**Carpathian Basin**” (charity ball, common school year opening, youth prayer at night, prayer day, Star Point, Bridge Of Love, conferences)
- More and more we come into contact with narratives and appeals, **in regards, one to one common issue** (for example: Székely Mikó college, Transcarpathia, disaster assistance)
- Beside the common challenges, we have **common feasts and joys** too (for example: Hungarian Reformed Unity Day, plaque and statue's inauguration, launching of the new translation of Institutes)

AFTER THE 22<sup>nd</sup> of MAY

Common issues, projects for follow-up that we **look at ourselves as a unit:**

- Common budget, aid funds (educational, pastor aid)
- Unified action towards the international church organizations (membership fees of the Reformed Churches in the world community, markings)
- New model in the diaspora (send a minister to Germany to Hungarian-speaking Protestant Churches Association)
- Calvin star
- live collaborations (consultative youth forum, protestant radio board, diaconal coordination council, etc.)

AFTER THE 22<sup>nd</sup> of MAY

## Common **plans, ideas:**

- Standardised pastor qualification
- while respecting the specifics, **more departmental**, harmony in the legislation/law-making, **alignment** (for example: election laws, courts)
- Structured along clear theological principles, **liturgical praxis** featuring several alternatives and publishing a new **hymnal**
- The preparation of **catechism** „written in our creed spirit, reformulated in today's language, useful in the **confirmation classes**”
- Celebration of **the quincentenary of the reformation**

# LOOKING FORWARD

- Ten years ago → Creating a **healing community**
- Five years ago → adopting a **common constitution** with the hope that „the brittle paragraphs built into a common spirit house”
- **If there is no unity then there is no future** (bishop's message at a round table held at the Protestant Unity Festival titled „*The Unit's Future*” on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May in 2014)
- **Renewal officers** → possibility to **re-conceive** the **expectations** related to cooperation of the Carpathian Basin's future, thoughtfully in regards to our common **tasks and possibilities**

# LOOKING FORWARD