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## From the Editor | Vom Herausgeber

The editor finds herself in a difficult situation when she is about to write a foreword to this issue i.e. Mario Fischer, the new General Secretary of the Community of the Protestant Churches in Europe has written a wonderful meditation on the theme “dedication” with such circumspection and sensitivity that it could also serve as a perfect preface. So I would kindly advise our readers to start reading this issue with that piece and then come back to this page for some introductory notes.

The aim of this issue of the *Sárospataki Füzetek* is to discern the enduring relevance of Karl Barth’s theology in continuity with the past. On the one hand, we look back to crucial moments in the theological reception of his work in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, we also look forward to sketch the extent to which Karl Barth’s voice can still be heard in contemporary discussions on theology. In our call for papers, we particularly wished to encourage contributions exploring the themes in Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics I/2*, since he dedicated this volume to the Sárospatak Reformed Theological Academy as well, where he was granted honorary professorship in 1931.

We are grateful to the two Barth scholars for having responded positively to our call for papers. Professor Eberhard Busch, writing on Barth’s understanding of the Old Testament in *CD I/2* in light of his encounters with Jewish philosophers and theologians, argues for the conversation character of *Church Dogmatics*. Professor Árpád Ferencz invites us to make some discoveries in Barth’s ecclesiology, and offers us impulses of the “Church Father of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” that can still provide us with clues as to how theology and the church as an agent of “civil society” can position themselves under the new conditions in the post-secular society.

As the Sárospatak Reformed Theological Academy is part of the wide network of scholars connected to the International Reformed Theological Institute (IRTI), the attention of the editorial board was called to a paper on Barth’s concept of neighbourly love in *CD I/2*. The study relates to actual, relevant aspects of the practice of hospital care, in particular of the reciprocal relationship between caregivers and patients or clients, between helpers and those being helped. The fourth and last of our thematic essays, by one of our senior students, offers a discussion on Barth’s concept of election in relation to and in dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox understanding of *theosis*, looking for the objective and subjective aspects of salvation as presented by these two systems of thoughts.

2018 does not only mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Karl Barth’s death, but also the centenary of the Swedish filmmaker, theatre director and writer (son of a Lutheran minister) Ingmar Bergman’s birth. On this occasion we also invited contributions that approach his extensive work from various perspectives (including theology) related to the international and varied contexts in which his work appeared and continues to appear. Both papers focus on the director’s films made in the 1960s. The first paper attempts to engage in a theological dialogue with Bergman’s cinematic

notion of the “silence of god”. The study concludes with referring to Bergman as a portrayer of horizontal transcendence. The second paper takes this theme a step further and demonstrates how the conception and relocation of the transcendental dimension shifted in the director’s films of the period: from the divine Other, first to the neighbour-as-Other, and from that to the self-as-Other.

As we move through the 501<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, we gladly publish a former lecture of our new honorary professor, Robert E.L. Rodgers, on key doctrines that lie at the heart of Martin Luther’s experiential theology.

The readers will find studies from a former Erasmus Plus lecturer and from our faculty members as well, who are willing to share their findings in Old Testament and New Testament studies and the sociology of religion with a wider, more international circle in the hope of provoking some reflections. And we cannot do more than that; we offer this collection of papers and essays to create reaction: we need one another and must complement one another’s thinking and practice, and thereby live out something of the reality of the body of Christ.

*Gabriella Rácsok*

*Károly Zsolt Nagy*

**“PRESERVE THEIR  
PIETY, THEIR BIBLICAL  
PREACHING –  
THIS IS OUR MISSION.”  
REFORMED  
CONFESSIONAL  
IDENTITY OF  
YOUNG PEOPLE IN  
TRANSCARPATHIA**

When we talk about migration or forced migration, we mainly think about individuals and communities, who leave their homes on their own account or who need to leave it. And when we talk about the culture of migration or forced migration, we mostly think of cultural patterns, which characterize the migrants, or the ways of migration, or the preservation of the migrants' identity.<sup>1</sup> In my presentation I would like to address an aspect, which is slightly less often talked about: namely those who stayed at home. I will take the long-time isolated Transcarpathian Hungarian Reformed Church as an example.

I'm going to talk about three topics.

1. The first topic is the impact of “málenkij robot” as a special kind of forced migration on the Transcarpathian Reformed communities.

2. The second topic is the evolving of the cultural memory of migration.

3. And finally, the third topic is the relationship between young Calvinist people and the emphasized elements of this cultural memory.

**1.**

As a result of the Treaty of Trianon, the northern and north-eastern counties of Hungary were annexed to Czechoslovakia. Subsequently, in August 1921, Bereg, Ung and Ugocsa Protestant Dioceses that had belonged to the Transtibiscan Church District, decided to establish a separate Reformed Church in Transcarpathia.<sup>2</sup> Back then the new church consist-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, “Migration Theory,” in *Migration Theory-Talking Across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (New York: Routledge, 2015), 3–36.; Sandra Barkhof and Angela K. Smith, eds. *War and Displacement in the Twentieth Century-Global Conflicts* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> János Csohány, “Trianon és a Magyar Református Egyház,” *Egyháztörténeti Szemle* 13, no. 2 (2012),

ed of sixty-five thousand church members, seventy-seven churches, three subsidiary parishes and three not self-sufficient mission congregations. Seventy-six pastors and five assistant pastors served the churches. At this time fifty-one Protestant schools operated in Transcarpathia. The Czechoslovak government hindered the church life in many ways. Many schools were secularized. The state did not automatically give citizenship to the Protestant clergy, and did not recognize the leadership of the church. The “Eastern Circle of Friends” was established at this time in Transcarpathia.<sup>3</sup> It was a revival movement whose aim was to educate self-conscious, Bible-based Calvinists within the church. This was in accordance with the church processes, which were going on at that time in Hungary and Transylvania. This revival movement had a great impact in the Transcarpathian Reformed Church, but in many places the church leaders and pastors objected to it. Some of them explained it before the congregation as a new religion, and not as a renewal movement within the church. As a result of the First Vienna Award in 1938 and the Hungarian military operations following it in March 1939, the Transcarpathian Reformed Church also returned to the Transtibiscan Church District. However, after the Soviet army had marched in (in October 1944) the Transcarpathian churches became a part of a new state, the Soviet Union. This was the time when the greatest trauma occurred in the history of the Hungarians in Subcarpathia. In November 1944, about ten thousand Hungarian and German men were carried off from the region and sent to Soviet camps. The Soviet soldiers who carried out the deportation calmed the frightened inhabitants down by stating that they were taking the men to do some reparation work for three days only. The Russian expression “маленькая работа” meaning a little bit of work, fixated in the minds of those left behind as *malenkij robot*. However, the men were not carried off to do some work; they were taken to the relocation camp in Szolyva, and from there to the forced labor camps on the Gulag. A lot of them died there, and those who returned were considered to be war criminals, and were not allowed to talk about what they had gone through. According to a research that took place at the end of the 1990’s, there were 4,359 registered victims on account of “*malenkij robot*.”<sup>4</sup> There were a lot of pastors who tried to avoid forced labor. In 1944 about

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75-83.; Lajos Gulácsy, “A Kárpátaljai Református Egyház,” in “*Tebenned bíztunk eleitől fogva...*,” *A Magyar reformátusság körképe*, eds. József Barcza and János Büttösi (Debrecen: Magyar Református Világtalálkozó Alapítvány, 1991), 107–110.; Lajos Gulácsy, *A mélységből a magasba: Egy önéletrajz: Gulácsy Lajos* (Munkács: Kárpátaljai Református Egyház Sajtóosztálya, 2005), accessed April 14, 2015, <http://mek.niif.hu/03500/03531/html/>; Zsuzsa Tóth, “A Kárpátaljai Református Egyház-kerület megalakulása, egyházmegyéinek küzdelmei a Csehszlovák Köztársaság kötelékében (1920–1928),” *Acta Beregsasiensis* 10, no. 1 (2011), 135–41.

<sup>3</sup> Gulácsy, *A mélységből a magasba*; Mariann Orbán, “Ébredési mozgalom a Kárpátaljai Református Egyházban (1936–1947),” *Acta Beregsasiensis* 8, no. 2 (2009), 239–44.

<sup>4</sup> Zalan Bognár, “Malenkey Robot, or the Deportation of the Civilian Population in large numbers from Hungary to Forced Labour in the Soviet Union in 1944/45, with Special Regard to those Deported as Germans,” in “*Our Only Guilt Was Our Origin...*”: *The Deportation of German and Hungarian Civil Residents for “malenkey robot” to the Camps of Stalin from 1944/45 till 1955*, ed. Zalan Bognár (Pécs: Magyarországi Németek Pécs-Baranyai Nemzetiségi Köre, 2009), accessed April 14, 2015,



a hundred pastors served in the congregations, but in those days forty pastors abandoned their service, and so the church was nearly paralyzed. The ecclesiastical institutions were secularized, and many churches were closed down – mostly in settlements, which the pastors had fled. The church structure collapsed. Churches could only operate in case they had a state permission. The state banned evangelization, religious education and services performed outside the church (with the exception of funerals). The state restricted the field of activity of pastors, illicit printing, and the distribution or import of religious literature, particularly the Bible. Total atheist propaganda came into effect.

In this situation, the re-organization of the church began mainly by the Eastern Circle of Friends. About half of the pastors became supporters of the revival movement. Despite prohibition, evangelism was performed; Bible studies and church services were held. In their work their main focus was on young people. Unfortunately, the official church leadership was fundamentally hostile to the evangelical movement.

A significant change occurred in the life of the church after the Circle of Friends had written a letter to Stalin in 1947. The letter called Stalin an instrument of God's judgment, and compared him to the biblical Nebuchadnezzar. "But you should know – they wrote – that you are a tool in the hands of God, and you have to obey the Lord's will."<sup>5</sup> The letter did not remain unanswered. Two of the letter writers, Barna Horkay and József Zimányi were arrested immediately. Several other pastors were also arrested. They were accused of anti-Soviet activity. Those who had survived returned from captivity in May 1956. As one of them, Bishop. Gulácsy puts it in his memoirs: "Back then we were convinced, but by now it has become particularly evident that God acted well and the seven and a half years of imprisonment was to our advantage. It was there where we had to be, to where thousands of our people were deported without a reason. It would have been a shame on the Church, if it had not participated in the judgement it deserved. The priests who were not carried off had to endure humiliation, eviction from the parsonage, suspensions, disqualifications, threats and very difficult financial circumstances at home."<sup>6</sup>

After this the Transcarpathian church continued to live in isolation, which only began to decline in the 1980s. Social isolation and the lack of spiritual leaders, Bibles and songbooks led to the intensification and self-organization of religious life. We can find the roots of self-organization in peasant ecclesiolas with their laic Puritan origins on the one hand, and in the revival spirit of the Circle of Friends, on the other.

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[http://www.sulinet.hu/oroksegtar/data/magyarorszagi\\_nemzetisegek/nemetek/malenkij\\_robot/pages/026\\_Bognar\\_Zoltan\\_Malenkij.htm](http://www.sulinet.hu/oroksegtar/data/magyarorszagi_nemzetisegek/nemetek/malenkij_robot/pages/026_Bognar_Zoltan_Malenkij.htm); Erzsébet D. Molnár and Zsuzsa Tóth, "A Szovjetunióhoz csatolt Kárpátaljáról donbászai kényszermunkára," in Bognár, ed., *"Our Only Guilt Was Our Origin..."*; Database of Victims of the "Malenkij Robot" (Based on the research project of the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute), accessed April 14, 2015, <http://kmf.uz.ua/mr/index.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Barna Horkay, *A Keleti Baráti Kör: Képek a kárpátaljai ébredésből* (n.p.: Kom Over En Help Foundation, 1998), 117.

<sup>6</sup> Gulácsy, *A mélységből a magasba*, 21.

The story of the peasant ecclesiolas dates back to the 18th century. In the almost one hundred years following the expulsion of the Ottoman and then Habsburg emperors an institutional “counter-Reformation” took place. Means of paramount importance to this end were the deprivation of Protestant communities from their spiritual and intellectual leaders, pastors and preachers. This historical circumstance resulted in the assimilation of Protestant communities in many places. However, at other locations, conversely, it triggered abandoned communities to take the reins of organising their religious life. In addition to reading the Bible, singing and praying, the opportunity of elucidation of the Holy Scripture was provided to all Calvinists. This was declared in the Reformed teaching on universal priesthood of believers, and such communities raised these forms of individual religious exercise to community level. The professional literature calls communities run in this way peasant ecclesiolas.<sup>7</sup>

These self-organized communities may also have played a major role in the life of the Church in the second half of the 19th century when under the influence of the prevailing theological paradigms “pastoral care” was considered unnecessary to be performed by pastors. These patterns were revived in the work of the Peasant Prophets and in the Ecclesiolas formed around them. In the late 1930s, two Calvinist Peasant-Prophetesses worked in Transcarpathia. The main religious lay-leader was Mrs. Mariska Borku (she was born in 1910 – and she died in 1978). The community she was leading operated between 1937 and 1977 in Tiszaágtelek. Her highly important work, the so-called “Third Testament” is a manuscript, written under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It was considered by Mrs. Mariska Borku and her followers as a holy text, a continuation of the Bible. These almost 800 biblical “quasi loci” were spread in hand-written copies and were read aloud at religious meetings in the Hungarian villages of Carpathian Ukraine, even fifteen years after her death. Beside biblical paraphrases, religious songs and prayers, one fourth of the text consists of her visions. The prophetess never explained these visions and the “words” of the Holy Spirit to her followers – she only announced them. Nowadays the largest religious community of her followers, mostly women over fifty, exists in the village of Dercen.<sup>8</sup> Its lay-leader, Miss Ida Balla, can explain the Words of the “Third Testament”, and the visions of Mrs. Mariska Borku. The other prophet, Borbála Szanyi Mikó, lived and worked in the neighbouring village of Nagydobrony for two decades. She organized a prayer group called the congregation of Erdős or Rekesz, which consisted mainly of her family members and relatives. She also wrote down her “Words” she received in the form of revelations in a work entitled Örökkévaló *Evangélium* (Eternal Gospel).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Jenő Szigeti, “Megtérési mozgalmak a XIX. századi Magyar vallásosság hátterén,” in *Conversio: Az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Karán 2011. szeptember 22–23-án tartott vallástudományi konferencia előadásai*, ed. Balázs Déri (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Vallástudományi Központ, 2013), 469–70.

<sup>8</sup> Imola Küllös, “We were Led by The Lord in a Special Way...’ - Visions, explications and reality in a twentieth century Calvinist congregation,” *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 46, no. 1–2 (2001), 153.

<sup>9</sup> Ildikó Sándor, “Egy vallásos kisközösség és vezetője a kárpátaljai Nagydobronyban (1937-től az 1970-es évekig),” *Világosság* 43, no. 7–8 (2003), 157.

As it has been demonstrated by the researchers Imola Küllös and Katalin Sándor, in these communities the Puritan and Pietist tradition of Reformed religiousness was determinant. The main elements of this tradition are as follows:

- regular Bible reading and Bible study with the community;
- intensive prayer and devotion, and
- exercise of the community of other believers

I think these three elements can be supplemented by a fourth one. One of the central ideas of the pietistic piety is the mystical unity of believers with Christ, which is achieved through the experience of the suffering of Christ. This is not a new idea but it basically came to Protestantism through pietism.

Between the two world wars pietistic religiosity characterized mostly the awakening or the so called domestic mission in Hungary.<sup>10</sup> This school sometimes had ferocious fights with another devotional and spiritual school known as historical Calvinism. Historical Calvinists tried to revive the Church through the actualization of the rediscovered doctrines of Calvin. Dogmatic and confessional doctrines and through these the establishment of clear borders between different denominations held utmost importance for them, however, the emotional dimensions of religion were not considered so important. As a result, many of those who were devoted to liberal or rationalist theology preferred this school. The school of domestic mission on the other hand did not consider dogmatic and confessional doctrines too important, so it was characterized by ecumenical openness.<sup>11</sup> This circumstance is important to us because the way the religious life of Subcarpathia was divided between the two World Wars, according to the recollections, is a reflection of this conflict. The church leadership – the pastors and the leaders of the church organization – belonged mostly to the school emphasizing denominational traditions. But a large portion of followers, with a few pastors whose number continuously increased in the beginning, followed the devotional school characteristic of domestic mission and pietism. Among them there were two peasant prophets, whose work was disapproved by the official church; they were considered to be sect leaders and their work was believed to further divide the already deranged religious community.<sup>12</sup>

Between the two world wars a specific form of “national religious allegory” spread in Hungary and Transylvania regardless of denominations. The allegory paralleled Christ’s suffering to the suffering of the Hungarians because of Trianon.

<sup>10</sup> Sándor Bíró and István Szilágyi, eds., *A Magyar Református Egyház története* (Sárospatak: Sárospataki Református Kollégium Teológiai Akadémiája, 1995), 383–417.

<sup>11</sup> Imre Révész, *A mai Magyar kálvinizmus* (Budapest: Bethlen Gábor Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársaság, 1923).; Sándor Tavaszy, “Mi a pietizmus és mi nem pietizmus?,” in *Világnézeti kérdések*, ed. Sándor Tavaszy (Torda: Füßy József Irodalmi és Könyvnyomdai Műintézete, 1925), 173–82.

<sup>12</sup> Imola Küllös and Ildikó Sándor, eds., *Két kárpátaljai parasztproféta szent iratai* (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2009), 64–6.



[Picture 1. The front cover of Louis Kossuth Birinyi's book: "Why the Treaty of Trianon is Void" (Grand Rapids MI: V. L. R. Simmons) from 1938.]

We don't know if this allegory was known in Transcarpathia. It can only be assumed that between 1938 and 1944, when Transcarpathia belonged to Hungary again, people were exposed to it through the press. The effect of the allegory cannot be demonstrated clearly in the two peasant prophet's texts. It is assumed, however, that the Christ-mysticism, which marks the texts very strongly, might have caused such crosstalk in the audience.

Mariska Borku worked until 1977. The organization of the Transcarpathian Reformed Church was significantly degraded by the end of 1970s. The number of pastors strongly lessened. Just twenty mostly elderly clergymen served in eighty-one congregations. Since 1974, however, there was some slight detente in the relationship between church and state. The church was given permission to train two pastors, and this was repeated every other year after 1977.<sup>13</sup>

2. After the political changes in the Ukraine, the KRE allowed the church to carry out its activity legally but under very difficult circumstances. A lot of people who had not had contact with the church previously joined the more and more active churchlife. A number of young people who had lost their Hungarian Protestant religious roots as well as their Hungarian language and cultural roots registered at the re-organized denominational secondary schools. Therefore, it was necessary to reformulate the Hungarian Reformed identity in such a way that they could under-

<sup>13</sup> Gulácsy, *A Kárpátaljai Református Egyház*, 112.

stand it. This process in Transcarpathia was emphatically apolitical until recently as opposed to other Hungarian Protestant communities. The synod of KRE (Transcarpathian Reformed Church) distanced itself from all types of political activity, and the redefinition of identity was based mainly on the religious dimension of faith. However, this situation has been slowly changing in recent years. Since 2010, in order to ensure its institutional existence, there has been a strong demand towards the KRE to play a more active role in political and public life. This change is taking place currently, so we cannot base our interpretation on extensive research. We can assume, however, that one of the reasons is the generational shift among pastors. The majority of young pastors is trained in Hungary. These young people are not only theologically better informed, but during their studies they can also observe how the Hungarian Reformed Church tries to enforce its interest in political and public life. Returning home, they try to use their experience to help their Reformed community whose subsistence as religious and ethnic minority is in danger. For elder pastors the attribute "Reformed" whereas for younger pastors the attribute "Hungarian" has become significant in the name of the Church.

These two relevant dimensions are two different – but complementary – narratives, which play a role in shaping the memory of the dictatorship in the Church.

A. The first narrative focuses on the piety and the religiosity of the victims. A good example of this narrative is the speech of the Transcarpathian Bishop Alexander Zán Fábíán at the inauguration ceremony of the memorial to deported pastors.



*[Picture 2 & 3. The inauguration of the Memorial to Martyr Pastors. Beregszász, 2008.  
Source: [http://refua.tirek.hu/data/gallery/14463/thumbs/pic\\_lelxszekx\\_elxljxrxk.jpg](http://refua.tirek.hu/data/gallery/14463/thumbs/pic_lelxszekx_elxljxrxk.jpg). 140x87\_  
q85.jpg]*

As the official account on the website of the church puts it: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' (Psalms 23: 3–4) Sándor Zán Fábíán, bishop of the Subcarpathian Reformed Church quoted psalmist's words; lines that served to encourage our deported pastors." Then the account discusses in length how the bishop explains this section of the Bible in the historical context of the "malenkij



robot”: “The psychological terror of the authorities accompanied by terrible poverty and an economy destroyed by the war practically paralyzed the people. Men separated from their families in the distance, widows in eternal black at home, mothers who lost their children. Furious atheism and the enormous vulnerability of ordinary people. Our pastors had to talk about the power of victorious and retaining faith in such difficult circumstances. [...] These pastors did not call for revolt, they preached gently. It was living their Faith that they were persecuted for, for which they were sent to death. For those who had faith were dangerous to the system. Here is the saddening balance: After 1944 forty Protestant pastors were deported because of their faith. Many of them established living communities behind the barbed wires. On their return from captivity, they were the yeast of the renewal period during the Great Awakening in the nineties. They could serve in the suffering church, and left us a legacy. – It is our mission to preserve their piety and their biblical preaching. Today there is a great need for preachers of the living faith, for the existence of our Hungarian communities is at risk again.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, the bishop believes that they have to walk on the old and beaten path among new threats.

A. The second narrative focuses on the resistance motif. As a young pastor says: “When we talk about it, we always emphasize that we have so many martyrs because they were not willing to cooperate with the oppressive atheist power. (There are scarce examples of this – they got away). In the case of pastors this is even truer; basically it can be stated that in our region none of them were recruited, so most of them put the pastoral robe down, or died as martyrs.”<sup>15</sup> This formulation essentially follows Calvin’s theory of the right of resistance.



[Picture 4 & 5. Commemoration of martyrs. Rát, 2014. Photography: Tibor Szimkovics.]

In order to understand the difference between the two narratives and to see the slight shift between them, it is worthwhile to say a few sentences about what the idea of the

<sup>14</sup> Erzsébet Marton, „A mártír kárpátaljai református lelkészeknek állítottak emlékművet Beregszászon,” accessed April 14, 2015, <http://refua.tirek.hu/hir/mutat/46988/>.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with K.L., on 18.11.2014.

Calvinian right to resistance consisted of. Calvin himself wrote about it in the fourth book of the *Institutio*. The Calvinian right to oppose was an important motivational factor in the freedom fight led by István Bocskai between 1604 and 1606, and it has been an important factor in Reformed thinking connecting the feudal and national freedom with the freedom of religion. In this context Calvin is mostly referred to just as the person who theologically justified the possibility to oppose tyranny, and thus liberated Protestants to start– if necessary, even armed – resistance. But Calvin's train of thought is more complex than that, and he discusses it in detail who and under what circumstances has the right to resist. Now I would like to highlight only two of his ideas that are important in understanding the analyzed narratives.

On the one hand, Calvin urges obedience towards the worldly authority. Namely, authority comes from God who puts it to the top of society with special tasks to fulfil. Even if this authority fails to do its tasks and becomes unworthy to its privileged situation, revolt cannot be our first reaction. As he writes: "Wherefore, if we are cruelly tormented by a savage, if we are rapaciously pillaged by an avaricious or luxurious, if we are neglected by a sluggish, if, in short, we are persecuted for righteousness' sake by an impious and sacrilegious prince, let us first call up the remembrance of our faults, which doubtless the Lord is chastising by such scourges. In this way humility will curb our impatience. And let us reflect that it belongs not to us to cure these evils, that all that remains for us is to implore the help of the Lord, in whose hands are the hearts of kings, and inclinations of kingdoms." "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods." Before his face shall fall and be crushed all kings and judges of the earth, who have not kissed his anointed, who have enacted unjust laws to oppress the poor in judgment, and do violence to the cause of the humble, to make widows a prey, and plunder the fatherless."<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, from this it follows that rebellion against and revenge for the "depravity" of authorities is not the assignment of the "people" in general, but that of the chosen ones of God. So, Calvin continues: "Herein are the goodness, power, and providence of God wondrously displayed. At one time he raises up manifest avengers from among his own servants, and gives them his command to punish accursed tyranny, and deliver his people from calamity when they are unjustly oppressed; at another time he employs, for this purpose, the fury of men who have other thoughts and other aims. Thus he rescued his people Israel from the tyranny of Pharaoh by Moses... [...] Let princes hear and be afraid; but let us at the same time guard most carefully against spurning or violating the venerable and majestic authority of rulers, an authority which God has sanctioned by the surest edicts, although those invested with it should be most unworthy of it, and, as far as in them lies, pollute it by their iniquity. Although the Lord takes vengeance on unbridled domination, let us not therefore suppose that vengeance is committed to us, to whom no command has been given but to obey and suffer. I speak only of private men. For when popular

<sup>16</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2002), 915–6., accessed April 14, 2015, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.html>.

magistrates have been appointed to curb the tyranny of kings [...]. So far am I from forbidding these officially to check the undue license of kings, that if they connive at kings when they tyrannise and insult over the humbler of the people, I affirm that their dissimulation is not free from nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, while knowing that, by the ordinance of God, they are its appointed guardains.”<sup>17</sup> Finally Calvin phrases the criterion for choosing between obedience and opposition in the following way: “But in that obedience which we hold to be due to the commands of rulers, we must always make the exception, nay, must be particularly careful that it is not incompatible with obedience to Him to whose will the wishes of all kings should be subject, to whose decrees their commands must yield, to whose majesty their sceptres must bow. And, indeed, how preposterous were it, in pleasing men, to incur the offence of Him for whose sake you obey men! The Lord, therefore, is King of kings. When he opens his sacred mouth, he alone is to be heard, instead of all and above all. We are subject to the men who rule over us, but subject only in the Lord. If they command anything against Him let us not pay the least regard to it, nor be moved by all the dignity which they possess as magistrates – a dignity to which no injury is done when it is subordinated to the special and truly supreme power of God.”<sup>18</sup>

Basically, this train of thought reveals itself in the events in Subcarpathia. The first reaction of the awakening movement, that had developed around the Circle of Friends, to the foreign, oppressing, godless i.e. an atheist authority radically limiting the freedom of religion was that of impenitence, and the letter written to Stalin confirmed this. The second reaction was resistance to the authorities but its visualized Calvin’s principle i.e. “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5: 29); thus, they made passive resistance i.e. they continued organising religious communities although the authorities forbade it. In the center of resistance there were the pastors, who were – just like Bocskai – often compared to Moses in the Reformed “folklore”<sup>19</sup> and this is what caused his doom.

However, this is just one of the cultural roots of this narrative. The other root is the community, which is experienced through suffering. This is the motif that I have mentioned earlier, and the wording, which I quote here (in very rough translation), can be traced back to the Hungarian national anthem. On 23 November 2014 a ceremony was held in Beregszász in commemoration of the victims of “malenky robot”. On the invitation card the following verse can be read:

“Sad Hungarians pray  
Heavenly Father to you.  
Turn your benevolent holy face  
To us, Hungarians,  
Crying we ask You and pray to You,

<sup>17</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 916.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> István Bitskey, “Bocskai alakja a magyar irodalomban,” *Kisebbségkutatás* 13, no. 3 (2004), 358–61.



To thee our souls fly.  
Such a sea of pain  
We do not deserve."<sup>20</sup>

The two situations represented by the two narratives are somewhat different. The first narrative is about pastors. This is a matter of the Protestants and it concerns a narrower circle only. The second narrative is the case of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community, and it concerns a broader circle. However, both of them demonstrate that Reformed people recall

the fate of their own communities, and with these different acts of remembrance they are trying to include various elements of Protestant identity in a group of problem-solving competencies, which can be used in everyday life. In the first case, the sense of vocation, self-denial and self-sacrificing work in the community for the glory of God is important. In the second case the resistance to tyranny can be interpreted as a consequence of the fifth "sola": "Soli Deo Gloria", i.e. all glory be to God alone, which means that no one should be so honoured as God.



[Picture 6.]

3. But the question is what community members think about these identity elements?

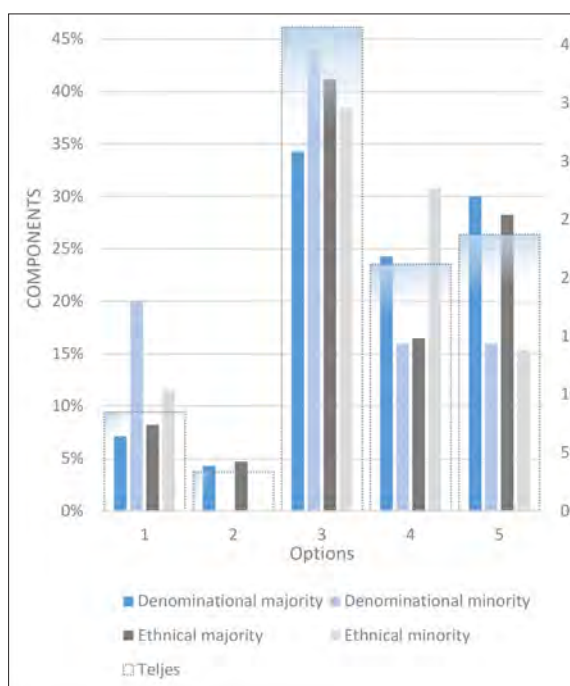
In the autumn of 2013 I conducted a questionnaire-based research in the four Transcarpathian Hungarian Reformed high schools in order to find out the answer. [Picture 6. Map of Transcarpathia.] The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part comprised the usual issues of social background and religiosity. In the second part there were issues with which I tried to tinge the image related to the respondents' religiosity and denominational identity. The respondents had to indicate their agreement or disagreement with 95 statements on a five-point scale where number "1" meant total refusal and number "5" full agreement with the statement. Consequently, number "3" was used to express indetermination. Now I'm going to present the results concerning three statements.

### 3.1. Vocation and community.

3.1.1. [88] Service to God. We fulfil it in our individual career, therefore, the starting point and basis of every good action lies in our vocation from God. Those who do not adapt to this will never walk the right path in their life. We shall not stand before God's judgment seat, if we don't do what our profession requires.

<sup>20</sup> Tóth László, "A sztálini terror áldozataira emlékezünk," accessed 14 April, 2015, <http://refua.tirek.hu/lap/nagybereg/hir/mutat/50542/>.

	Denominational		Ethnical		Total
	majority	minority	majority	minority	
1	7,1%	20,0%	8,2%	11,54%	8,5%
2	4,3%	0,0%	4,7%	0,00%	3,4%
3	34,3%	44,0%	41,2%	38,46%	41,5%
4	24,3%	16,0%	16,5%	30,77%	21,2%
5	30,0%	16,0%	28,2%	15,38%	23,7%
1+2	11,4%	20,0%	12,9%	11,54%	11,9%
3	34,3%	44,0%	41,2%	38,46%	41,5%
4+5	54,3%	32,0%	44,7%	46,15%	44,9%
peakedness:	-2,80185	2,189541	-0,98599	-1,41797	-0,00025



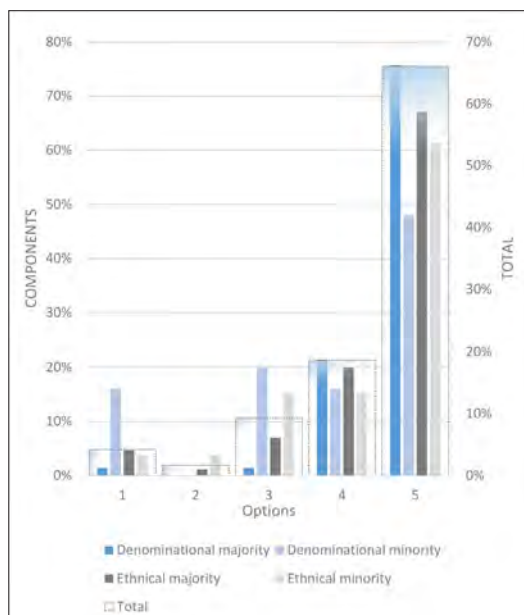
[Table 1. &amp; Diagram 1.]

The statement formulates the individual calling and the related responsibility. As shown in the table, the respondents were strongly divided. When we analyze the responses separately, we find that most of them are uncertain. The answers given to option 3 make up 41.5% of all answers. When we combine the responses at the two poles, the result is slightly amended. At the negative pole (option 1 and 2) the

proportion of those who tend to disagree is 11.9%. At the positive pole (option 4 and 5) the proportion of those who tend to agree is 44.9%. The difference between those who agree and those who are uncertain is very small.

3.1.2. [57] The Reformed believer is responsible for the community in which he was born because God had placed him there. It is not by accident; it is only a God-given mission he needs to fulfill faithfully.

	Denominational		Ethnical		Total
	majority	minority	majority	minority	
1	1,4%	16,0%	4,7%	3,85%	4,2%
2	0,0%	0,0%	1,2%	3,85%	1,7%
3	1,4%	20,0%	7,1%	15,38%	9,3%
4	21,4%	16,0%	20,0%	15,38%	18,6%
5	75,7%	48,0%	67,1%	61,54%	66,1%
1+2	1,4%	16,0%	5,9%	7,69%	5,9%
3	1,4%	20,0%	7,1%	15,38%	9,3%
4+5	97,1%	64,0%	87,1%	76,92%	84,7%
peakedness:	3,397693	2,484765	3,589815	3,877772	3,791018

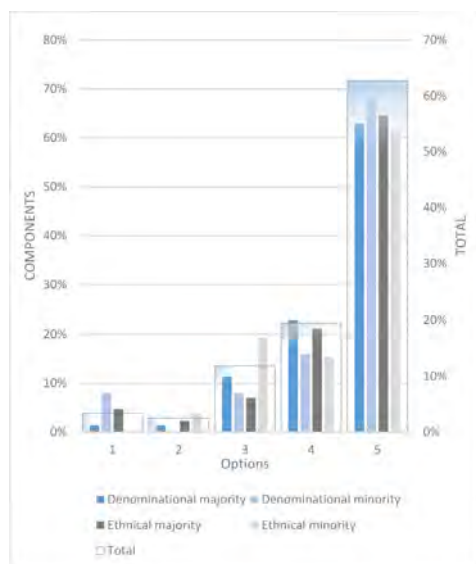


[Table 2. & Diagram 2.]

This statement formulates the community aspect of the previous one. In this case, what we witnessed is an “overwhelming” consensus. The overall percentage of those who prefer to agree (option 4 and 5) is 84.7%. I think this is a very important result because the content of the two statements are linked. This is what we see in the case of the deported pastors. They had a personal calling and it determined that they took responsibility for their community. For young people who have replied to the questionnaire, this relationship between vocation and community is uncertain.

3.1.3. [27] The aim of the Reformed believer’s life is a self-sacrificing service of God’s glory.

	Denominational		Ethnical		Total
	majority	minority	majority	minority	
1	1,4%	8,0%	4,7%	0,0%	3,4%
2	1,4%	0,0%	2,4%	3,8%	2,5%
3	11,4%	8,0%	7,1%	19,2%	11,9%
4	22,9%	16,0%	21,2%	15,4%	19,5%
5	62,9%	68,0%	64,7%	61,5%	62,7%
1+2	2,9%	8,0%	7,1%	3,8%	5,9%
3	11,4%	8,0%	7,1%	19,2%	11,9%
4+5	85,7%	84,0%	85,9%	76,9%	82,2%
peakedness:	2,634207	4,179719	3,344044	3,054471	3,465375



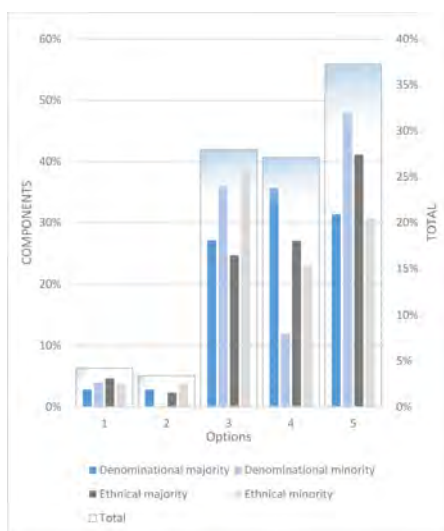
[Table 3. & Diagram 3.]

The answers to this question demonstrate that the reason for uncertainty is not the lack of religious commitment. A total of 82.2% of the respondents agree with the fundamental doctrine that the aim of the Reformed believer's life is a self-sacrificing service of God's glory. The causes are therefore likely to be found elsewhere. (One of the reasons might be the lack of vocation, which can be considered as an age-related characteristic as well.)

### 3.2. Resistance to tyranny

3.2.1. [46] For Protestant people God is the holder of any major power, and therefore they reject all forms of despotism, and working on democracy is a primary responsibility for themw.

	Denominational		Ethnical		Total
	majority	minority	majority	minority	
1	2,9%	4,0%	4,7%	3,85%	4,2%
2	2,9%	0,0%	2,4%	3,85%	3,4%
3	27,1%	36,0%	24,7%	38,46%	28,0%
4	35,7%	12,0%	27,1%	23,08%	27,1%
5	31,4%	48,0%	41,2%	30,77%	37,3%
1+2	5,7%	4,0%	7,1%	7,69%	7,6%
3	27,1%	36,0%	24,7%	38,46%	28,0%
4+5	67,1%	60,0%	68,2%	53,85%	64,4%
peakedness:	-3,09411	-2,12562	-1,7354	-2,55405	-2,67884

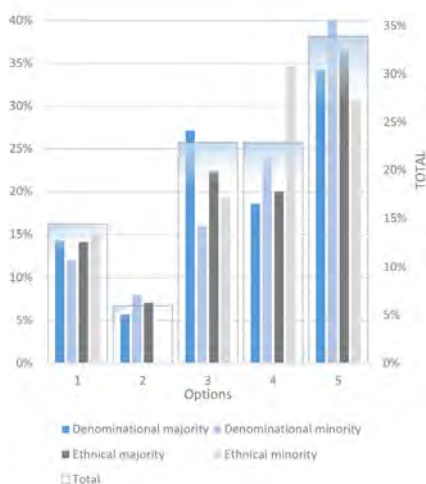


[Table 4. & Diagram 4.]

This abovementioned statement formulates one of the basics of Reformed political thought. The adoption of the statement is important because this is one of those ideas through which deportation can be interpreted as martyrdom. Apparently, the results do not show a clear consensus. Summarizing the results of the fourth and fifth options, 64.4% of the respondents tend to agree. However, if we analyze the responses to the third and the fourth options separately we get almost the same results. Although these are lower than the joint results with option 5, they clearly indicate the distribution of the answers.

3.2.2. [15] An important task of Reformed people is to seek God's will which is to be asserted in public affairs and politics. So they should not retract from public life or politics.

	Denominational		Ethnical		Total
	majority	minority	majority	minority	
1	14,3%	12,0%	14,1%	15,4%	14,4%
2	5,7%	8,0%	7,1%	0,0%	5,9%
3	27,1%	16,0%	22,4%	19,2%	22,9%
4	18,6%	24,0%	20,0%	34,6%	22,9%
5	34,3%	40,0%	36,5%	30,8%	33,9%
1+2	20,0%	20,0%	21,2%	15,4%	20,3%
3	27,1%	16,0%	22,4%	19,2%	22,9%
4+5	52,9%	64,0%	56,5%	65,4%	56,8%
peakedness:	-0,86866	1,05	0,970898	-0,22506	0,054146



[Table 5. & Diagram 5.]

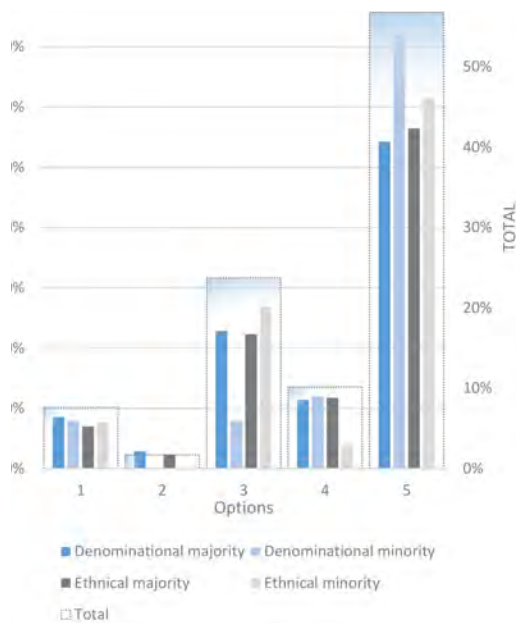


In the case of statement 15, the situation is almost the same. The difference is that the proportion of disagreeing is definitely higher here.

3.2.3. [05] I think the Church should not take part in the struggles of political parties.

Finally, the fifth statement shows a clear attitude. The vast majority of respondents believe that the proper space for advocacy activities of the church is not politics.

	Denominational		Ethnical		Total
	majority	minority	majority	minority	
1	8,6%	8,0%	7,1%	7,7%	7,6%
2	2,9%	0,0%	2,4%	0,0%	1,7%
3	22,9%	8,0%	22,4%	26,9%	23,7%
4	11,4%	12,0%	11,8%	3,8%	10,2%
5	54,3%	72,0%	56,5%	61,5%	56,8%
1+2	11,4%	8,0%	9,4%	7,7%	9,3%
3	22,9%	8,0%	22,4%	26,9%	23,7%
4+5	65,7%	84,0%	68,2%	65,4%	66,9%
peakedness:	2,542935	4,587449	2,718036	1,66294	2,3733

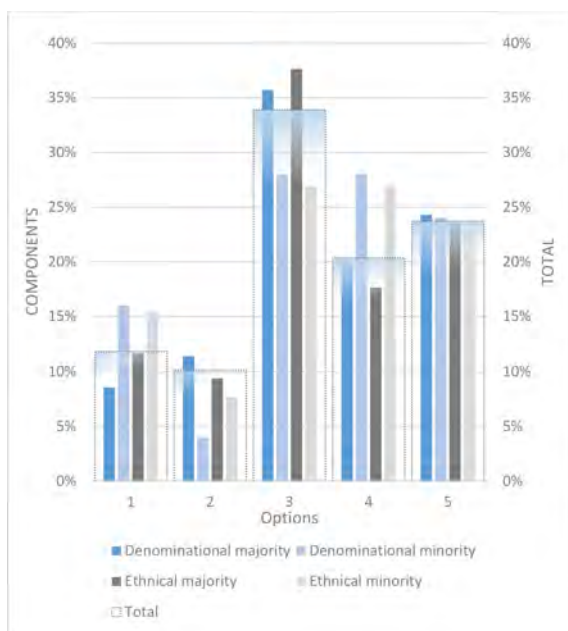


[Table 6. & Diagram 6.]

## Conclusion

The historical significance of the Reformed Church was that it worked as a nation retaining power. This is one of the most important identity narratives in the Hungarian Reformed Church. It helps to summarize the history of the church and helps to legitimize its activities in public life. This statement – statement Nr. 4 – is also included in the questionnaire.

	Denominational		Ethnical		Total
	majority	minority	majority	minority	
1	8,6%	16,0%	11,8%	15,38%	11,9%
2	11,4%	4,0%	9,4%	7,69%	10,2%
3	35,7%	28,0%	37,6%	26,92%	33,9%
4	20,0%	28,0%	17,6%	26,92%	20,3%
5	24,3%	24,0%	23,5%	23,08%	23,7%
1+2	20,0%	20,0%	21,2%	23,08%	22,0%
3	35,7%	28,0%	37,6%	26,92%	33,9%
4+5	44,3%	52,0%	41,2%	50,00%	44,1%
peakedness:	-0,39546	0,579882	0,81439	-0,73789	-0,51676



[Table 7. & Diagram 7.]



The answers given to it – to put it in a nutshell – indicate uncertainty. The Transcarpathian Reformed youth is unsure about whether they should consider the nation retaining power of the Reformed Church in terms of politics. In order to explore the cause of uncertainty we need to continue further research. The reasons may comprise age-specific features as well. It is certain that community is important to them, but they have not found their place in it yet. This is important because we know that denominationality and religiosity are not the same categories. Denominationality is cultural consciousness which refers to religiosity.

Our working hypothesis for further research – based on the data having been listed so far – could be that this reference has lost its basis for young people in Transcarpathia. It is very important to stress that this process seems to be even stronger where the respondents live in a denominational or ethnic minority as we know that the minority status is more and more decisive in the life of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community. We also know that the changes in religiousness of a society are influenced by age groups or cohorts. Thus, the difference in the use of the past as preparedness, among young people and young pastors may be a component of the conflict that will affect the fate of the community in the future.