The centre of Reformed home mission in Budapest
A short history of the German-speaking Affiliation (1859–1912)
Kovács, Ábrahám

The history of the German-speaking Affiliated Church in Budapest is strongly interwoven with the origin, development and spread of home mission organisations and revivalism within the Reformed Church of Hungary. This small congregation was established by the Church of Scotland in 1859 which had already been in the country since 1841. The peculiarity of its history lies in the fact that the members of this church were not ethnic Hungarians who profoundly impacted the overwhelmingly Hungarian speaking Reformed churches across the entire nation. The establishment of the Affiliated Church owes a lot to the Evangelical-Pietist alliance initiated by a variety of people whose conviction was to pray and work for the spread of kingdom of God encountering unbelief and liberal theology. The first era of the congregation was between 1859 and 1863. It introduces and explains how and why the congregation came into being as a result of a clash between evangicals and liberals. Second, the study shows that the first associations of home mission were formed during the period of 1864–1869. Then, the members of the congregation decided to build a church during the next 8 years, a remarkable story in itself. Upon completing this ambitious project the congregation was able to focus on its very remarkable period when it saw the establishment of missionary organisations that became the model for national movements like YMCA and Sunday school movement. Shortly after the fruitful and successful period conflicts began to undermine the missionary enterprises of the church due to several reasons within the church. This internal clash that is related very much to issues of change of leadership, Magyarisation and theological outlook the home missionary organisations were disconnected from the Affiliated Church which gave birth to them several decades ago. During the era of 1900 and 1914 the former revivlist and their successor needed to rethink the concept and ways of doing home mission work, now outside the sphere of their mother congregation. The story of this small congregation is a great witness to the successful transplantation of an evangelical-Pietist endeavour that bore many fruits for the Reformed Church of Hungary.
'Vacantia sedis' of Kalocsa in 1961
Sági, György

In the study the author examined the events from the death of Archbishop József Grősz, through the election of Imre Várkonyi Titular Provost of Géder for Vicar Capitular, to the unsuccessful appointment of Senior Master Canon and Auxiliary Bishop János Bárd as the Apostolic Administrator of Kalocsa and Bács.

Archbishop Grősz died on the 3rd October 1961 after a mass that he celebrated in the Archbishop’s Palace of Kalocsa. The author wrote about these events and the organization of the funeral. He dealt in his study also with the will of Grősz that the aulists didn’t find when he died (He only found the testament’s draft in Kalocsa).

Besides, he wrote about the tragicomic election of Várkonyi for Vicar Capitular on the 4th October 1961. He unfolded in detail the process of election with the help of the Chapter Protocol and the reports of Ministerial Commissioner Gyula Szakács, who was the Church Affairs general rapporteur of Bács-Kiskun County. Through them the reader can see the strong pressure of state power on the election and the Church leadership of Kalocsa. The canons couldn’t do what they wanted. Várkonyi was regarded to be the perfect leader in the Archdiocese of Kalocsa and Bács by the State Office for Church Affairs (ÁEH) because he was a „peace priest” who served the demands of the state. From the study it can be get also a good picture about his functioning in the archdiocese and about the relationship between he and the priests and the men of state.

Pope John XXIII on the 20th November 1961 appointed Auxiliary Bishop Bárd as the Apostolic Administrator of Kalocsa and Bács, as the interim successor of Grősz. This was unexpected for Várkonyi but it wasn’t a surprise. Endre Hamvas Bishop of Csanád – who became president of the Hungarian Catholic Bench of Bishops after József Grősz’s funeral – wanted the state to accept the person of Bárd, but it didn’t succeed for him. That was neither a surprise for János Bárd. The anticlerical state with Imre Várkonyi’s help removed him from Kalocsa to Kerekegyháza near Kecskemét and Bárd wasn’t allowed to practice his bishopric tasks. So Várkonyi remained Vicar Capitular of Kalocsa until 1964, when Bishop Hamvas became Archbishop of Kalocsa and Bács. Pope Paul VI transferred him from the Diocese of Csanád to the head of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa and Bács as a result of Agostino Casaroli’s negotiations with the state.

In addition to this, in the study the author quoted Mr György Kujáni and Reverend Ferenc Tölgyes as witnesses. The former is the nephew of Grand Provost Ferenc Kujáni, whom was intended to elect vicar capitular by the chapter after the death of Grősz, but it was not allowed by the state. The latter, Father Tölgyes was one of those priests who were last ordained by Archbishop Grősz in 1960. He was made archibishopplic counsellor by Archbishop József Ijjas in 1984 and now he’s a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa and Kecskemét. In the appendix of the study, the reader can find also some publication of sources.
From Bishop László Ravasz of Dunamellék
official correspondence
Sas, Péter

László Ravasz (1882–1975) theologian, a religious writer, one of the dominant personalities of the 20th century Hungarian Protestantism. quickly rose through the ranks of the Church’s talent. In 1907, he became a professor at the Cluj-Napoca Reformed Theological Academy, in 1918 the Transylvanian Reformed Church District chief clerk. In 1921, the Bishop of the Dunamellék Reformed Diocese, for four decades in Budapest Kálvin Square Church pastor. Between 1926–44 a member of the Upper House. In 1948, he resigned as bishop of rank and retired from public life. Thanks to the revolution in 1956, he dedicated a few months for his old his work.

His vocation in the service of God may be related to the choice of a finding of this general message “the Transylvanian Hungarian Reformed man’s life together has intertwined the church’s life closely”. In 1921 going to Budapest he had to separate from his homeland. The extended concept of homeland for both geographical territory has took him through hard times.

That’s no secret, we can not mention the name László Ravasz without critical voices, as he voted for the first and second Jewish laws. As a man of faith he protested against the third Jewish law. Part of it was that on 20 October 1942, the Hungarian Reformed Church Universal Convent founded the Good Shepherd Jewish Rescue Mission Commission. As of today he remained subject of polemics.

The letters published from Transylvanian intellectuals, politicians (Lajos György, Farkas Gyalui, József Nyrő, Bernády György, György Buday, Count Bálint Bethlen, György Kristóf, Elemér Gyárfás, Count Pál Teleki, Singer and Wolfner Literary Institutes) were written to the bishop of the Dunamellék Reformed Diocese. For the memorial meeting for the 125th anniversary of his birth, pastor Zsolt Kozma, professor of theology, both Hungarians and Transylvanians, he has spoken about „our László Ravasz”. Knowing from correspondence it can not be concealed that his heart was beating stronger towards his Cradle Place.