

# Church and State

Theological Reflections in the Hungarian  
Reformed Churches and in the Korean  
Protestant Churches

# Studies in Hungarian and Korean Protestant Theology

Series Editors

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Edited by

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# The Influence of the Changes of 1989/90 on the Reformed Church of Hungary and Its Relationship to the State

On the theme of the state and church relationship the political changes of 1989/90 opened new possibilities for the Hungarian Reformed Church in many ways which also contoured the challenges as well. That is well pictured in the great number of publications (from the first decades after the changes) which gave reflection on a wide scale of possible levels regarding the new situation of the church. Real debate did not often happen for various reasons, but in some cases, for example in conference materials and articles, an attempt was made for public discussions, whereby the themes of “diagnosis and therapy”<sup>1</sup> clearly provided the framework. The lack of facts, as well as the often false diagnosis of the current situation in relation to past, present and future – meanwhile coloured with emotions, temper and unrealistic or not rightly placed expectations – all of these real difficulties are clearly detectable in the background of the theological elaborations, which are also now recognized in the evaluations of the evaluation.<sup>2</sup>

Next, as we continue to describe the ecclesiological situation of the Reformed Church of Hungary, we shall: 1) introduce the changes and challenges of the relationship of the church and state from the viewpoint of the state; 2) describe the search of the Reformed Church of Hungary for its identity and its role in the socio-political and cultural transitions; 3) sum up evaluations related to the

image of the church and our theme, and how the Reformed Church of Hungary made attempts to face the first decade after the changes – especially between 1990-2000.

### State Politics Towards the Church after the Changes of 1989/90<sup>3</sup>

In 1989, the church was freed from the pressure and control of the state which had almost completely paralyzed its work. A new time had started. István Bogardi Szabó differentiates three models which well characterise the relationship of the state and the church since the changes of 1989. These models reflect the different governments' politics towards the church. The first model takes place between 1990 and 1994, and its main feature was the rehabilitation of the church. The second model made an attempt to restrict the church between 1994 and 1998. The third model can be viewed as a cooperation between the state and the church from 1998-2002.<sup>4</sup> We can add that from the year 2002 until 2007 the model of restriction has been playing a determinative part in the state's politics regarding the church.

#### Rehabilitation Model between 1994 and 1998

The political climate around the changes of 1989/90, we can acknowledge that the winner of the first free election of the Hungarian Republic was the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF). The MDF which stood on a conservative value system held many similarities with the Christian values, therefore the acknowledgement of the historical churches' role in society was obvious. The MDF also made a notable effort to build a new relationship and cooperation with the churches. Their willingness was mainly restricted by their financial possibilities, and in some cases the theoretical basis of jurisdiction was not well prepared or well reasoned.

The Hungarian Parliament prepared a compensation for the church for their lost in the previous Communist System on a juridical level. The first step was the framing of the Act of freedom of conscience and the law of religious freedom. The preamble to the Act of 1990 on the churches, makes a special recognition of the importance of the church's role in maintaining the values in societies, building communities, their role in culture and education, and their important activity in public health care and maintaining the national self-consciousness.<sup>5</sup>



The agreements in 1990 guaranteed in the Constitution on the highest juridical level that the forty years were truly over. In Hungary the state's connection with the churches relates to the constitutional law as determined by Section 60 of the same Act, paragraph 3 in the Constitution and its interpretation of the Constitutional Court. According to this the state and the churches function separately from each other. As understood by the Constitutional Court, the relation of these two entities should be formed by the neutrality of the state. The following facts emerge from the principle of disestablishment in accordance with decision No.4/1993 (II.12.) of the Constitutional Court: a) the state may not join itself to a religious alliance, nor to any one of the churches separately; b) the state does not subscribe to any of the churches' teaching; c) the state does not interfere in the churches' internal affairs; d) it especially should not take sides in issues relating to faith; e) the state must treat the churches as being equal.<sup>6</sup>

The invalidation of the Agreement of 1948 between the state and church was the next step, which was followed by the commitment to the recompense for the losses of the church.<sup>7</sup> The recompense happened basically on two levels: 1) on the level of material goods which meant the rebuilding of church institutions and the theoretical working out of public financing; 2) the reestablishment and support on the level of the public duties of the church.

The attempt for the process of recompense happened in the context of the foundation of new religious communities, which was assured by the Constitution and created a paradox situation for the so called historical churches (denominations) in Hungary. By declaring neutrality from the time of 1990 the Constitution creates a crux for the rehabilitation of the so called historical church. The Constitution prescribes that every religious community should have the equal benefit from the ideological neutrality of the state, nevertheless the historical churches' expectation in the rehabilitation process was that they would yet receive special advantages. A tension between the newly founded religious communities and the traditional churches was unavoidable. The new formations of religious communities felt discriminated. The tension was also kindled by the political propaganda.

The purpose with the introduction of the 'American' model, whereby the church and state are completely separated, served the tendencies of laicism. In that model the state guaranties to not interfere with the churches, therefore preferring the American model – and this would mean neglecting

the recognition of the heritage of the historical churches. The application of the Constitution to church related matters could (or some may say should) result in an understanding wherein the historical churches are to be seen as no different from the plethora of newly founded churches. The guarantees which were assured by the laws of recompense and recognition of churches' social role (preamble Act, 1990), became very ambivalent in the interpretation and application, which depends on the actual political climate. The nature of this paradox of interpretation is evident from the next two models, the models of restriction and cooperation.

#### The Restriction Model which Played a Role between 1994 and 1998

At the election of 1994, the winner was the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) in coalition with the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ). It became clear that the Hungarian population gave a priority to materialistic values in their vote. The socio-economic difficulties which occurred with the changes of the system, the effect of the Communist brainwashing and the nostalgic feelings that "everything was better in the old system," contributed notably to the political and ideological socialist restoration. The result of the election also testified that the church had lost its basis in the Hungarian society. The new historical circumstance did not allow open persecution of the churches but the MSZP could vindicate and develop its time-tested methods learned from Communism, but now applied in the new setting - and that was enough to slow down the process of rehabilitation. The secret of their success lays in the fact that they maintained a whole net of economic interest independent from the law. The national culture and education were led by a left-wing liberal intelligentsia. The conjunction of these two processes continuously weakened the condition of the historical churches' role in society. In the Hungarian society the majority became economic victims of the transition, and the result of this was that people became more exposed and defenseless, and therefore the political propaganda often could easily reach its goals.

#### The Model of Cooperation between 1998 and 2002

The political climate radically changed after the election of the Young Democrats' Alliance (FIDESZ). The winning by the right wing was simply the result of the fact

that the Socialists could hardly fulfill any of their promises listed in their programs. Materialistic values played a major role in the election again.

With the winning of FIDESZ, Hungary was governed by a new political generation, who were freed from the troublesome earlier political inheritance. Their new understanding of the nation, church and state pushed the party to represent civil-national and conservative views. The recognition of the need for refreshed political insights and the readiness for change made FIDESZ a relevant political entity.

After 1998, the church found itself in a new situation. The new government's prime minister was Viktor Orbán, an active member of the Reformed Church who held his religious belief to be of importance. FIDESZ announced a completely different value system which circled around ethical and axiological basic notions such as honour, good and evil, truth and falsity, the protection of family life, patriotism and the cleansing of public life of corruption and propaganda, and so forth. FIDESZ not only recognized and acknowledged the importance of the historical heritage of the Reformed Church of Hungary but also urged the importance of the future mission of the churches in the life of the Hungarian nation. Working out the model of cooperation was a tangible reality, which was realized in a number of arrangements. The process of rehabilitation was accelerated and a new system of financial order was introduced which extended care to the role of church in public life. The support of the importance for the church to be present in culture and public welfare clearly meant a continuance and development of the rehabilitation model. It became clear that neither the model based on a complete separation of the state and church, nor the model of the restriction of the church, are suitable in the Hungarian context.

Behind the three models and most of their possible variants there are two major intellectual tendencies which predominate. One is based on a utopian fiction in which the church, the sovereignty of the state, and the individual are each other's opponents. In this tendency the inclination is more dominant in the direction of a complete separation and restriction. The other tendency acknowledges the reality of public life as an organic process, while also seeing the historical necessity of the separation of state and church to a certain extent, but the model of cooperation becomes determinative.<sup>8</sup>

## The Comprehension of the Reformed Church of Hungary about the State's Relationship with the Church after 1989/90.<sup>9</sup>

A short analysis on this theme in light of some of the evident actions of the Reformed Church of Hungary gains importance for the following reasons: 1) it can indicate if any changes have occurred in the understanding of the Reformed Church of Hungary about the state in comparison to its earlier view during Socialism; 2) it will also show how the notion of the state is nuanced or distinguished in the Reformed Church's understanding, in relation to the other elements of society; 3) we shall also see the effects on the understanding of the own immediate and long term duties and tasks of the Reformed Church of Hungary.

The Reformed Church of Hungary also had to face (like other churches as well) the run down infrastructure and its atrophied institutional structures which seemed hopeless, especially considering the relationship with its members. The organizations and associations of the common church membership did not function well any more. In many cases, their former motivators got old or died.

A notable amount of the energy of the church was engaged with the restarting of its institutions and obtaining financial resources. One of the high priorities of the restart was the recognition of the importance of the Reformed Church's teaching task in the unity of church and school. In the midst of the compensations by the state to the church, the priority was the reclaiming and reestablishment of the lost 'nationalized' church schools, on all levels of education. The mission task concentrated on the young generation, with the hope that in the context of the aged and empty local churches the church would be renewed by the younger generation, who were now receiving their education in the reopened church schools. In the year two thousand, the Reformed Church of Hungary maintained the same number of schools it had between the two World Wars. The success in quantities is not in direct proportion with the qualities but notable results had been achieved in church education. The substitution of experts is a longer process than a decade. With the reestablishment of the relatively great number of church schools, the church did not reflect clearly on its ideas about how it will settle accounts with rapidly decreasing demography, and how it will try to keep other areas of mission in proper balance, whose importance became obvious after a decade. The attempts related to the church's understanding of

its duties in correspondence to the society or the state was clear. The church mainly focused on the integration of the newly forming civil society.

After the changes of the political system, the first government started a partnership with the church, therefore the church almost without any conditions endeavoured to fulfil its field of activity in that connection, which basically bore the sign of a folk-church or state-church setting. The (re)building of the structure of the state and the church did not differ from each other as we have noted earlier. One of the principles was to continue where it had been stopped before the time of Communism, in order to find the way toward legitimacy and continuity.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the relationship of the church and the state was pictured according to the motives of the old 'fashion'. The observation by the sociology of religion that the church institution takes over the characteristic features of the political and social structures of its context became very evident in the Hungarian situation. The edge between the two sides, the integration of the church into society and the religious sphere engaging in politics, was very vague.<sup>11</sup> One of the most characteristic phenomena in the Reformed Church of Hungary after the changes circled around the following question: Should local pastors take part in party politics? It is also important to pay attention to the fact that the issue of repentance and the confession of sin shrank into insignificance beside the issue of the local pastors' participation in party politics. A great number of articles gave evidence to that in the official weekly newspaper of the Reformed Church in 1990.

The Hungarian Reformed Synod arrived at a decision on the issue and advised all pastors to not address any party political questions from the pulpit, nor to hold any positions in political parties, nor to be a candidate in electoral campaigns for membership in the Parliament. The Synod's advice was based on the plea that the vocation for being a pastor requires openness to all people, regardless of the political identity of the members of the congregation. Any office in party politics interferes with the pastoral work and can lead to a division in the congregation. Moreover, the Synod declared that if the local pastor accepts a mandate or political function, he or she is obliged to resign from his/her pastor's office for the time being.<sup>12</sup>

The aftermath history of the question proves the complexity of the problem. Basically two circles were formed around the pro- and contra arguments. On the one hand, the pastor who is active in daily politics falls into a trap easily

whereby the aim of (pastoral) completeness (pléroma) can be harmed by service of a party (pars).<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the danger of ignoring daily life activities such as politics would restrict the church's mission to become a salt and leaven in society.<sup>14</sup> Rózsai's suggestion gives the heart of the problem when he calls attention to the following distinctions. The pastor has to be distinguished from other church members, as does church life from the profane political life. Rózsai added a special remark that both areas can be practiced as the worship of God.<sup>15</sup> The Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary changed its earlier position and all the questions related to the issue were forwarded to the decision of the local congregation's presbytery, with a special note saying if there is a contested point in the local congregation, a higher church authority will settle the question.<sup>16</sup>

Isépy's evaluation on the practice of pastors taking upon themselves a role in political parties describes the tendencies as early as the spring of 1990:

Pastors who entered the political arena can draw a lesson from the election: They were measured and most of them "found lacking..." They were lacking suitability, eloquence, a competitive program, but most of all in finding their own identity... they wanted to uphold their lambkins unauthorized by the Lamb of God.<sup>17</sup>

The church's participation in the life of party politics did not end with these incidents. By the end of the nineties, the theme of church pulpit and politics became more influenced by party politics. The church slowly became a factor in politics while it was not prepared at all for the new possibilities and challenges, and therefore the representatives of the church were characterized by one of the extremities of party politics or being apolitical. A shifting of accent was present which threatened the theology of the church with ideologization again and became a real danger during the next decade.

During 1990-94 the Reformed Church backed the government of MDF which acknowledged the historical churches' role. The church did not begin any dialogue with the other political parties which thought differently. They were mainly seen as a monolithic enemy. Shortly after the changes it became obvious that after an impetuous start in the outward life of the church, more difficulties occurred as a result of the slowing down of the transition and development. The situation revealed that the church could not find its proper position in

regard to politics. The pastors should have pointed out the good moral values of the MDF; rather, the pastors were more interested in realizing their personal political ambition and finding ways to get individual financial sources to the different projects in the church. Kádár's observation is realistic when he sees the situation of the church as ancillary and as a beggar in relation to the state after the changes. The question of the financial survival of the church overshadowed the mission of the church. The church behaved indifferently toward the civil society which was coming to life again. A critical distance from party politics<sup>18</sup> and a relevant presence for public life did not characterize the church.<sup>19</sup>

The mistakes were vivid after 1994 when the constituencies of Hungary gave authority to the MSZP. The society made its political decision on materialistic values. The only motive that formed the majority's opinion was determined by which party would guarantee a higher living standard. The majority of the electorates believed that the changes of the system was complete, therefore most of them did not make any considerations on an ideological basis. The ideological contrast of morally good or bad, guilty or not guilty, and Christian or atheist hardly played any role. The promises of party programs in relation to materialistic welfare were determinative. It was evident that the church missed its target when it could not fulfil its special duty, the prophetic faithfulness<sup>20</sup> according to the special call which is not from this world.

A prophetic contradiction characterized the church in the time of 1994-1998. According to the application of the restriction model, the MSZP made notable steps to narrow down the condition of churches' social services. These four years were a time when the church spoke out against the politics of MSZP in the matters of: economic stabilization, social and family programs, the issue of the unemployed and homeless people, social-provisions<sup>21</sup>, the situation of the demographic decline and surgical abortion,<sup>22</sup> the discriminative financing program for public education in relation to church-schools, as also against the standstill of compensation for the churches,<sup>23</sup> and the disrespectful use of the name of God in the different media.<sup>24</sup> The restrictions by the government were not comparable to any open persecutions of the church. The restrictions toward the church and its programmes were a consequence of the MSZP's realisation that since they had won the election in 1994, the churches' voice and social role did not count for much. Thus, the MSZP enforced its own individual interest and purposes, which became more evident in the unscrupulous capitalism and privatization.

Fazakas's comments have significance, namely that during 1994-98 the Reformed Church of Hungary arrived at the point where it could have realized that the conditions to fulfil its social role and duties cannot only depend on outward circumstances.<sup>25</sup> The Reformed Church of Hungary had already faced a number of critical points of such realization in its long and short term history. In 1936, Karl Barth in his inaugural lecture in Sárospatak made the following statement which calls attention to the same problem:

The different options which are given and could be given by the state have to be put on a scale by the church. The possibility of the church's structure as a folk-church, free-church or confessing-church are all not more than only an option which comes and can come only outwardly.<sup>26</sup>

László Ravasz's statement referred to another similar moment in 1945: "The question is: are we going to be a free-church in a free-state, or a second class state-church, or are we becoming a confessing-church in a hostile world? All this depends on what value the state ascribes to the church."<sup>27</sup>

The changes in the outward possibilities drove the church to raise a notable protest and confession during the time of 1994-1998. The behaviour and actions of the church can be evaluated as a mirroring of the power structures of that time. It became obvious that the historical churches were not alone in fulfilling a role in politics and society. A number of other tendencies, such as secularisation, (post)modernisation, technological revolution, and globalisation called attention to the fact that the strategy to continue the organisation of the church and all its activities as it was before Communism, was now impossible. The ambivalence of continuance can be clearly characterised by the fact that the church constitution attempted to be continued where it had stopped in 1948. During the constitutional activity that started relatively soon after the changes of 1989, the church was seeking its historical traditions. The Reformed Church of Hungary sought good examples in the constitutions from the past, however it insisted on keeping the strongly centred organisational pattern, which was established in the enactment of 1967. It did not consider that the world's, the church's and the church members' way of thinking had greatly changed. Thus its structure came into conflict with its stated principles.



Another feature of this time was the vital question of nationhood in connection to the concerns of the Gospel. For Hungarian Protestantism this question was always a special task because of the difficult historical contexts in the life of the Hungarian nation. The Protestant Churches were committed to the national independence since the sixteenth century as we introduced earlier. In the post-Communist countries, which had suffered under the yoke of the interests of greater powers using the flag of internationalism, the intensity of the national self-awareness was a natural reaction after the changes of the political system. That process is also detectable in case of Hungary where the Reformed Church tried to have a notable role. The historical wounds of the Hungarian nation, especially "Trianon," came to a front, although effective answers for the historical injustice was straggling behind. Rather, the different political parties according to their limited (mis)understanding of the historical and political reality gave their different suggestions about how to settle accounts with the traumas which were often involved in the political propaganda. These tendencies also took place in the Reformed Church. And this led part of the church to involve itself in the loyalty to the aims of far right wing political parties. In some cases the concept of nation was absolutised and was raised to a metaphysical status, often dangerously approaching nationalism as a pseudo-religion. The sources of these tendencies are also clear from the socio-economical and political difficulties which we have already introduced in this chapter. The danger for the churches lay in the temptation that the boundaries of the national self-awareness and Christian identity would merge into each other - for which we have seen a number of frightening examples in recent past (church) history.<sup>28</sup> The above quoted Ervin Vályi Nagy's paradigmatic view also emphasises and warns against these tendencies related to the church and the world.

The outcome of the election of 1998 was that the FIDESZ - MPP<sup>29</sup> could form a government and in its politics gave a favourable position to the so called historical churches. The contradiction or restriction model between the state and church was interrupted, and the model of cooperation started, whose causes and consequences we have mentioned above. Beside the number of actions by the government which truly saw the churches as partners, the churches were not only recognized by financial data in the state budget but the service to the society by the church also took on a determinative role. The

most evident outcome was an agreement between state and church<sup>30</sup> whereby the state and the church could set up the principles of a partnership. This was a new script in the line of the history of agreement between the state and the church. The church declared that the agreement was not carried out by any compulsion, rather its motivating source was the critical solidarity with the state and society.<sup>31</sup> A new dimension was opened in the debate about the church's role in politics, which seemed to be overruling the interest of party politics. The visible church in its own understanding could not avoid being a political entity, which was directly or indirectly connected to the life of the polis. The agreement evaded any possibilities of power struggle for any positions or professions of allegiance. According to the mentality of the agreement, the outward church politics could not be in contradiction with its inward norms which regulates its life and aims. Most evaluations - from the year two thousand<sup>32</sup> - rightly ask the following question, which is also obvious from the earlier description of the history of the Reformed Church of Hungary since the changes: Was the church ready for and capable of the task which was set up in the preamble of the agreement? Before answering the question we can also ask another question: what led to the success of the FIDESZ-MPP winning the election? Gyula Horn<sup>33</sup> bitterly noticed that the MSZP lost the election because the priests and pastors of the churches made a campaign against them on the pulpits and other places. Unfortunately, Horn's remark was not true; the church did not have such an influential role on its members. Horn's remark may ease the responsibility of the MSZP for the lost election, but in reality the population turned against the MSZP since hardly anything had been accomplished from the promises of their electoral campaign. The majority of the Hungarian population faced serious existential problems on all levels of their life. The trust of the Hungarian electorate's majority in the FIDESZ-MPP was not more than it had been four years earlier as trust in the MSZP: the hope for a better life according to the measurement of materialistic goods. The same mentality was present in most members of the church. That mentality also differed from the mentality of the principles of the agreement between the state and the church. In practice, the standard of the agreement was measured on the scale of finances: How much financial support will be given to the church? The principle of a free-church in a free state must be maintained for the church, step by step, to reach spiritual and financial self-maintenance. Révész's clearly phrased the main reason for

that in 1946: "Opportunistic aims cannot impede the church in the preaching of the Gospel, which is the lifelong task of the church, and the state as social or political organism cannot make itself dependent on the church to fulfil its duties which come from its nature."<sup>34</sup>

Provisionally, it is important to make the following remark: The complete separation of the state and the church is impossible; either we see the question from the standpoint of the state's jurisdiction over the church, or we see this from the standpoint of the church's autonomy. The individual, who practises his or her rights according to the freedom of religion, could be a member of any kind of religious organisation; however, the individual's right in this matter will be transformed to a collective right because he or she is the citizen of the state as well.<sup>35</sup>

While a clear perspective of the state and church relationship is not actualized, the church will be under the pressure to accept the outward possibilities and thus its commitment to its context may overrule or even contradict its own existential nature. Financial dependence (negative or positive) on the state and the mentality which gives priority to materialistic values can easily put the church into service of an ideology. One of the sources of the problem is that since the changes the Reformed Church of Hungary only concentrated on the definition of the state in the perspective of executive authority (actual governments).

## References

- 1 The expression is borrowed from *THÉMA* (Theologiai Élet Ma / Theological Life Today) which after the changes became in recent years a significant theological enterprise as an organized scholarly circle. The founders of the association were students of the widely respected professor, Ervin Vályi Nagy. The scholarly circles were ready to maintain ErvinVályi Nagy's spiritual-intellectual inheritance today, characterised as: 1) exemplary ways in theological inquiries, 2) the existence of the theologian centres on the Scriptures, 3) freedom in courage and 4) commitment to the service of the Church. See *THÉMA* periodical of the protestant scholars' circle, Budapest: Pro Cultura Christiana Foundation, 1991, No. 1, 15.
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- 3 FAZAKAS, S.: A Magyarországi Református Egyház politikai szerepvállalása az elmúlt tíz évben, in: *Református Egyház* no.3 (2002), 59-65.; Szabó, I.B.: Az Állam és egyház kapcsolatának lehetséges modeljei, in: *Protestáns Szemle* 10 (2001), 200-206.
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- 5 Magyar Közlöny, 1990/12.
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- 12 *Református Egyház* (11 January 1990).
- 13 GÁBOR I.: Politizáljon-e a gyülekezeti lelkész?, in: *Reformátusok Lapja*, (3 December 1989).
- 14 CSONTOS, J.: A gyülekezeti lelkész politizál, in: *Reformátusok Lapja* (6 January 1990), 6. See also Szabó, G.P.: Apolitikus Egyház, in: *Reformátusok Lapja* (21 January 1990), 7.
- 15 RÓZSAI, T.: Politizáljon-e a lelkipásztor?, in: *Reformátusok Lapja* (25 March 1990), 6.
- 16 *Reformátusok Lapja*, (25 February, 1990).
- 17 ISÉPY, G.: Politizáljon-e a lelkipásztor?, in: *Reformátusok Lapja* (25 March 1990).
- 18 The need for the principium of critical distance and solidarity appears in the recommendation

- of the Study Committee of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary. See Vitafórum, in: *Református Egyház* (February, 1996), 45-46.
- 19 KÁDÁR, P.: Egyházunk elmúlt évtizede a lelkipásztor szemével, in: *Théma* (2000/4).
  - 20 RÉVÉSZ, I.: Körlevéltervezet, in: Barcza, J. (ed.): *Vallomások (Teológiai önéletrajz és válogatott kiadatlan kéziratok 1944-1949)*, 1990, 91.
  - 21 No. 712/1995 decision of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary (Budapest, November, 1995) in *Református Egyház* (April 1996), 95.
  - 22 The declaration of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary (Budapest, 18 April, 1996), *Református Egyház* (June, 1996), 139-140. See also No. 715/1995 decision of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary.
  - 23 See the decision of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary about the agreement of Public Education. See also the letters of the church leaders to the prime minister, in *Református Egyház* (June, 1996), 140-141. Further, cf. No. 29/1998 decision of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary about the church financing issued by the Hungarian Parliament on December 2, 1997, *Református Egyház* (May, 1998), 114.
  - 24 No. 711/1995 decision of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary.
  - 25 FAZAKAS, S.: *A Magyarországi Református*, 59-65.
  - 26 BARTH, K.: Népegyház, szabad egyház, hitvalló egyház (Inaugural lecture on the occasion of receiving a *causa honoris* degree at the Sárospatak Theological Seminary in 1936.), in: *Igazság és Élet* (9/1937). Referred to by FAZEKAS, S.: *A Magyarországi Református*, 62.
  - 27 RAVASZ, L.: Új egyház felé? *Élet és Jövő*, (10 November, 1945), referred to by FAZAKAS, S.: *A Magyarországi Református*, 62.
  - 28 FAZAKAS, S.: *A Magyarországi Református*, 62.; and SZŰCS, F.: Etnikum, nemzet, keresztyénség, in: *THÉMA* (2000/2-3), 69.
  - 29 The FIDESZ went through a notable change regarding its earlier political understanding, which can also be seen in its new name: the Alliance of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civil Party (FIDESZ-MPP).
  - 30 An agreement was signed between the Government of the Hungarian Republic and the Reformed Church of Hungary on December 8, 1998, cf. *Magyar Közlöny* (1999/45).
  - 31 BÖLCSKEI, G.: Püspöki jelentés a Tiszántúli Református Egyházkerület Közgyűlésén, (December 1, 1998), in: *Református Tiszántúl* (1-5 December 1998).
  - 32 FAZAKAS, S.: *A Magyarországi Református*, 62.; Kádár, P.: *Egyházunk elmúlt évtizede*, 59.; Pecsuk, O.: *Református Egyházunk – az állam és a politika*, in: *Református Egyház* no. 2 (2002). ISÉPY, G.: *Tíz év az idő mérlegén, 1990-2000 A Magyarországi Református Egyház ezredvégi évtizede*, 52.
  - 33 Prime Minister of the Government of the Hungarian Republic between 1994 and 1998.
  - 34 RÉVÉSZ, I.: Szabad állam szabad egyház, in: *Debreceni Protestáns Lap* (15 April 1946), Fazakas S.: *A Magyarországi Református*, 64.
  - 35 SZATHMÁRY, B.: Veled vagy nélküled? Gondolatok az állam és egyházak szétválasztásának lehetőségéről Magyarországon (manuscript of the lecture held at the Congress of the Pax Romana Society), Budapest, (12 April, 2007).