

## *Church and Society in the Past Century (1918–2018)*

The Department of Reformed Theology and Music of Babeş–Bolyai University in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca in joint venture with the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary headquartered in Budapest and the Reformed Public and Cultural Centre Foundation [*Református Közéleti és Kulturális Központ Alapítvány*] held a conference featuring the title above in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca on 7–8 June 2018. The volume contains the written material of the joint conference in English.

The peace treaties concluded around Paris after World War I were seen rather as peace awards by historians and political scientists. This labelling suggests that the losers' only right was to accept them. It is also well known that the victors considered neither ethnic-linguistic boundaries nor previous political traditions or historical antecedents. The goals were fuelled by emotional and economic motivations: to completely humiliate the enemy defeated in the war, to prevent it from recovering as much as possible, and to keep economically important geographical areas under the Allies' control. The consequence of this was, among others, that the Kingdom of Romania, which had been established for less than half a century, had to face a radical internal change in several respects with the annexation of Transylvania in 1918. The post-World War II changes in the region as well as the years of the communist dictatorship resulted in tremendous ordeals and challenges in the lives and co-operation of different ethnic groups and denominations.

The historical, political events of the last hundred years have resulted in various changes in the relationship between church and state as well as in the majority–minority relations. The scientific debates covered the following topics: churches in the role of the victims, church history in resistance, the process of diasporization, the church and the totalitarian system, resistance of churches, school versus church – counter-actions – secularization, ecumenical approaches, national-religious identity in the process of change, and the possibility of processing the past.

The speakers presented the events, processes, and documents that meant the changes in the theological, social science, historical, legal, and ecclesiastical-sociological approaches, which have had a significant and decisive impact in the last hundred years. The conference was also characterized by denominational diversity: Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Reformed speakers, each seeing events from their own perspectives.

The speakers are renowned local and foreign experts in the relevant fields (literary history, history, theology, art history, social history).

The aim of the conference was to provide a clear picture of the “ecclesiastical and historical perspectives” of the different cultures and denominations living together in Transylvania, in order to get to know and understand each other’s historical and cultural identity, learn from each other, not only accept but respect each other’s views and pursue the process of mutual reconciliation across generations effectively, starting off from each other’s historical grievances and pain.

Speakers from Hungary also attended the conference. The organizers aimed to avoid any language sensitivity; so, with the help of simultaneous interpreters, everyone could deliver their presentations in their respective language.

The conference material is intended for a wide readership. We are grateful to the Committee of National Remembrance in Hungary [*Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága*] for having sponsored the translation of the conference materials into English and the leaders of Károli Gáspár University and the Cultural Centre Foundation for having supported the conference financially.

This dialogue and conference enjoyed the support of the historic Churches. We would like to express our gratitude for the continued patronage by the Right Reverend Béla Kató, Bishop of the Transylvanian Reformed Church District; His Eminence Andrei, Archbishop of Vadu, Feleac, Cluj and Metropolitan of Cluj, Maramures and Sălaj; His Eminence Crihălmeanu Florentin, Greek-Catholic Bishop of Cluj-Gherla; and the Right Reverend Ferenc Bálint-Benczédi, Bishop of the Hungarian Unitarian Church, all of whom have advocated for the creation of a common, peaceful future. We would like to thank the leadership of Babeş-Bolyai University, with special consideration to Vice-Rector Dr. Anna Soós, who has taken a personal interest in establishing this forum.

The conference organizers and volume editors strongly believe that the studies that reflect each other's views on history, religion, and national identity will lead to a better mutual understanding, bringing us all closer to understanding each other, encouraging patience, and serving brotherly love and rapprochement.

*In the name of organizers, Olga LUKÁCS*