

**‘Fear Not Little Flock’
The Vocation of Minority Churches Today**

Session One : Introducing Hungary and its Church Life

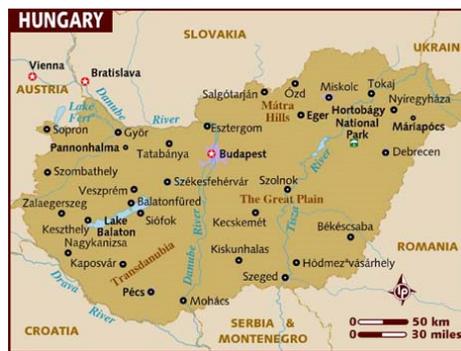
**„The Hungarian Dream” and Its Collapses
in History and Religion**

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I. Patterns of Dreams and Their Collapses in Hungarian History

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Tibor Fabiny



1) Introduction: a Minority Nation’s Minority Church

Herder’s 18th century prophecy concerning the Hungarians

2) Dream of a Permanent Homeland

Great migration from the Uralic mountains
Hungarian: not Indo-European but Finno-Ugric language
(recent sectarian challenges to this view)
Hungarian natural religion: eg. „Blood-contract”
People of Árpád, 7 chieftains

„Emese’s Dream”

This legend is about Hun-Magyar kinship, and the base of the theory that the Magyars reconquered Hungary as their rightful inheritance from Attila's great Hun Empire.

Occupation of the Carpathian Basin in 896

Hungarian: a linguistic island amongst Slavonic and Germanic peoples

Attacking the West: „from the arrows of the Magyars oh save us, our Lord”

3) Dilemma (the „borderline trauma” - the people of the East in the West)

Whether to remain faithful to the pagan beliefs of their ancestors (sacrificing „white horse”) threatening Western Europe: view of Koppány Or adopt Christianity and thereby domesticating themselves (view of Géza and his son Stephen)

4) The Dream of King Stephen (1000)

According to the story Archangel Gabriel appeared to St Stephen in his dream and offered him the crown of Hungary. Pope Sylvester II indeed sent a crown to him acknowledging Hungary and King Stephen as a defender of Christendom.

Christianization: 1000

Crown to Stephen. King Stephen Hungary offered to Virgin Mary: „Regnum Marianum” – the reign of Mary.

Christian missionaries invited to the country (Gellert)

Conflict between Stephen and Koppány

Rock-opera: *Stephen the King*.

Hungarians: people of the East – or people of the West
(relevant today: whether it was right or not to join the EU.

History repeats itself!)

5) The Dream Fulfilled: the Appearance of Greatness

The Middle Ages – feudalism. Hungary is part of Christian Europe Hungary part of „corpus christianorum”, of Constantine Christianity.

This provides security. Hungarian kingdom is a significant part of Europe

Alliance of the altar and the throne

Árpád-Dynasty dies out in 1301

During Anjous Hungarian kingdom has three shores: Polish Northern Sea, Adriatic Sea, Black Sea

6) Collapse of Dreams I :The Trauma of MOHÁCS (1526)

Turkish nightmare : The 16th Century

Turkish invasion and the Reformation.

Responses to the new situation („Catholic substance” – „Protestant principle”):

A/ Catholic (pragmatic, political view): reformation weakened the cohesion and unity of Catholic Europe. Heresy and religious debates make the nation vulnerable. – The view of Sir Thomas More: *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*

B/ Protestant view: typological and apocalyptic: parallels between Old Testament events and Hungarian history. We were unfaithful to God (Catholicism is spiritual adultery, our nation idolatrous, serving Baal, therefore, the Turks are set upon us as punishment). They are the „scourge of God” a warning that the nation should repent.

7) Dreams of Deliverance from Foreign Powers during the 16th -18th Century: Country Divided both politically and religiously

After the Battle of Mohács: Country Divided into 3 parts

Northern part: controlled by Catholic Habsburgs

Middle part: occupied by the Turks

Eastern part: Transylvanian Princes provide relative independence

Religiously: 16th – great success of Lutheran reformation

Swiss (Calvinist) reformation more successful among Hungarians („Magyar religion”) as Lutherans mainly among Germans and Slovaks – but not entirely!

Radicalization of the Reformation: the case of Francis David: Catholic-Lutheran-Calvinist-Unitarians.

8) The Jesuits' Dream: Recatholization

With the activity of the Jesuits and the assistance of the Habsburgs.

Aristocrats, noblemen won for the cause of Rome. Transylvania's Calvinistic Princes resist.

„*Cuius regio, eius religio*” principle

Protestant (Calvinist and Lutheran) confessing pastors taken to galleys: the „decade of mourn” (1670-1680)

1686 Turks driven out of the country with the help of Habsburgs.

9) The „Kuruc” Dream

Uncompromizing commitment to freedom against the pragmatic-minded compromising attitude of the Habsburgs' efforts to colonize Hungary.

Kurucs' war for independence: led by Franz Rakoczi Prince of Transylvania: 1703-1711

10) The Enlightenment Dream

Religious Toleration, Liberalism, Secularization (marginalization of religious values)

Joseph II enlightened Habsburg: Issued Toleration Acts 1792 (Protestant now allowed to build churches without a tower)

Throughout the 19th century the political agenda is significant.

11) The Dream of Political Liberty and Independence

The issue is Hungary's independence from the Habsburgs.

The revolution and war for independence: 1848-49

Petőfi, Kossuth, Madách

Failure of the revolutions, political martyrs.

11) The Dream of Compromise and the Illusion of the Empire-Building

1867-1918 Ausgleich, Compromise, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

Hungary develops but ethnic minorities of the realm oppressed

12) The Collapse of Dreams II: The TRIANON Trauma (1920)

Capitalistic development but independence given up



For Hungarian families the real trauma was, first of all, the Trianon treatise after WW1 when Hungary lost 2/3 of her territories.

Families were torn apart.

„The Hungarian Creed: I believe in One God, I believe in one Homeland, I believe in the Resurrection of Hungary”

13) The Dream of Political Balance and the Hungarian Mirage („Délibáb”)

Regent: Miklós Horthy- „an admiral without a sea”

Prime Minister. Miklós Kállay’s „Swing Politics”

Horthy’s Weakness (Lost Territories: parts of Northern „Highland” and Transylvania given back by Hitler in 1939 ad 1940)

14) The Collapse of Dreams III: Nazi Trauma –The Trauma of the Yalta Pact

In the last year of WW2 Hungary’s pro-Nazi wing seize power.

Therefore, Hungary allies herself with Nazi Germany.

March 19th, 1944: German invasion - Jews deported to concentration camp.

October 15th, 1944: The Abortive Attempt to Jump of WWII

April 4h, 1945: Soviet army „liberates” Hungary.

1948 Communist takeover.

Hungary part of the Soviet Empire: 1945-1989

15) Dreams of „Modus vivendi” During Communism

Totalitarian state hostile to religion.

Marxism - a form of Christian heresy.

Communism: „myth of time” – history will solve the problems, with good human effort we can create society of freedom

Religion: „false consciosness”, opium of the people

Churches seen as reactionary

Models in church-state relations during Communism

a) Catholic model: resistance (Cardinal Mindszenty)

b) Calvinist model: Communism is God’s judgement because of the sins of the past as churches were part of the oppressing unjust social systems (Bishop Bereczky, first openly supported by Barth!)

- c) Lutheran model. Ordass based on the advice of Bergravy: defence and not resistance. (No „Pope” or „Barth” but Ordass elected as Vice President of LWF in 1947 and 1957).

16) The Dream Fulfilled: a Moment of Freedom -Oct 23-Nov 4,1956

Hungary - a hero in the Eyes of the World

See the documentary: „Freedom’s Fury”

1956: Leaders of historical churches (Cardinal Mindszenty, Bishop Ravasz, Bishop Ordass) speak up.

17) The Collapse of Dreams IV: Russian Tanks Oppress Revolution, „Socialist” Restoration . The Kádár-Era (1956-1989)

Nation paralyzed for more than 3 decades

After 1956: demoralization of churches.

Church leaders became subservient to Communist politics.

Created false theologies such as „theology of service” or „theology of diakonia”

Political Resistance to Communism:

Represented not by the churches (as in East Germany or Poland) as their leaders were puppets of the state and the state a puppet of Moscow

Two movements from below:

- a) Intellectual-cosmopolitan-urban, frequently the second generation of Marxists or even Communists, or, members of the Jewish intelligentsia
Left-wing intelligentsia disappointed after the oppression of the Prague-Spring
„Socialism with a human face” is not an option any more.
E.g. Charta 77 movement
Samizdat-literature
In the late 1970s and early 1980s illegal „flying universities” attract many young students including myself.
- b) Patriotic –populist resistance to Communist. Though some of their representatives made a compromise with the communist state.

1986 Monor Assembly- first and last occasion when opposition to decadent Communist regime was in unity.

One movement from above: reform-communists

May 1988 Kádár (after 32 years) replaced by Károly Grósz

International climate: Gorbachev’s perestroika

June 16 1989 Official reburial of Imre Nagy and other Communist Martyrs

Most radical speech by an unknown young man – later: Viktor Orbán, founder of FIDESZ and Prime Minister (1998-2002), likely to come back in 2010

Reform-communist: Hungary the first country to break through the iron curtain
Summer of 1989 East Germans let out to the West

18) Dreams Come True: 1989

Eastern Europe collapses as a pack of cards in the autumn of 1989
October 23, 1989 – Hungary Declared to be Republic Instead of People’s Republic
First free election: May 1990
During the first free elections the patriotic and the cosmopolitan wing neck to neck.

Hungarian Democratic Forum: 24,3% (lead by József Antall)
Alliance of Free Democrats: 21,39%
The Small- Holder’s Party. 11, 3%
Hungarian Socialist Party 11,73 %
Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) 8,59%
Christian Democrats 6.46%

Hungarian Socialist Worker’s Party 3.68% (Kadar’s party)

Free elections every 4th year:

19) Collapse of the Dreams V: Twenty Five Years Political Vicissitudes (1989-2014)

FIRST-GOVERNMENT(Rightwing-central: **József Antall and Péter Boross**)
1990-1994 Coalition of Hungarian Democratic Forum (József Antal, first freely elected PM, died in December 1993) – Small-Holder’s Party-Christian Democrats.

SECOND GOVERNMENT (Left wing-central: **Gyula Horn**)
1994-1998 Hungarian Socialist Party- Alliance of Free Democrats (Left wing liberal-socialist coalition, lead by Gyula Horn, Foreign Minister of the Kadar regime)
Concordat with Vatikan was signed in 1997.

THIRD GOVERNMENT (Right wing-central: **Viktor Orbán’s** First Government)
1998-2002 Alliance of Free Democrats FIDESZ led by charismatic Viktor Orbán: coalition with Small Holder’s and Christian Democrats
Former radicals became conservative, drastically uniting left-wing parties.
Trying to create an alliance also with the mainline churches. Small churches appeal to international forums as freedom of religion seems to be threatened.

Radical right wing (MIÉPm lead by István Csurka) also in parliament.

FOURTH GOVERNMENT(Left wing-central: **P.Medgyessy, F. Gyurcsány**).**2002-2006** Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)
Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy (soon turns out that he worked for KGB but did not resign)
Radical right wing (Csurka-party does not get into Parliament)

After the loss of elections: Crisis on the right but FIDESZ tries to create a loose national network of sympathizers. („Civic Circles” - „Polgári Körök”)

2004 May 1: Hungary joins EU

Crisis in the Socialist party: „inactive”, „Unimaginative” Medgyessy criticized and dynamic Ferenc Gyurcsány former young Communist who became millionaire is elected as MP by the decadent Socialist party in hope of revitalization.

Orban’s party: Euro-scepticism

FIDESZ and other right wing circles including mainline churches (!) promote referendum on citizenship granted to Hungarians living outside Hungary (especially in Transylvania and Slovakia)

PM Gyurcsány and liberals oppose referendum

December 2004. Referendum on citizenship for Hungarians abroad.

Great loss of prestige for the right.

Beyond Csurka’s right wing party there is a new right wing party of young people („Jobbik”).

FIFTH GOVERNMENT (Left wing-central again: Gyurcsány and Bajnai)

EU politicians as well as multi-national circles all unanimously support Gyurcsány and the socialist as they are afraid of emergence of nationalism, anti-semitism.

For the first time that there is continuity as Ferenc Gyurcsány wins election.

The great opponent, charismatic but populist Orbán loses – for the second time!

Despite the absorbing efforts of Orbán’s Civic Circles, Hungarian Democratic Forum (led by Ibolya Dávid) also manages to get into parliament (just above 5%)

In May 2006 (after winning the elections) at a party meeting: PM Ferenc Gyurcsány acknowledged he was lying „day and night”. This was leaked soon after..

This resulted to the September-October 2006 riots.

March-April 2009 Due to Crises Home and Abroad Gyurcsány resigns but the party survives with Gordon Bajnai as Prime Minister as from April 20, 2009

SIXTH GOVERNMENT (FIDESZ/Christian Democrats - 2/3 MAJORITY)

2010-2014 (Viktor Orbán’s Second Government)

Hungarian Democratic Forum + Free Democrats do not even get into the parliament

2 new parties: right wing: „Jobbik”; LMP (Politics can be different)

Hungarians beyond the borders receive double citizenship; they could vote (400.000, 5% of 8,5 millions)

SEVENTH GOVERNMENT (Orbán’s Third Government)

(From May 2014)

(FIDESZ/Christian Democrats - 2/3 MAJORITY, Again)

Fidesz and Christian Democrats: 4 430 122 VOTES ; 133 mandates, 43,55 %

SOCIALIST COALITION: 2 608 685 , 38 mandates, 26.21 %

JOBBIK: 2 021 113 ; 23 mandates; 20.69 %

LMP: 513605; 5 mandates , 5,43 %

Scandals within Socialists before elections: (Simon)

Scandals within Jobbik before EU elections (Kovács, Russian spy)

Myth of the „political center”.

Problem of centralization.

II. Majorities and Minorities: The Religious Situation in Hungary in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Religion (%)	1930	1949	1992	1998	2001	2011
RC	67,1	70,5	67,8	57,8	54,5	38,9
Reformed	20,9	21,9	20,9	17,7	15,9	11,6
Lutheran	6,1	5,2	4,2	3,9	3,0	2,2
Greek Catholic					2,6	
Baptist					0,18	
Jewish	5,1	1,5		0,2	0,13	0,11
Non-denominational		0,1	4,8	18,5	14,5	18,2
Others	0,7	0,7	2,2	1,9	1,1	

Churches in Society: Three Christian Models of Education Related to the New „Christian Universities” in Hungary. A Case Study

1) Roman Catholic Vision (Pázmány Péter Catholic University founded in 1992 with four different Faculties)

This vision is characterized by unity and integrity, corresponds to the model of „Christ above culture” (H.R.Niebuhr). According to this vision Christ appears „as a supernatural fulfillment of the aspirations of culture, in the same way that grace is seen as perfecting nature and theology as perfecting philosophy... All learning pointed, with the assistance of revelation and grace, toward the supernatural source of the world and reason and toward the supernatural end of humanity, which is the contemplation of God”.

„A Catholic University's privileged task is to unite existentially by intellectual effort two orders of reality that too frequently tend to be placed in opposition as though they were antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the fount of truth. (Pope St John Paul II, Ex Corde Ecclesiae, 1990).

2) Reformed (Calvinist) Vision (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, founded in 1993 with four Faculties)

The Reformed theological vision corresponds to the model of „Christ the Transformer of Culture”. According to this vision: everything on earth and in human existence belongs to, and is therefore ruled by Christ.

A leading figure of the Reformed vision of education Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), a theologian, university founder and politician.

Kuyperian Calvinists lay the emphasis on the *integration of faith (revelation) and learning (culture)*.

Followers of Christ are, therefore, invited to transform this world: Christian philosophers, politicians, artists can make this world better.

The Kuyperian theology has been embraced by, for example, Calvin College, Michigan and this vision is ultimately the basis of George Marsden's magisterial book *The Soul of the University*, in which he regrets the loss of Christian values of the once church-related colleges and universities and the marginalization of „Christian scholarship”.

Reformed Politicians: frequent practice, both globally and also in Hungary, that Reformed clergy who began their careers as congregation pastors eventually turned politicians in their (originally theological) hope that once they are in the arena of the public square, they would make it better.

A tradition of Hungarian Reformed Clergy becoming politicians (Tildy, Péter, Balog).

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3) Lutheran Vision (Evangelical Lutheran University; formerly Lutheran Seminary now only with one Theological Faculty but with Educational Programs)

The Lutheran Vision: „Christ and Culture in Paradox”.

Luther's distinction of two kindoms: the world of Christ and the world of culture.

Though both realms are ruled and governed by God; it is done in different ways.

The art of making distinctions that defines a theologian.

Tension and paradox between the worlds rather than „synthesis” between them.

Education belongs to the secular realm – we should not lament the disappearance of „Christian scholarship”.

Mark Edwards? Jr. (once President of St Olaf's College MN)

Both the Catholic and the Reformed visions or models opine for an ideal, normative view of what Christian education and see every deviation from this ideal regrettable. Unlike them, he sees the present situation not necessarily as the time of the „dying light” but, rather of a „new refraction”.

„We need to remember that the faithfulness of the church and of the church's institutions, including colleges, depends ultimately not on what we do for ourselves but what the Holy Spirit does for us. God has shown throughout the centuries, in the Bible stories and in church history, that God can accomplish God's purposes despite all the human weaknesses and foolishness that stand in the way. A sense of humility and, yes, an accompanying sense of humor are not out of place. We need to be able to laugh at our pretensions and shortcomings. And God can be trusted to preserve the colleges of the church in the form and way that God.”

Mark R. Schwen (Valparasio Lutheran University):

„The Christian university can truly be itself only in a context of institutional pluralism, as one of several models, perhaps even a model on the margins, of university education. Christianity functions most truly and most effectively when it is disenthralled. And in this regard the life of the ideal Christian university is like unto the life of the individual Christian. Insofar as Christians relax their grip upon the reins of earthly dominion and contract the scope of their temporal ambitions, they so far increase the range of their spiritual influence and so the more steadily secure their hold upon eternity. This too should be a teaching of a Christian university”.

The Emergence of a Lutheran „Public Theology”

Lutherans not uncritically involved with present Hungarian politics: the Lutheran public voice of „critical solidarity” within the chorus of „uncritical solidarity” of Catholic and Reformed clergy.

Bishop Tamás Fabiny’s Interview on „The Risk of Political Christianity”:

<http://hungarianspectrum.wordpress.com/2013/12/21/the-risk-of-political-christianity-an-interview-with-tamas-fabiny-lutheran-bishop/>

David Baer (Texas Lutheran University) „Open Letter” concerning the new Hungarian church law is published only on the official Lutheran website.

<http://hungarianspectrum.wordpress.com/2012/08/13/david-baer-the-fate-of-hungarys-deregistered-churches/>

<http://hungarianspectrum.wordpress.com/2013/11/21/h-david-baer-all-animals-are-equal-but-some-animals-are-more-equal-than-others-continuing-problems-with-hungarys-law-on-religion/>

See also the Baer’s Preface to his forthcoming book.

<http://hdavidbaer.wordpress.com/hungary/hungarys-religion-law-under-scrutiny/>

See also the decision of the European Court of Human Rights:

[http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng-press/pages/search.aspx?i=003-4725089-5739803#{"itemid":\["003-4725089-5739803"\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng-press/pages/search.aspx?i=003-4725089-5739803#{)

September 9, 2014 - Grand Chamber of European Court of Human Rights rejects appeal of Hungarian government, the Court's decision on Hungary's church law goes into effect.

Concluding Thoughts

There might be some theological advantages of being in a „minority within a minority”.

"Never confuse the will of the majority with the will of God." (Chuck Colson);

“In matters of conscience, the law of the majority has no place.” (Gandhi)