

Progress Report of the Church Revision Committee Synod session 23 April 2014

Executive Summary

In the time since the November 2013 Synod session, the Church Revision Committee (CRC) has been working through its submitted working plan. In terms of continuing the broad dialogue with congregations, the CRC has launched a 28-week **prayer campaign** focusing each week on a concern or plan formulated in the last Synod Submission of the committee (November 2013). In order to efficiently prepare a professional action plan for the Synod, the CRC is working in cooperation with the Synod Mission Committee, revisiting and re-launching the **operation of the eight working groups** of the first Mission Day, which aim to develop a mission strategy for the Church. The CRC will formulate its final action plan based on the results of the above working groups for the upcoming November session of the Synod. The CRC assigned an expert in organization development to coordinate the strategizing process. The CRC is in standing communication with the congregations directly, via e-mail and also via its homepage. The consultation of the working groups and the whole process is scheduled in the project- and communication plan adopted by the CRC in February.

Main processes

The CRC's main concern at its meeting on 13 January was how to schedule the tasks resulting from its last Synod submission. After its "Diagnosis" based on the evaluation of congregational responses and the suggestions of the boards, the CRC started committees and institutions of the RCH to draft a proposal for "Therapy" in the three main fields that the CRC identified as crucial (missionary identity of the congregations; mission oriented operation of church run institutions and structural revision in the sign of solidarity). In its efforts toward this goal, the CRC relies on the eight working groups, which came together at the first so-called Mission Day last September, convened by the Synod Mission Committee. After looking at its own working plan and the objectives of the Mission Committee's project, the CRC deemed it reasonable, even necessary, to coordinate both processes as a joint effort. The eight working groups of the Mission project, along with the eight strategic objectives of the strategic planning process, namely deal with issues highly relevant for the CRC's "Diagnosis." Until the end of May, about twenty consultations will take place with the professional coordination of an organization development expert in the hope that the CRC will be able to present a detailed proposal about the renewal of the congregational life and the restructuring of the church.

Our committee for formulating church revision opted for a broad dialogue not for practical and democratic purposes but because of the conviction that, indeed, "the Church lives in its congregations". "Our plan throughout this dialogue was to assure every congregation that the understanding and transmission of the Gospel message, real communion, sacrificing for others, suffering for truth and solidarity, are the values that can only appear in Hungarian society through us, and upon which we can build our future. The Church

with its institutional network, organizational structure and financial management can do no better than to strengthen and serve the local congregations.” (Synod submission November 2013)

The Committee members are still convinced that the Church, including its institutional network, decision making structures and economy, cannot do better than serving the congregations’ ministry. As this principle shall serve as a guideline for the all efforts in church renewal, the members of CRC are still convinced that promoting the broad dialogue with congregations is their primary responsibility. To fulfill this aim the CRC developed a detailed communication plan. Besides this, the members are also participating in different church meetings and count on the cooperation of the printed and electronic church press.

Featured dates

<i>16 January 2014</i>	The CRC letter for the congregations that answered, appeal for the opinion of the submitting of November
<i>24 January 2014</i>	Committee session: decision about the details of the cooperation with the Missionary Committee, the course of the preparation of the action plan, the ratification of the project, common Mission Proclamation and Revision, and the drafting of strategic goals (see: appendix)
<i>30 January 2014</i>	Reconciliation about the renewal of the mission law
<i>28 February 2014</i>	The CRC asks the congregations in letter and in news to support the phone survey of the ecclesiastic sociological research
<i>28 February 2014</i>	2nd Mission Day: first meeting of some members of the CRC and the eight working groups. Definition of the aims and sessions of the working groups, fixing two new meetings in every working group.
<i>2 March – 21 September 2014</i>	“Tuned for prayer”: every week the CRC calls the congregations to praying on topics that decisively influence our church, so that more people can join those who work for the reformation in Spirit and Word. These prayers appearing week by week follow the 28 topics of the last Synod submission of the committee. The prayers are published in the reformed newspaper (Reformátusok Lapja), on reformatus.hu and also on local sites, and several congregations will get them directly via e-mail.
<i>19 March 2014</i>	Meeting of CRC delegation and Presidency Council
<i>20 March – 3 June 2014</i>	Workshop sessions of the Mission Day , making the action plans in 2-2 sessions (two sessions per workshop) under the coordination of Áron Mózes. (20 March, 21 March, 27 March, 28 March, 4 April, 10 April , 11 April , 5 May, 6 May, 8 May, 9 May, 12 May , 13 May , 15 May, 27 May, 3 June 2014)
<i>2 April 2014</i>	National Session of Deans and Chief Elders , presentation of the work of CRC, discussion of highlighted topics in working groups (Missionary spirit in congregations, in theory and in practice.

	Professional and spiritual background for pastors to support their works. Solidarity structures and effective church administration. Ecclesiastical Institutions)
<i>7-8 April 2014</i>	Carpathian Basin Mission and Diaconia Conference: overall report of the work of CRC, group discussion of the work of the mission workshops (also the strengthening of the missionary identity of the institutions, elaboration of the missionary criteria, unification of the visitation protocols); consultation with mission leaders, institution leaders, mission-diaconia and youth officers
<i>17 April 2014</i>	Synod session: mission proclamation, revision, submission of strategic aims to discuss (see: appendix)
<i>June-September 2014</i>	Harmonization and correction of the eight groups' workshop action plan, coordination with responsible professionals, involved bodies and control groups
<i>20 September 2014</i>	3rd Missionary Day: last meeting of the eight workshops participating in the creation of the missionary strategy, accepting the harmonized and corrected action plan
<i>30 September 2014</i>	Committee session and meeting with the delegates of the Missionary Day workshops
<i>15 October 2014</i>	Finalizing the action plan and submission of the CRC
<i>12 November 2014</i>	Discussion of the CRC submission in synod session

Proposal

In the current Synod session, the CRC submits for discussion the above mentioned foundation, which was created together with the Synod Mission Committee and is the basis of the newly evolving mission law. This foundation involves the mission statement, vision statement and the strategic objectives that define the ongoing consultation series.

Appendix: Mission and vision statement

Proposal for decision

- 1. The Synod adopts the progress report of the Church Revision Committee and wishes God's blessing on the work of the CRC.**
- 2. The Synod proposes the Mission and Vision statement, and the strategic objectives as formulated in the attachment of the Progress Report, for wider discussion in the church, in view of the forming Act on Mission of RCH.**

APPENDIX

RCH Mission Statement and Developing Vision and Strategic Objectives

Mission Statement

"The basis of the Church's existence and mission is that the redeeming will of God has become manifest in Christ. The Church, therefore, is both a partaker and an instrument in God's mission. The community of the Church is called to be a sign, foretaste and servant of the kingdom of God in the world through its congregations and church members, who proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the world both with words and deeds. The organization of the Church, the structure that provides the framework for the community of the congregations, must be a tool and medium of the communication of the Gospel creating values, identity and community."

(Mission Statement from the Revision Committee proposal adopted during the RCH General Synod in 2012)

Vision Statement

Our main objective in the upcoming decades is that the Reformed Church in Hungary shall proclaim, demonstrate God's love, justice and grace in the changing Hungarian society struggling against secularization, individualism and social tension. Therefore, our Church would like to be an ever renewing community through the service of its devoted, creative members and pastors (men and women) living out the Christian spirituality, an accepting community serving in unity and in ecumenical cooperation with other denominations.

Strategic objectives

1. Strengthen the missionary identity of congregations (regarding the training and further education of pastors, elders and congregational co-workers).
2. Develop and implement the missionary aspects in the ministry related to youth and children.
3. Deepen the reformed missionary identity of our institutions.
4. Build a national network providing spiritual, pastoral and professional care to support the health of pastors and congregations.
5. Raise awareness of the importance of living out the values of God's Kingdom: we offer Christian answers for the challenges rooting from a changing society and the shift in its values.
6. Examine the possibilities offered by new IT- communication; rethink and renew our communication in order to reach society more effectively.
7. Develop alternative concepts for the Reformed Church in Hungary's structural renewal – which support its missionary call and make it function more effectively as a public Church.
8. Create a system in our Church community supporting honesty, transparency, greater trust, and encouragement to take more responsibility for one another.

(Vision Statement and Strategic Objectives of the Mission Strategy)