

PASTORAL SERVICE USING INTERNET

Press release

The annual meeting of the 68 years' old Hungarian Reformed Pastoral Service in Western Europe (HRPSWE), in Hungarian: *Nyugat-Európai Magyar Református Lelkigondozó Szolgálat (NyEMRLSz)*, was held between July 12th and 15th 2012 Burgenland/Austria and hosted by the old Reformed parish of Oberwart/ Felsőőr. Participants from 9 European countries were attending.

Three invited lecturers dealt with the task of the main topic '*Pastoral Care using Internet*'. The papers of Viktor Segesváry (Switzerland) theoretical and philosophical considerations, Attila Tóbiás (USA) technical issues and András Berecki (Romania) practical theology problems were well taken and intensely discussed. For the webcast of these papers visit, please <http://nyemrlsz.newslights.info>.

The attendants reviewed the situation in the field of Hungarian Reformed Pastoral Care in the countries of Western Europe. The migration has been intensified due to the impaired economy out of Hungary and other countries in the Carpathian Basin with an important Hungarian minority. This is creating new challenges for our churches in Western Europe, especially regarding incorporation of the migrants into the new society and still keeping their confessional and national identity especially for the youth generation. The socio-political situation primarily for the Hungarian Reformed Churches in Romania in for the Hungarian minority in the countries surrounding Hungary – has been impairing during last months. We thus try to draw attention of our respectively governments in West European countries to this painful and untoward evolution. This Pastoral Service has been objecting to the Hungarian government in a letter with a comprehensive note, because of our organization not being invited for the constitutional meeting of the Hungarian Diaspora Council (the webcast in Hungarian and English on this issue and political aspects of the Hungarian Reformed church as well available on our Website). The 85th Anniversary of foundation of The Hungarian Protestant/Reformed Church in Paris will be celebrated on November 4th this year. The meeting stressed the importance of the Convent of Hungarian Reformed Churches (*Magyar Református Egyházak Tanácskozó Zsinata, MRETZS*) founded in 1995 and its work for Hungarian Reformed Church activities world-wide. The participants brought a tribute to *Ferenc Liszt* the 19th-century Hungarian composer and pianist visiting his birthplace in Raiding/Doborján.

The next annual convention of this Pastoral Service in 2013 will be hosted by the parish of Csákvár in Hungary. On this occasion the 75th Anniversary of the world wide- *Hungarian Reformed World Council* will be commemorated. Founded in 1938, this forum successfully organized the Hungarian speaking reformed Christians' world meetings until it's liquidation in 2010 by the Presidency of the Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary.

The solemn closing divine service ended with a Holy Communion in the local church in Oberwart/Felsőőr.

The Hungarian Reformed Pastoral Service in Western Europe has its origins in the full authorisation and mandate issued by the Reformed Church of Hungary in 1944, maintaining pastoral care among displaced persons following WW2, renewed in 1945 and 1947. The 'Hungarian Reformed Church in Diaspora' was founded on the basis of this mandate in the Western World, which on its turn set up the Hungarian Reformed Church organization among Hungarian Protestants in Western Europe (HRPSWE / *NyEMRLSz*), Latin America and Australia. Hungarian Reformed Church activities in North America did exist as from the end of the 19th century). The Pastoral Service is also recorded as a 'foundation' with the Chamber of Commerce in The Hague, the Netherlands, nr. 27262806.

