

“REFORMED A-Z” WORKING MATERIAL

The Main Aim of Creating a *Reformed A-Z*

The renewed webpage of the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH) contains a heading entitled *Reformed A-Z*, which provides basic information on our Church for those who may not know much about us. Creating this heading we have chosen and utilized the well-known Internet tool FAQ or Frequently Asked Questions. Meaning, we have collected questions an outsider might ask when first meeting the reformed church and compiled them on our webpage for a simple way to explore our church. One aspect supporting our choice to renew the RCH website is consumer research analysing Internet users' habits. These results show that the Internet has become one of the most important tools for pre-decision making.

Based on this information, we worked to collect those situations, orientation directions that can lead to meet the reformed church. For a visitor it could be the preparation for christening, marriage, funeral or the need for information concerning divinity. Other situations may include getting acquainted with reformed education or understanding the relationship of the Reformed church with other churches. All of these topics are represented in *Reformed A-Z*.

We believe it is very important that we answer these questions using words and expressions requiring no precognition. We are endeavouring to create a communication situation that is similar to, and mirrors, a conversation one could have with a pastor. It is for this reason that we asked a secular journalist to conduct interviews with pastors and a theology professor using the questionnaire below. The completed version was confirmed by the editorial office and then reported and corrected by pastors and theologians.

Problems and Solution Attempts

During the testing period we received a number of readers' letters showing that it is hard to submit their consensus/answers, although there was careful preparation involving reformed experts into the preparation process. Furthermore, it is impossible to present a standard practise. These problematic questions were temporarily withdrawn and corrected. We must point out that every letter sent by the readers mentioned their appreciation of the initiative undertaken in *Reformed A-Z*. Ultimately, the presidium of the Synod ordered the provisional to be temporarily withdrawn because of some critical remarks concerning the content.

After this decision we forwarded the questions and answers of the *Reformed A-Z* to the Education and Theology Committee, asking them to evaluate and correct the text. During the summer the Committee worked on the document and made some corrections. However, they questioned whether this version was the best form to communicate information to those interested in the Church. Moreover, they stated that certain questions should be discussed personally, perhaps within the confines of trainings.

The opinion of the Education and Theology Committee was presented in October to the Communication Committee, which maintained the importance of enabling Internet users to find helpful information on the webpage of the RCH.

The Presidential Council's Proposal for Solution

In the end, the council adopted the determined aim, agreeing that presenting information is very important. However, the council still saw some problems, so they made a proposal to resolve the situation:

- The parts concerning theology and church history should be removed from the original text
- Questions regarding the orientation of people searching for information should remain alongside questions we should answer as a community
- Answers should be short and essential

- It is the Synod who decides which questions should be answered, taking in consideration the suggestions of the experts
- Questions will be answered by the cooperation of the Education and Theology Committee
- Defining and answering the theological and historical questions will be postponed to the time when the Reformed Káté is put together.

All in all, we ask the Synod to define which questions and answers should be incorporated into the heading *Reformed A-Z* on the website of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

Attachment

Crash-course

1. What does the word Reformed mean?
2. Reformed Church in Hungary or Hungarian Reformed Church?
3. Where do the most Reformed people live?
4. What is the structure of the Reformed Church in Hungary?
5. My parents are Reformed; am I Reformed, too?
6. My parents are not Reformed; how can I become Reformed?
7. Where can I get some information about the Reformed message, belief and church?

Explanation of reformed basic terms

1. Which term to use for Christian? Keresztény (Roman Catholic) or keresztyén (protestant)?
2. What is the proper greeting?
3. What does manse stand for?
4. Who are the presbyters? What is a presbytery?

Christening/Baptizing

1. What is baptism?
2. Why is it worth to have my child baptized?
3. What happens before the christening?
4. Where does the christening take place?
5. What happens during the christening?
6. Can a Reformed pastor refuse the rendition of christening?
7. Can only children living in a round or typical family be baptized?
8. I was baptized in another church, should I get baptized again?
9. What should I do if I want my child to be baptized?
10. What should I do if I want to be baptized as an adult?
11. Should I get baptized if I want my child to be baptized?
12. We are not Reformed, can our child be baptized?
13. Should godparents be Reformed?
14. Can a non-Christian person become a godparent?
15. How much does it cost to have a christening?

Marriage

1. What does the church marriage service mean?
2. Why should we ask for blessing on our marriage?
3. What is pre-marital counselling?
4. Should we be baptized to have blessing on our marriage?
5. Will our children be Reformed if we ask for a Reformed blessing?
6. Can a Reformed pastor refuse to bless our marriage?
7. Being divorced, can I get blessing on my new marriage?
8. How many times can I get blessing on my marriage in a Reformed church?
9. Can a couple from different denomination be blessed?
10. We have nothing to do with the Reformed church – can we get a blessing?
11. Do you have to be married in a church?

12. Do we need witnesses for the church marriage service?
13. Do Reformed pastors wed people of the same sex?
14. Where should I go if I want to ask for a Reformed blessing on my marriage?
15. What happens before the Reformed marriage service?
16. How does the blessing happen?
17. How does the vow of the husband sound?
18. How does the vow of the wife sound?
19. Does the couple have to pay for the service?
20. How can I contribute to the church for giving us a blessing?
21. Do we have to invite the pastor to the nuptials?

Funeral

1. We are not mourning for a Reformed person – can he be buried by Reformed customs?
2. Can a Reformed pastor refuse the funeral?
3. To whom can I apply for burying my adherent?
4. I need pastoral care, what should I do?
5. What happens before the funeral?
6. What happens during the funeral?
7. Do we have to pay for the funeral?

Reformed education

1. I would like my child to learn divinity – what should I do?
2. I would like to meet Reformed young people – what should I do?
3. I would like my child to attend a Reformed school. What kind of conditions are there?
4. In what terms offer the Reformed education different qualifications?