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**TRANSYLVANIAN CALVINISM
TRACES OF HISTORICAL CALVINISM IN THE
THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF TRANSYLVANIA
IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

**PhD dissertation
Summary of the Thesis Booklet**

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1. The topic and objective of the thesis

In this thesis, I tried to place Historical Calvinism, as one of the defining Reformed trends in the theological history of the 20th century, on the map of the Transylvanian Reformed theological history.

I collected the documents, manuscripts, studies and newspaper articles presented and cited in the thesis with one specific goal: to prove that transylvanian historical Calvinism exists. Although there is no exact way to measure its impact on theological history, its existence is undeniable. However, I did not want to establish the mere fact of its existence in this thesis, but rather to show some aspects. The "Transylvanian" epithet in the title is a reference to that historical Calvinism, which developed a specific image in Transylvania. There are some aspects that make the "Transylvanian Calvinists" not only unique, but significant in the universal and Hungarian Reformed theological history. Its universal significance is due to the fact that it pushed the European borders of Calvinism and historical Calvinism further to east.

It appears at a time when the Hungarian sense of community in Transylvania is in crisis. Reformed theology really needs the grittiness of the historical Calvinism in the post-Trianon lethargy. I think it is no coincidence that Tavaszy, Makkai or even

Ravasz looked for the possibility of spiritual and theological renewal in the rediscovery of Calvinism at the beginning of the 1920s.

In the situation when in Transylvania, social and public activity had to deal not only with the prejudices or indifference of the Hungarian community, but also with the continuous suspicion of the Romanian majority government and, later on, with the malicious condemnation of the communist authority.

The dissertation highlights not only the virtues of "Transylvanian Calvinism", but also its weaknesses and failures.

I can outline the boundaries of my research presented in my thesis as follows. The historical, Calvinist examination of the relationship between the church and the state, the theological systematization and socioethical exploration of these relationships in the midst of the Dutch, Hungarian and Transylvanian conditions, in the period between the two world wars, as well as the manifestation and development of historical Calvinism as a theological orientation in the Transylvanian Reformed theological history.

2. Content structure of the dissertation, research method and its results

a. In the age of the Reformation, the question of the role of the state plays a prominent role in the theology of both Luther and Calvin. The state must not only threaten, but also contribute to the processes of social development. This way, Christians have a place in life not only in the church, but also in society, in politics, culture, economy, education, science, etc.

b. Rediscovering this social-shaping character of Calvinist doctrines, in the second half of the 19th century, under the ideological leadership of Abraham Kuyper, the partly theological, partly social movement called historical Calvinism has started. His church renewal efforts, political work, university founding activities and social efforts all serve the one common goal: emphasizing God's (sovereignty) omnipotence in the various spheres of life.

c. At the beginning of the 20th century, a significant number of Hungarian theologians studying in the Netherlands learned about Kuyper's doctrines and returning home they developed their further theological work based on this system of ideas.

d. The desire to return to the spirituality and theology of the Reformation started several spiritual movements, including a renewal effort in Debrecen, which Sándor Koncz named Spiritual Calvinism. Cluj-Napoca could not be left out of this list either, the Calvinist renewal that developed here is often called Creedal Calvinism, Confessional Calvinism or – as Sándor Makkai alluded to – Self-conscious Calvinism. Perhaps it is most accurate if we call them all under one common term and that is "Transylvanian Calvinism".

e. Following the spiritual apathy of Trianon - in this special Hungarian minority situation - a new trend developed, Transylvanianism, which, due to the changed social conditions, reinterpreted and formulated the vision of the Hungarian society in Transylvania. Also, the Transylvanian way of thinking of this period was decisively influenced on the one hand by Károly Böhm's philosophical ideology, and on the other by the Helikon circle in Marosvécs, which defined literary life.

f. From a theological historical point of view, it would be unfair to examine Transylvanian Calvinism without mentioning those pastors and theologians who do not belong to the "front line", but at the same time their spiritual work is indisputable. (Samu Barabás, József Cűrös, Ferenc Fülöp, László Horváth).

In terms of the research methodology, in order to have the depth of the research, it is necessary to mark the frames and define the areas to which the research is limited in this complex system.

However, both from a content and methodological point of view, it is necessary to define the lines along which the research progresses:

- the theological trend
- the geographical delimitation
- the time frame

The presence of "Transylvanian Calvinism", that is, transylvanian historical Calvinism - even if it does not show itself as spectacularly as in Hungary in the work of Jenő Sebestyén and his circle - is undoubtedly undeniable. Even if it did not manifest itself as spectacularly as with the similar communities to the west, it still existed, and by God's grace and by his sovereign will, it is present in the life of our church.