

Summary

Under the sign of *reformatio vitae*

Studies in the field of the History of Reformed
Theology, Church Theory and Political Ethics

The dialectical tension between the Reformation of faith and life, doctrine and order is by no means a thing of the past, even if this tension has a history of more than five hundred years. The jubilee year of the Reformation 2017, with its celebrations and its fruits for art, culture, science and ecclesial awareness, has highlighted the continuing lack of our Church and social life. According to the conviction and theological claim of the Reformers, the *reformatio doctrinae* should be followed by the *reformatio vitae*. Today, in the age of ecumenism and the common witness and service of the churches, one sees the striving for more dialogue and consensus in theological, doctrinal development replacing earlier divisions in the Church. It seems, however, that the implementation of the *reformatio vitae* in the field of Christianity, in the institutional and organizational life of the Church and the field of democratic civil society has come to a standstill, even though one is aware that over the centuries, the Reformation has contributed to a radical restructuring of the social, economic and political life. Beyond the renewal of faith, the Reformation has generated a social revolution: In various parts of Europe, it has served not only economic or political interests but has also contributed to a radical transformation of political and social institutions. At the same time, historical experience shows several hybrid formations, situation-dependent decisions: on the one hand, reference is often made to the Reformation roots, while on the other hand, such institutional and structural, person-dependent solutions and methods

are claimed which are alien to the spirit of the Reformation; commitment to a community of faith and love on the one hand, bitter and merciless struggle for inner-church power and positions on the other; regretful and repentant view of history here, self-justification and dubious coalitions there. Often everyday life is burdened by the contrast between the proclamation of the reconciliation message and the inability to achieve reconciliation in practice. Has the second accent of the Reformation, i.e. the claim to the renewal of life, so far been burdened by compromises? What considerations, motives and indications should be taken into account in transforming our personal, church-institutional and social life in order to keep in step with reality? How could the claim to the second moment of the Reformation program (the *reformatio vitae*) be formulated in the context of our respective concrete situations, and what impulses for social life can we expect from research on the history of the Reformation and a more in-depth knowledge of reformed theology?

These and such questions had interested me in recent years and guided my research interest. The struggle for clarity, for the discovery of complex interrelationships and the analysis of socio-political and ecclesial situations, have been constant elements of my work, accompanied by a passionate involvement, solidarity and commitment to the Church. Most of the chapters are the result of various lectures I gave before and after the Reformation Jubilee at various academic and ecclesial forums, academic conferences and training courses in Hungary and abroad. Other texts I have formulated for scientific journals or volumes of festive publications. Despite different concerns, the texts published here show an inner context and arc: from the presentation of the fundamental decisions of reformed theology, the reform and fundamen-

tal questions of church organization or the relevance of reformed theology and ethics for law and political culture to the contextual assessment of church activity in the past and present. This content coherence is also explained by the fact that all texts are based on primary research which I was able to conduct as a research fellow at the universities of Münster and Heidelberg between 2017-2019 with the generous support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). I am very grateful for the fruitful discussions, the advice and the critical engagement with my colleagues there. With the publication of the texts, I hope for a level of further dialogue, scientific exchange and openness towards further research results. For the publishing of this study volume, I am grateful to the Board of the Bolyai Association and the University Publishing House of Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, as well as to my home institute of the Reformed Theological University of Debrecen. The volume is dedicated to the Reformed Theological Faculty of the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca after many years of fellowship and cooperation.