



Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary Youth Committee (MEÖT-IB)

In co-operation with



Ecumenical Youth Office



Ecumenical Student Christian Movement



Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute

Ecumenical Formation for Students and Youth

The ecumenical formation of youth is of decisive importance for the future of the ecumenical movement. The quality and quantity of persons interested in ecumenical life, both in the WCC and elsewhere, is declining. The survival of the ecumenical movement is largely conditioned on the active and responsible involvement of youth. A vision requires visionaries to dream and struggle for its realisation. The preparation of a new ecumenical generation is imperative. It must become a major focus for the ecumenical movement. The future belongs to those who have the vision and courage to shape it.

ARAM I, *Report of the WCC Moderator (27 C)*, February 2006

Joining and reflecting on this initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC) on ecumenical formation, and having been engaged in the process of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly (Sibiu, 2007) on national level, the idea of ecumenical formation for youth was raised by the Magyar Ecumenical Student Christian Movement (KÖD) and the Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute (BGÖI) in Summer 2006.

Following this idea, the Youth Committee of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary (MEÖT-IB) as the broadest and most representative ecumenical youth body in Hungary, organised a formation for Christian youth and student leaders. This ecumenical formation did not primarily deal with practical co-operation, since it has its own fora, but it was an effort for converging the goals shared by Christian youth organisations and questioning their denominational divisions. The topic, therefore, was Christian unity and its scandalous absence.

In Autumn 2006, the MEÖT-IB accepted this idea and entrusted a team of ten delegated members with elaborating a thematic plan and organizing the first ecumenical formation for Christian youth leaders in Hungary, together with the Ecumenical Youth Office, responsible mainly for logistics.

The team represented a broad Christian spectrum of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Evangelical-Lutheran, Calvinist-Reformed, Methodist and Baptist denominations, grassroots ecumenical organisations like KÖD, and ecumenical theological institutes such as BGÖI. When inviting participants and lecturers, the same broad Christian presence was maintained.

The task was determined as follows: we endeavour to bring to light the fact that divisions between denominations are – beyond diminishing the efficiency of mission – scandals before God and humanity, and obstacles to be overcome according to our chances and inspiration by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, mutually enriching diversity opens the door to a more complete reception of the Gospels and the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ.

In order to fulfil this task, we prepared a weekend seminar as a first step, from 9–11 February 2007. The seminar's venue was the Conference House of the Society of the Divine Word in Budatétény (Budapest). We chose workshops, panel discussions and lectures as our most important means and methods.

On one hand we worked intellectually, which involved handing over knowledge and understanding concerning the importance of unity. On the other hand we took part in ecumenical prayers and worship, which furthered our involvement into the spirituality of unity. All these events of the seminar were pervaded by the force of a close and friendly being together.

Twenty-five resource persons helped sixty participants from all parts of Hungary (and beyond) in deepening their ecumenical consciousness. After an introduction and ice-breakers, through discussions the participants uncovered their stereotypes and prejudices on denominations and on the ecumenical movement as a whole.

Lectures followed, dealing with Jesus Christ's call for unity as a Biblical introduction, as well as the history of the ecumenical movement (in four branches). A panel discussion dealt with the models of visible unity.

Group discussions gathered the spiritual, theological and practical means of unity. One panel discussion was on the obstacles on the way towards unity, and another on ecumenical vision. The seminar ended with an ecumenical worship and an overall evaluation.

Our project was financially supported by the Catholic Alliance for Youth and Adult Education (KIFE), the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary, the Calvinist-Reformed Church in Hungary, the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary and the Magyar Ecumenical Student Christian Movement (KÖD).

For supporting the idea of an ecumenical formation for students and youth, we thank Rev. ÓDOR Balázs, Reformed theologian and chairperson of MEÖT-IB; GÁBOR Miklós, chairperson of the Catholic Youth Movement (KIM) in Hungary; Rev. BARTHEL-RÚZSA Zsolt, Evangelical-Lutheran University chaplain, Budapest; and Rev. NOBILIS Márió, the Secretary of the Youth Committee's Advisory Council of the Hungarian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Regarding the future of our endeavour, we strongly hope for the continuation and further development of this ecumenical formation for students and youth, and confirm our commitment to support such initiations in Central and Eastern Europe, and also in Europe as a whole. For this we also offer our help and expertise.

The Preparatory Committee:

BÁRDOS Zita, Magyar Orthodox Diocese
JAKAB Rita, Ecumenical Youth Office (ÖKI)
FEDOR Mónika, Magyar Ecumenical Student Christian Movement (KÖD)
Rev. KODÁCSY Tamás, Reformed Church in Hungary
Rev. KÖRMENDY Petra, Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary
LADOS István, Baptist Union of Hungary
NAGY Lajos, Roman Catholic Church in Hungary
NAGYPÁL Szabolcs, Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute, Pannonhalma (BGÖI)
OROVA Csaba (moderator), Magyar Ecumenical Student Christian Movement (KÖD)
SZUHÁNSZKY Tímea, Methodist Church in Hungary

and the Hosting Committee:

BUDAY Gergely, Ecumenical Youth Office (ÖKI)
NÉMETH Zsófia, Ecumenical Youth Office (ÖKI)

Budapest, 1st March, 2007

Resource Persons

- BÁRDOS Zita (Orthodox): teacher, chairperson of Magyar Orthodox Youth Federation (MORISZ)
- Rev. BÉRES Tamás (Evangelical-Lutheran): teaches systematic theology at the Lutheran Theological University (EHE), Budapest
- Rev. ÉDES Árpád (Calvinist-Reformed): Calvinist-Reformed university chaplain, Budapest
- FABINY Tibor (Evangelical-Lutheran): literary historian and leader of the Department of Hermeneutics at the Faculty of Reformed Theology, Budapest, and chairperson of the Magyar Luther Alliance
- FEDOR Mónika (Roman Catholic): sociologist, Executive Committee member of the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE), and board member of the Magyar SCM
- Rev. HECKER Frigyes (Methodist): theologian, chairperson of the Mission Committee of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary (MEÖT)
- Rev. IMRÉNYI Tibor (Eastern Orthodox): theologian and *protoierei* of the Magyar Orthodox Diocese
- JAKAB Rita (Roman Catholic): conductor of children with special needs, human resources manager; works at the Ecumenical Youth Office (ÖKI) and is the general secretary of Magyar SCM
- Rev. KODÁCSY Tamás (Calvinist-Reformed): theologian and university chaplain of the Faculty of Reformed Theology, Budapest; a founder of the Jesenius Center for Faith and Science
- Rev. KOVÁCS Géza (Baptist): theologian, professor emeritus at Faculty of Baptist Theology, Budapest
- Rev. KÖRMENDY Petra (Evangelical-Lutheran): Evangelical-Lutheran university chaplain, Budapest and Székesfehérvár
- LADOS István (Baptist): student of Theology
- Rev. MAKLÁRY Ákos (Greek-Catholic): teaches canon law at the Faculty of Greek-Catholic Theology, Nyíregyháza
- NAGY Lajos (Roman Catholic): pastoral assistant and musician
- NAGYPÁL Szabolcs (Roman Catholic): ecumenical theologian in the Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute (BGÖI), Pannonhalma; teaches philosophy (of religion) at ELTE University, Budapest; editor-in-chief of Student World (1908) and WSCF-CESR ecumenical anthologies; board member of Magyar SCM
- Rev. NOBILIS Márió (Roman Catholic): theologian; the Secretary of the Youth Committee's Advisory Council of the Hungarian Conference of Catholic Bishops; director of the Catholic Pastoral Institute (OLI) in Hungary
- OROVA Csaba (Roman Catholic): doctoral student at PPKE University, Faculty of Theology, Budapest; and researcher in the Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute (BGÖI), Pannonhalma; chairperson of Magyar SCM
- Rev. PECSUK Ottó (Calvinist-Reformed): theologian; general secretary of Magyar Bible Society
- Rev. PUSKÁS Attila (Roman Catholic): theologian; leader of the Department of Systematic Theology at PPKE University, Faculty of Theology, Budapest
- Rev. ROZS-NAGY Szilvia (Evangelical-Lutheran): school chaplain, doctoral student at the Lutheran Theological University (EHE), Budapest; board member of WSCF-CESR and Magyar SCM
- Rev. SÜLYÖK Elemér OSB (Roman Catholic): teaches Biblical theology at the Sapientia School of Theology, Budapest; researcher in Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute (BGÖI), Pannonhalma
- Rev. SZÜCS Ferenc (Calvinist-Reformed): rector of the Károli Gáspár Reformed University (KGRE), Budapest; leader of the Department of Systematic and Ecumenical Theology
- SZUHÁNSZKY Tímea (Methodist): student of engineering and boarding school teacher
- Rev. TARR Zoltán (Calvinist-Reformed): theologian, leader of the Synodal Office of the Reformed Church in Hungary
- Rev. ZSENGELLÉR József (Calvinist-Reformed): theologian; Hebraist at the University of Reformed Theology, Pápa. He is a member of the Commission on Faith and Order, World Council of Churches (WCC), Genève.