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The Kölcsey Ferenc Calvinist Teacher Training College, as the
legal successor of the Calvinist College of Debrecen and the
Teacher Training College of Debrecen¹

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Abstract

The teacher-training in Debrecen –from its formation in the 16th century on- had only connected to Reformed Church for long centuries. Its persistent operation was hold up in the era of the secularization, however, the teacher-training engagement started again in 1959, within the frames of the state higher education, and from 1976 it has worked as a state college.

After the change of the system and the re-organization of the ecclesiastical possessions, the teacher-training college –that worked as a state institute at that time- got back under the authority of the diocese. We only have a small number of written data concerning the transmission itself, and we only know less about the reformed re-organization of the teacher-training college of Debrecen (that, by that time, had reached the same level of quality that other state higher educational institutes had). Since 1990, the college has operated under the name 'Kölcsey Ferenc Reformed Teacher-Training College'.

The writing insists on introducing the specific features and the dual profile of the teacher-training in Debrecen. It attempts to introduce the basic features on which one can consider the college as a reformed institute, but it also tries to present those historical events that hinder the spread of reformed morals at certain levels of the college.

The research is based on the documents of the historical past on one hand, and it leans on interviews made with leading members having significant roles in the life of the college on the other hand.

Keywords: Teacher of Education; Colleges; Church Related Colleges (ERIC)

Introduction

The present study attempts to introduce the bad situation in that the higher educational institutes of the post-communist countries got after the changing of the system through the example of the Kőlcsey College. It wants to reveal the troublesome status that was caused by the fight of the public and ecclesiastical forces and in that the part-takers rather became victims than active participants.

It is not the aim of the research to provide a jurisdiction or special attitude. Instead, it would like to introduce the traditions and the present situation of teacher training by emphasizing the role and the historical traditions of city, as a reformed centre. On the one hand, the research is based on the written sources concerning the Debrecen College; on the data of the archives; and on the publications dealing with the college. On the other hand, the research is based on interviews that make the picture about the present situation complete. So, the interviews attempt to make us see the happenings of the near past and the present days, and they show the process of becoming an ecclesiastical college out of an state college. In addition, the interviews demonstrate the present functions, the mission and the future images of the college.

The research cannot be viewed as complete because of the complexity of the topic. We plan further researches in the archive, to make more interviews and their documentations and we want to take part in programs such as devotion and filmclub. We also plan to make some student attitude-studies in order to reveal the inner life of the college. Hopefully it will result a complexity in the study, when we will be able to put the roles of the college into broader context.

The protestant traditions of Debrecen

The character of Debrecen had been defined by the calvinism until the 1950s – as we can see it in its symbols, mentality and its traditions. However, the city's becoming calvinist cannot be attached to a particular date. Instead we must say that Debrecen was in the middle of a change that prepared the acclimatization of a new ideology.

„Debrecen used to be the richest city in Hungary, but in the same time, if someone takes a look at the mock-up of Debrecen of the 16th century, he would not believe it, because the houses were small and simple. It represents the puritan atmosphere that did not attempt to be ostentatious. Besides, there is the ancestor of the college, the medieval school that was huge compared to these small houses. (bishop)

Debrecen, being a city along a merchant way was quickly informed about the reformation, and because of the puritanism and close-to-people nature of the new conviction the city rapidly became a place to spread the faith. So, Debrecen instantly became the protestant centre of country. On the one hand, this process was due to the inner order of the society, since the inhabitants were first of all simple and rational people. On the other hand, it was due to the fact that Debrecen belonged to the Tiszántúli Diocese, that later became the biggest district of the calvinist church in Hungary.²

In the 16th century patronage from the landlords came under the control of the town leadership and the power structure defined the functioning of the town in favour of rooting and putting forward the spirit of reformation. “ Debrecen as being a reformed town long ago, was always famous for the fact that the presbytery and the magistrate of the town were governing and defining the life of the town together” (a College teacher) The special leading of the town thus can be understood by the characteristics of the town's patronage: the town became its own patron, its basic function was its self-preserving commitment. Its result was that there wasn't any hierarchycal relation between the decisions of the leadership of the town and the interests of the Church, their goals concurred. In this sense the Church leadership was equal to the magistrate and the elected

² Rác, István. *Protestáns patronátus*, Debrecen, Kossuth Egyetemi, 1997. 60.p.

leaders of the city of Debrecen. Scholastic training, which emphasizes value and culture mediating pastoralship, also came into existence from this cooperative thinking. „ The duality, which was formulated by the side by side living of the monastic and secular schools, constituted into a synthesis by the reformation.³

Because of this, there were many occasions when the town undertook the patronage of the building of the school, under which process one of the most important schools of the country, the Reformed College of Debrecen also came into existence.

The Formation of The Calvinist Teacher Training College of Debrecen – Historical Antecedents

So it was in the second half of the 16th century that the Christian denominations started to realize the necessity of a systematic preparation for teaching. Regarding the region's and also Hungary's cultural transmission, the formation of the College was one of the most significant momentum in the life of Debrecen. According to the traditions of the Hungarian calvinist schoolculture, the College meant a three-phase training; it was more than just a synonyme for the concept of the traditional dormitory and boarding school. According to the calvinist terminology, the college incorporated the stages of elementary, secondary and higher education. On the basis of the West European model, we can speak about the fulfilment of the confines of collegiate education since “the two- and three-year academical departments were established besides the two- and later four- years of elementary and six years of secondary training”⁴

Méliusz Juhász Péter, who was an ecclesiastical leader of the age, writes about the importance of teacher training, to which the canon of the 1957 synod of Debrecen also refers. With the increasing number of protestant worshippers, it became important that prepared schoolteachers should also teach the youngest pupils. Hereby those who got out of the College were sent for a 2-3 year teaching. One of the cardinal tasks of the College

³ Barcza József (Szerk.): *A Debreceni Református Kollégium története*, Budapest, A Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinati Irodájának Sajtóosztálya, 1998. 15.p.

⁴ Győri L. János: „*Egész Magyarországnak... és Erdélyiségnek világosító lámpása*”, Debrecen, Tiszántúli Református Egyházkerület, 2006. 51. p.

was teacher training, which at the same time for centuries was closely attached to minister training. A well-known saying of the age was: „The way to pulpit leads through professorship.”⁵

Only from the declaration of acts in 1856 on was there a possibility to establish an independent teacher training institute. At first, the institute had only one class with students of theological interest. Later on, the number of classes had been raised to two, three and four, and the Practice School of the Teacher Training Institute was established as well. The intellectuality of the institute –in spite of the hardships of history- had always been strongly linked to the theorem of the Calvinist church. The adaptation to the state provisions took place in order to preserve the autonomy of the school. In 1923, the number of classes was raised to five, and it gave the possibility to broaden the educational content and to practice the methodology.

However, due to the secularization the teacher training in Debrecen was abolished, and it only continued in 1959. The public teacher training institute did not consider itself as the legal descendant of the reformed school. The institute attempted to raise the educational system to the academic level, and from the state orders in 1976 on it worked as a public college. The public teacher training was based on three principles, which were the following: up-to-date education, links to life and direct labour and raising the level of the effectivity of socialistic training. Its task was to „to train teachers of Communist ideology, who are proper in their professions and who like their jobs.”⁶

However, after the change of the system the public Teacher Training Institute became the property of the church again. There are hardly any written data concerning the shift of owners and concerning the reformed re-organization of the school, that has the name Kölcsey Ferenc Calvinist Teacher Training College since 1990.

⁵ Györi L., János: „Egész Magyarországnak... és Erdélyiségnek világosító lámpása”, Debrecen, Tiszántúli Református Egyházkerület, 2006. 51. p.

⁶ Földesi Béla: *A debreceni felsőfokú tanítóképzés 25 éve, Debrecen*, Tanítóképző Főiskola kézirat, 48. p.

Surrender – takeover ?

Using the words surrender and takeover together in itself alludes to that unclarification, lack of understanding and different other attitudes which sign the cessation of the Teacher Training College as a stately upheld institution and its becoming an institution upheld by the church.

Contemporary press legalizes the validation of the different viewpoints and passions and I have to add, that it is also legalized by the current statements of the interviewee.

About the question of the changing of the upholder and about the problems arising from this, those college teachers who were personally part of this procedure still cannot speak without emotional response. When we came to the question about the changing of the maintainer, the breaking of the conversation could be felt every time: with silence, embarrassment, or with giving a direct and logical explanation. From this point, the interviews turned from easy conversations into moderated ones.

Whereas in the case of an honest narration, or when stating a deep conviction, the interviewee wanted an equally honest answer for the question: in what ways, and on what forum will the given informations be used. They also stated that of course what they said are all undertakable and can be announced. Whereas the tone of the undertaking, after all showed that latent uncertainty, which made the narrators to ask this question, and which shows the responsibility which they possibly have to take after telling their opinion.

Subsequently we tried to find the answer for the question: how the upholder changing could take place - which in the case of the College meant the giving back of the ecclesiastical goods - and how this fact is argued by people who are closely attached to the life of the College. Why is this still a living problem until nowadays, and what are the roots of the different approaches in the narrations. Historical past is the question of the present, and has a cardinal role in the ars poetica of the school, in its basic goals, and in the functioning of its organizational departments. The leaders of the organizational units of the College were affected in different ways in the schools's turning into a reformed College, and this led to different intentions regarding the leading and organizational functioning of the College.

About the circumstances of the surrender- takeover process we can read primarily in the local press. “ A Cry from the College”, “ On the soil of reason – about the ecclesiastical properites”, “ Objectively and According to Traditions”, “ Even the Marxists have nothing to fear of” – only few article titles from the contemporary press, which are reflecting on the changed circumstances, changing of the inner life and uncertenties of the College.

On the basis of a shallow reading of the press, and on the basis of common opinion we could think that the very focuse of the case lies in the fact that taking the College under the control of the church really abolish public teacher training.

According to ecclesiastical representatives, that after getting back the ecclesiastical goods, it is the right and also the task of the Diocese – as it is attached to Debrecen, which has a 400 year-old teacher training past – to manage the reformed teacher training together with the upholding of the College. As the one-time under-secretary, Attila Kálmán states, the fact “ that the Church wants to get back the opportunity of teacher training, is not something dislocated or drastic. Thus will tradition and the case of necessity be resettled” (Magyar Nemzet, 1993. 05. 18.). As opposed to, and besides this we can read the echo as follows: “the ministry, with its iteniton to turn the state teacher training into a denominational one, distracted the otherwise not trouble free – but according to both sides’ release well going – relationship between the local government and the local calvinist leadership” (Köztársaság, 1993. 02. 12, 12.p.)

However if we are get into the published material, it gets revealed that the key to understand the surrender/takeover process is if we are able to be sensitive to the question: can a state teacher trainig school - with its well formulated organizational units, educational matters and with students and teachers attached to this - from one day to another give up that existence that we call the inner life of the school? How can a school, which has basically different idologies than the church, reformulate its function and errand? What is the most outstanding in this discourse is that the church maintanance layed its claim first of all not to the institution, but to the building itself, which claim-

knowing the circumstances of the building's secularization- equally considered by the different sides as right and unright. So the cessation of the public teacher training for a period also meant the fear of the cessation of the teacher training in Debrecen as such.

The Main College in The Hands of the Calvinist Church, than of the State, and of the Reformed Church again.

In 1948 the state made a contract with the Reformed Church, according to which only few secondary schools could stay under ecclesiastical maintenance, then in 1952 because of the pressure of the state the Church offered other schools as well to the state. About the future of the Main College "a decision was made by the Political Committee of the MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Working Party) on the sitting of the 10th of May, 1966. The decision was preceded by a forced offer – the ground floor of the Main College building was used for the purpose of public elementary school education."(HBM Napló, 1992. 06. 11.) Besides these the renovation of the Reformed College became pressing, and the state did not contribute much to the expenses of the renovation.

For the renovation the Church asked for the state's help, which according to the account of the calculations totaled up to 40million forints. The consequence of the debit was, that the Church had to give up the ownership of the Main College, which was recorded in the "Property Takeover Contract" of 3rd of July, 1947. So the surrender happened in a case of necessity, which is well signed by the "regulation dated on the 10th of July, 1947, according to which the title of the acquisition is: nationalization."(HBM Napló, 1992. 06. 11.) After all the phrasing is secondary, as the contract about the takeover actually occurred. The Church debated about the 40millions being the offset for the Main College, and the amount of money, which was ciphered out from the calculations documenting the renovation, was also said to be exaggerated. According to Kálmán Attila, the one-time under-secretary, this was a surrender of a building of great value for a "bowl of lentils"(Magyar Nemzet, 1993. 05. 18.) State advocacy on the other hand put the emphasis on the contract, according to which the amount of money can be debated, but legally it is vulnerable only in some sort.

The XXXII. Act of 1991 tells about the renewed intentions of the political powers, namely that Hungarian Churches should have an increased share in their chances again, and that the pedagogical, educational, and national identity-shaping role of the Churches should be acknowledged. All of these demand the settling of the proprietary rights of the Church, and the redressing of the aggrievements. Thus the 1992. XXXIII. Act was made, which decided about the returning of the ecclesiastical properties. By this, the requiring back of the Teacher Training College started. According to the statement of the director-general, Papp Miklós, “the ministry had to assume that the Colleg was not ‘taken away’, but bought, and that it happened not in 1948, but much later. This was the time when the argument turned up that the sale was made under compulsion. The reality is, that it was the Church that had serious money worries so it made an offer for buying the College in the beginning of the 1960s, and an order was also made for the takeover by the state party, however they did not really need it. The pact was deferred. The idea of the acquisition was fulfilled in 1974. Eight years after that the state party dealt with this question: so they did not precipitate or compelled it. What is more the Church thanked for the state for its role in the case.” (Magyar Hírlap, 1993. 05. 10)

In the summer of 1992 after the long discussions an agreement was made between the government and the church, according to which the “Property Takeover Contract” of 1947 was vacated, in the name of the Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training College of Debrecen, they urged the indication of the reformed character. The government also authorized the Cultural Minister to make a contract with the Hungarian Calvinist Church about the taking over of its students and teachers. But no law was made about the alteration of the state College.

Regarding the surrender and takeover, more precisely giving back the property to the Church and all the legal procedures arising from its antecedents, are only the shallow surface of the consequences of the action. Behind all these there was the anxiety whether there will be no more public teacher training in Debrecen, whether what kind of frame will be given to the following teacher-student work? As Papp Miklós said: “nobody objected against the claim that the reformed church should get back their just property,

we are not fighting for the building itself, but for the public teacher training.”(Népszava, 1992. 07. 29) The Fidesz stated a similar viewpoint because of which in some of the publications they were responsible for blowing up the warlike situation. „If they hadn't blown up the case, there would be a complete peace.” (Új Magyarország, 1993. 05. 06.)

Accordingly the Calvinist Church and the government tried to find a location for the Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training College together, about which a conceptual declaration was also made. The church and the town were asking for the help of the state together in favour of moving the College to the area of the Universitas of Debrecen. On the 2nd of July 1992, a legal compact was made, according to which the Reformed Church takes over the actuation of the Teacher Training College of Debrecen. : “The regulation is shocking and opposes with the spirit of the negotiations going on since a year, and also with the priorly made partial results of the case”, said Papp Miklós.” The College was not informed officially, and we also did not get an invitation for the conference. I was discussing another case in the ministry, when I was informed, that there will be an appointment about the future of the College.”(Napló, 1992. 07. 25.) The result of the discussion was the number 3314/9. secret governmental decision, which meant the putting of the College under the control of the Church. It is conceivable that this pact does not sign anything else, but the catching of the appropriate moment which we can observe at those institution foundtaions, which took place after the changing of the system, when “such political intentions got back-wind, which were simmering long ago, and were waiting just to be given a boost.”⁷

„I heard the news there”, continues Papp Miklós, „and I read about the details in the Hajdú- bihari Napló...” according to the director – general, the procedure was inequitable, „they did not ask the for the opinion of the 3200 workers, students and teachers who were affected by the case.”(Napló, 1992. 07. 25.) The director-general is hurt by his worldviews because of the fact that the building is completely given to the Calvinist Church. (Magyar Nemzet, 1992. 12. 05.) The general assembly thus supported the surrender of the building, but not of the institution. They imagined the functioning of

⁷ Kozma Tamás: *Kié az egyetem?* Budapest, Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2004. 80.p.

the building at the Campus on Kassai Street, which notion was equally supported by the clergy.

The different papers, which up to that point were giving different shades to the happenings, reported uniformly on the agreement made about the College on the 6th of January 1933. The agreement signed on the 5th of January by Kocsis Elemér, the bishop of Reformed Diocese of the Beyond-the-Tisza region, by Lipták András, rector of the the Kossuth Lajos University and by Andrásfaly Bertalan, the minister of education. According to the agreement the Reformed Church will operate the school as Kölcsey Ferenc Reformed Teacher Training College, and will vacate the “Property Takeover Contract” of 1974.

The mission of the college is to provide supply to the ecclesiastical and public schools of the area. According to this, the Ministry of Education acknowledges the degrees achieved in the college to be the same to that of the diplomas of public training schools. Furthermore, the agreement claimed that the whole staff of the college would be taken under the responsibility of the church. So, the church tackled that no discrimination would be made between the students with different religion and ideology. The church paid 20 million forints for the state and gave the rights to handle the immovable estate. The college became the part of of the Debrecen Universitas.

Andrásfalvy Bertalan referred to the fact that “within the frames of the Universitas of Debrecen there is a way to keep the public teacher training...As the contract assures available higher education for everyone and what is more it also assures religious freedom and the liberty of conscience.” (HBM Napló, 1993. 02. 17.) Kósa Lajos however did not accept the answer of the minister, his opinion was that the „solution is not good for the Calvinist Church either as it had to accept that it will be neutral in its worldviews.” (HBM Napló, 1993. 02. 17.) Besides all the different opinions and jurisdictions, the general discredit becomes tangible about the question, how will a high educational institution be able to function as an ecclesiastical and at the same time public institution. But with saying that it cannot be achieved, we also state that the Church and

the State are separate powers, and they cannot work as partners, only as opponents. Namely that their goals are not more than ideas that are given shape along the lines of validating their own interests. Daragó József, director-general, made the case clear: „ So it was a misunderstanding, that with the formation of the reformed teacher training, the public teacher training will be absolutely ceased ... the college council sees the future of the teacher training to be assured in the new situation: our values formulated so far will endure in the future and will be widened by the values that stand for the traditions of the ecclesiastical higher education.” (HBM Napló, 1993. 02. 18.) This statement was strengthened by the director who followed Daragó József: “When I came here, there were consolidated circumstances, however there were naturally some people, who could not be resigned to the changing of the upholder, but these people left the institution.” (Pro-rector)

In the life of the College the takeover meant contextual and structural changing, but in the sense that the basic elements of the public teacher training, its actual and classic values were transmitted. On the period of uncertainty the already Calvinist Teacher Training College could continuously pass, the new training kept its high quality and wanted to give such human and spiritual values which can give directions in our changed world.

However in the souls of the teachers the happening left its prints, and was not processed in every case. We had to experience, that the appearance, and during the times more and more strong reformed spirituality in the life of the school, became acceptable for the teachers, but still they treat it with a kind of stand off attitude. They speak about the College's becoming a calvinist institution very carefully. Behind the abstain stands possibly the main question of the College, and within this, the role of the teachers, namely that how can an institution be neutral in its worldviews and at the same time also assuming its worldviews.

On the basis of the narrations of the teachers, the facts are also parts of the hermeneutics of the school that from where do the teachers originate the roots of the College, how their personal relations were shaped in the course of time, in which period of the College did

they latch on to the teacher training of Debrecen, and how they judged the surrender – takeover process of the College. The teachers form and shape the present mission of the College by remembering, which can be a sign from the point that how the intentions of the Church and the State could fuse in the goals of a single teacher.

On the basis of the interviews and according to the memories of the teachers, the emphasized fact is not that we could trace the history of the College and its becoming part of the Calvinist Diocese of the Beyond-the-Tisza Region. On this track we could only observe date-and legal failures. Not even the searching for the historical past and origins of the College were as telling – so that they trace back its roots to the changing of the system or the starting of public teacher training, or also from the time of reformation – as the observation of the emotional filling or conviction with which they gave the interviews. The uncertainty of the changes is shown very well by the types of interpretations about the changes of the life of the institution, like this one: “we could agree, but this cannot be connected to my personality.” (a leading College teacher) The dividedness can be detected through the different opinions about the happenings; at what point – if not in a direct way – did the interviewee brake or make uncertain the unity of the approaches.

Nevertheless a united narrative for the past seems to take shape. This can be detected from the different introductory of the stories: “according to the official standpoint”, “ I was not teaching here at that time, but...”, “ know we know that...”. The unity of the teacher’s approach is also formulated indirectly by the history of the school posted up in the building, on the corridors or in the offices. According to these the school is the successor of one of the most important teacher training of the country, which leads back to the Calvinist College of Debrecen. „The history of the institution however not only includes teacher training connected chiefly to minister training, as being born from the consequence of the reformation. Teacher training is not broken in style, but can be seen as being continuous. By this the past of the institution also includes the course of public teacher training, the heresy of public teacher training can be traceable in its present as well.” (leading college teacher)

The uniform approach of the institute shows a continuous strengthening. The common narrative definitely becomes coherent in the course of the following decades, when the future generation will be less sensitive towards the happenings of the past, and will inherit a Teacher Training College, which can handle the situation, how an institution can meet different expectations, either by the Church or the State, or the demands of the market pressing the school from inside, or the process of globalization itself. The present situation of the institution thus came into difficult situation again. According to the narratives, during the course of the outer representation of the school, the answers for the above mentioned challenges are framed by both the upholders and the symbols of the school. How will teacher training be able further exist in Debrecen, how can a teacher training institution with such long history stay alive?

Financial support of the Kölcsey Ferenc Calvinist Teacher Training College

Since the ecclesiastically governed institute completes the task that normally should be done by the government, it gains the amount of financial support that the public institutes do. The support can be normatively defined on the basis of the sector-neutrality theory. The support is collected and used up by the Calvinist Diocese of the Beyond-the-Tisza Region.

„The upholding has its economical features as well: so the church can provide sector-neutral support for the ecclesiastical schools, and attempts to do anything so as it becomes real both in the system of laws in the practice. This is an essential aspect. It is not the main task of the upholder to convey the support to the institute, but to make the government, the parliament and the minister-president to complete the absolute basic theory of supporting. We have investigated a great amount of energy into this in the past few years. It came into light, that the state deceived the ecclesiastical upholders with 7.2 billion forints. It is obvious that the church wants to avoid precedents of this kind in the future.”(bishop)

The Diocese has an own budget according to the annual calculation. One part of the money the diocese is provided for educational tasks. The money is divided normatively

by the upholder. Additional income is provided by the educational fee paid the correspondent students, by the researchal applications and by giving the building and the educational tools into a hire.

The message of the name giving

The school took up the name of Kölcsey Ferenc in 1990, before that it was functioning as the Teacher Training College of Debrecen. Kölcsey Ferenc was a one-time student of the College, so we can say that with choosing his name for the school, a kind of spiritual continuity is manifested, it is to remember to the reformed teacher training tradition. Beyond the reformed spirit however, it also alludes to the life work of Kölcsey, to that cultural value which he left behind to the posterity, which is not only a historical memory but also gives a relevant essence for the present.

“It was a very good name giving, besides the fact that he was the poet of the Hymn, he can be attached to the Hungarian Culture Day. He was an important figure of the reform age: he imagined a civil Hungary, which waits for being fulfilled still today. As Széchenyi said, what Kölcsey wanted was not, but hopefully will be.“ (Leading teacher of the College)

“I think that Kölcsey who was person of culture, had not only great influence on the romantic period, but brings self-knowledge closer for many people even today. What he said about the national language, about the development of national culture and about the relationship of these two, are such thoughts that should be kept in mind even today.” (Leading teacher of the College)

The inheritance of Kölcsey gives evidence to such a deep philosophical and cultural – historical knowledge, which brings up problems that are still unsolved today. Under his name those people who are attached to the College should devote all their efforts to fulfill his cultural program.

The mission of the Kölcsey College

The need for self-manifestation is the main motif of all political cases; it defines the other motives. The requirement of the school developments (as the field of the social self-manifestation) only can be captured if we watch it from the point of view of the need of self-manifestation. The operation of the Kölcsey College is controlled by the higher educational act, the educational act of the Hungarian Calvinist Church from 1998 and the Calvinist Diocese of the Beyond-the-Tisza Region. The self-definition of the College can be captured in a declared form in the Declaration of the Mission of the Institute and in its policy of quality.⁸

The Declaration of the Mission is based on two Calvinist ideas : the attachment to the calvinist inheritance and the role of the teacher training in the region – that emphasizes the “semper reformari se debet”. This is the main calvinist idea that claims that the community and the individual must always be reformed.

This means a continuously renewed education and innovation. So the institute attempts to fill a culture transmitter and a culture creator function. The ideal man of the school is a personality who is open and can answer the social challenges and who has the classical civil values.

“Our mission is to ensure elementary teacher training for the region, and to live with the special chances that are the results of the local and regional facilities.”(bishop)

In this respect, the school’s task is to help the teacher training in the Subcarpathia and the Partium. Beside of the traditional training the college attempts to start qualificational frames that belong to the special needs of the church, so as „a modern, but value-centered training can become true.” (bishop)

All in all, the public features show up within the frames of a professional workshop, whereas the religious features become clear in the way the college maintains the traditional christian values.

The qualifications given by the College are equal to other licences given by other public training institutions. But in the same time the leadership of the school offers the calvinist-

⁸ Pusztai, Gabariella: *Református pedagógusképzés*, Manuscript, 5. p. (DE Neveléstudományi Tanszék)

christian ideology as an alternative in the moral chaos that the students encounter. So Calvinism is not prescribed but offered by the school.

The Christian mind is therefore not ruled but controlled as an input factor but it appears in a direct and indirect form by the training . “The church is not a professional inspector, but it helps the work.” (HBM Napló, 1993.02.08.)

All these are manifested in “ the development of the skills, in helping the weaks, in the attempt to do everything for the community and in the respect towards others and the labour.”⁹

Value-transmission at the college

„I can mention the question of value-system as the most important aspect of human reformation. It is necessary to speak about because of multiple causes. The question of value-system is a problem of fate without a solution, and it is the root of our problems and the source of the solution. In addition, both the destruction and the rehabilitation of the value-system depends on us.”¹⁰ „The reset of the ecclesiastical schools in Hungary was not only the deal of he church (even if it rooted in it) but also of the state and the society.”¹¹

The Kölcsey College, although being an ecclesiastical institute, conveys modern knowledge and a clear value-system through the teachers. Of course, the question derives how it can manage to function regarding the secular and the ecclesiastical features in the same time.

In our interviews teachers were asked about their aims and ideologies. We experienced that the teachers, being religious or not, follow the same values. It was especially interesting, when reformed believers, when being asked about the reformed values,

⁹ Csorba, Péter (Edit.): *Tájékoztató a Kölcsey Ferenc Református Tanítóképző Főiskoláról*, Debrecen, 2000.

¹⁰ Rókusfalvy, Pál: Mitől keresztény egy egyetem? *Partiumi Egyetemi Szemle*, III. évfolyam, 2004, 1-2.szám, Partiumi kiadó, 102.p.

¹¹ Frenkl, Róbert: A magyarországi egyházi iskolarendszer jövőképe In Gálffy Kolos (Szerk.): *„Isteneink, hazáink, tudományaink” Konferencia az egyházi oktatás tíz évéről*, Budapest, Mministry of Education, 2001.

simply claimed that „these reformed values always coincide with the current, classical values.”(leader of the college). The non-reformed teachers listed items of the classical value system. These items were responsibility for the community, faith, the love of labour, and respect towards others. To the question how do we identify a reformed believer, we got the answer: there is no way to identify, because we do not know what is in someone’s heart. These answers demonstrate the religious freedom being realized within the institute. „the reformed church and the college does not formulate expectations, but it offers values for its students’(president)

It is beyond dispute, that the KFRTKF attempts to offer a constant value system for its students regardless of their religion. The task of the college is to enhance the faith of the believers, and to eliminate the prejudices within others – the prejudices that were built up in the previous system towards religion. Therefore, an introduction to theology course is compulsory for everyone. The aim of the lesson is to address people who had no contact with the church before. Knowledge is the first step towards religion, especially, when this knowledge turns into an inner feeling. So, distinction must be made between chorister and religion teacher students and teacher students. „The chorister students and religion teacher students come to this college, because they prepare for religious duty. The training of them is more extensive, they have more courses concerning theology. Others believe that religious classes are more periferial. Some stay in this belief, some not”(college teacher) „The scientific ateism as a theory definitely appears here as dominant factor that shapes our ideology. However, it can be less regarded as a real behaviour controller, and it does not give a proper orientation in the field of social co-habitation and individual problems.”¹² The college attempts to formulate a manner of behaviour that is opposed to the hedonist practice. Those, who have not met the church by this time, rather know the calvinist way of following Christ. „Nevertheless, a catholic believer and a reformed believer stand much closer to each other than a calvinist believer and a non-believer.(college teacher)

¹² Tomka, Miklós: A szekularizáció mérlege, *Valóság*, 1979, 7. szám 67. p.

The Jewish-Christian traditions are not only transmitted as the part of the culture, but as a lifestyle that calls our attention to pay responsibility for each other and the world. So, the college provides places and opportunities for the students to get closer to god. There is a devotion twice a week, and the invisible theatre gives also a catartic experience. In addition, there is a handicraft workshop at Christmas time, there are several concerts, relationship-lectures and movie-nights. So, the college tries to address its students in an informal way as well.

Through these occasions the attempt of the leadership is demonstrated, that utters to the relationship between religiousity and teaching. Both mean duty and commitment. The aim of teacher training is also linked to the humble attitude: to maintain the students as partners. The task of the teacher is the overall support of the student. This relationship is formally symbolized by the college celebrations and the Big Church.

The shaping of the community appears a few times in the organization of the Andragogical Institute: after the formation of the teachers' club, the instructors can listen famous lecturers. They also organized public life parlour, where nationally prominent professionals represent their results of research. After the lectures, there is always a chance to discuss, to have friendly conversations and to build personal relationships. „I think a new community must be formed. We try to provide the outer frames for the sake of it. The idea of community is a missing element of our society. We must set meeting points and must provide chances to lead a community life. In this respect, the college must a special workshop where the teachers feel good and where the common interests and the appreciation of one another dominates. So, we want to create forums and programs that connect people.” (leading college teacher)

Teacher training – the basic functions of the Kölcsey College

The calvinist training –as we have seen- has a great past in Debrecen. The institute staff has done a lot in order to achieve that the training managed to become a three years long term in 1959 and then a four years long term in 1995. „We always have complained in

our ministry report that we had a smaller amount of time to teach than the highschool teachers had. Teaching in the first four classes is art, teaching in the highschool is a profession, but teaching in the college is less than these, because a teacher who has literacy and can express himself is not a lost man in the classroom.

The college first of all has trained specialists who want to teach in the first four classes – or, according to their professional area, also in the 5th and the 6th grade. „Our students are mostly widely informed, open people, but in the same time, they are devoted to a special area of knowledge, as well.”(president)

Thus, until the 2002/2003 schoolyear one of our students’ two majors was the teacher training itself. It was modified, when communication major, as an independent major appeared. The training defines its function mainly in the training. „In general, the college wants to train appropriate professionals who have humanistic education and who focus on on teacher training” (leading college teacher) Some questions arose while making our interviews: what is the ideology of the college, what makes a good teacher, what could serve as a filter to pick the most appropriate trainees and what describes those students who have studied at the Kölcsey.

The entrance exam does not differ from that of the public schools, however, the applicants must get through an aptitude test within the topic of music, communicative competent and sport. The entrance has no other criteria, and if they are accepted in their subject, they are in the college. So, the ecclesiastical maintenance of the college is not touched at the entrance conversation. However, according to several teachers, the aptitude test should be completed by emphatical competence test. „Believe me, the secret of the good teacher is the talent to create an atmosphere in that the students like to be an in that they are raised in an automatic and undetected way. Otherwise, it does not make a sense.”

According to another teachers’ opinions the best way of the entrance exam would be a test where the applicant had the chance to create a contact with a child in front of the exam committee. The practice had been in use for a while, that the students could prove their problemsolving ability by acting in different pedagogical situations.

The most significant factor of the training is the practice-oriented training. The students have the opportunity to achieve these abilities that are crucial for a 6-12 years old child's physical, mental and emotional development. The teacher trainees' education therefore begins with a class-visit of three semesters. The college prepares the students for the teaching of 6-12 years old pupils, and it also makes them to discover the age preceding the schoolyears. Similarly, they also have the chance to encounter the age-peculiarities of the children and adolescents in order to see what would represent the young people under the teacher's control. „So, we attempt to see the past and to look into the future as well. We consider the intellectual, emotional and social features, the attitude of the teacher and the steps of setting the ideology.”(leading college teacher)

From the 4th semester on, the independent teachings start, first as microteaching, than as a 2 days and 2 weeks long practice. In the 8th semester they will have a months long practice. The school-visit takes place in the practice school of the college and in the Arany János Elementary School of the University of Debrecen. The individual practice takes place in one of the many schools of the city. In the 8th semester the students can decide where to spend the practice (within the region). It may be followed by a lucky job-offer. These are mostly calvinist schools, and it is essential because religious subjects could not be taught in other schools. During the practice the students encounter different methodological tricks that can help their work later on. These methodological tricks are only efficient if they help the students to realize what they already know and what they can build on. So, their knowledge can be broadened as concentric circles. The task of the teacher is to introduce the world to the students by transferring the values and morals, and to let them develop in this world. It coincides with the process of Christian education. „The child must demonstrate and develop all the talent gotten from God. In relation, the good teacher never expects an echo but an answer to the questions.”¹³ So, the teacher must be a partner, a supporter and a catalizator for the student and he must teach the way to exist within the society.

¹³ Gaál, Botond: A reformátori neveléseszemlény az idők mérlegén, *Theológiai Szemle*, 1994/2. 80.p.

The trainee students –while having a practice in different schools of the region- must face that the children in the different schools have the access to different cultural goods. „It is different to teach in Debrecen and in a village around. We may realize that teacher who is a good one to teach children of intellectual, well-situated families may not provide the same good job when teaching a class of socially disadvantaged students.” (leading college teacher). In consequence, a teacher must try to compensate the functions that may cannot be provided by the family. „Even if the teacher cannot make up the family he should support the student.”(leading college teacher)

„The careful preparation increases confidence within the students and the trainee teachers. „Our graduated students can function the tasks of the teacher from the beginning on. When returning to their alma mater, they tell that there is a great fear in their colleagues. For them, however, teaching is a pleasure. It is so because we taught them how to teach.”

The present situation of teacher training – teachers’ opinions

„The personality of a teacher is a crucial factor and it cannot be substituted by anything else. Therefore I believe it is dangerous that the prestige of the teachers’ profession has fallen in the past few decades. Obviously, I do not want to hurt anyone’s feelings, but the case is that those who cannot study some other fashionable university majors will be teachers. The question is, indeed, if there is a real attempt to turn this tendency beyond the slogans, catchwords and political campaign-tricks.”(bishop)

The bad situation of the teacher training is described by many teachers in a similar way. They have also the question in what the Bologna-process would result and what changes it would take into the Hungarian higher education. However, the deputy president is not so pessimistic: „those, who were admitted for the first three years in the Bologna system think that they got into a university, but actually they only will get a paper that does not authorizes them to anything. The teacher training remained a four years long study, so it became one of the best degrees. In addition, it is very varied, and this applies both for the teaching skill development and for the teaching major.”(deputy president)

In the same time, the teachers and teacher trainee students must face the fact that due to the demographical wave less and less children will attend the school, and this will query the necessity of the present teacher training and their own existency. This can result in the dismissal of teachers and in cut-back. It is risky if a major does not have the proper number of teachers and it needs to employ additional people. The five years long term means that it is not sure that the given department could handle a situation in that -due to the rapidly changing educational system- there would be no need for a teacher anymore. The college has a solution for this, as well: beside of the full-time teachers already retired teachers give lessons, too. In addition, a new status was created by the presidential decision; the status of a apprentice, that actually equals with the position of a demonstrator's position, both in terms of the amount of work and salary. However, the contract only goes for a year. This precaution is very telling and it illustrates the vague future image of teachers and teacher training. „Staying at this job is more and more challenging, both mentally and physically.” (leading college teacher)

The position filled by the Kölcsey College within the region

The Kölcsey Ferenc Calvinist Teacher Trainig College, as one of the biggest teacher training institute of the country is the leading college in the region. Not only in the county, but also in the whole Tiszántúl it undertakes the realization of teacher training. It offers such majors that nay cannot be provided by other institutes. In terms of the number of students, this college is the biggest teacher training school of the country, and it is also very fruitful in quality and efficiency, if we take a look at the results of the nationwide academic competition. Still, the level of quality seems to have fallen in the past few years, and the leaders of the college think that the reason for this is the lack of tendering opportunities. As opposed to the universities, they cannot join programs with great financials. The departments cannot provide the necessary sources for researches of great volumen, so they cannot involve students and cannot demonstrate the results. However, their students usually achieve a good place at the annual competitions.

The college is an independent higher educational institute with an ecclesiastical maintenance from 1993 on. It is not integrated, but it undersigned a co-operational agreement with the University of Debrecen and with the Reformed Theological University of Debrecen in January, 2000. The opinions concerning the non-integration of the college differ. Some are afraid of the falling of the academic level, and others think that the college can only work under ecclesiastical control in the future. The college, having this double profile, has not been integrated to anywhere, and it behaves as an independent unit, although it has several relations to the two universities and other schools and organizations of the region as well.

The Kőlcsey has permanent contacts with other teacher training institutes, such as the Tessedik Sámuel College and the teacher training institute of Sárospatak. This contact primarily includes professional meetings and continuing professional education in the region. While interviewing, they mentioned the Holland contact, and they indicated the possible future contacts with Germany, Canada and Japan. The Japanese offered to send Japanese teachers to teach arts. In the Canadian relationship they would support the children of sporadic Hungarians. It would coincide with the attempt of the college to take up the over-the-boarder Hungarians. In this way, primary relationships are the ones with Bihar and Szatmár county, and the one with the Subcarpathia. In addition, the college undersigned a contract that says that all the school-inspectors of Romania would be trained here. The leadership of the college realized that without a broad relationship net „no modern training conditions can be produced. The more open, and the more foreign relationships a college has, the more efficient it would be.” (leading college teacher)

New forms of training at the college

The profile of the college became more varied by the grounding of the Institute of Media Sciences and the Andragogical Institute. The birth and the secession from the limits of a department of these two institutes is representative. They are reactions given to the transformation in higher education and to the market needs. Because of the decline of the number of applicants, and in order to make the college popular, they started the

communication and media sciences major in 1993. At the beginning, it only ran with the teacher major and the librarian-informatician major, but from 2006 on it became an independent major, as a basic major of the Bologna system. The actualizing of this major was an answer to regional needs, and in the same time the conception of the church was also drawn: to train professionals in the media who also know the world of the church.

In the previous political system, the church was low-represented in the media, however, more and more researches dealt with the ecclesiastical communication. The two worlds that were separated started to approach each other. „Since 1989-1990 religious programs have become more and more places in the national media. The written press also became open.”¹⁴ The development of the calvinist media was slower. First the programs on the commercial radio, TV, and then the online publication took place. Today, according to the market needs and the number of listeners, it is reasonable to start a new major as well. The practical training is supported by the Főnix calvinist news for the youth, the Kölcsey studio, and the radio of the school, the Méliusz radio that deals with topics in connection to the church. Since 2007, all are included in the Lícium Mediportal.

The Andragogical Institute, such as the Communication and Mediasciences Institute defines its educational content according to the regional needs. On this basis, it offers pedagogical postgradual courses and accredited courses. The opportunity to take OKJ trainings and the organization of major days, inland and international conferences and cultural programs also makes the college attractive.

Summary

The Kölcsey Ferenc Reformed Teacher Training College attempts to keep both the traditions of the ecclesiastical and of the public education and practice. The goal of the college is to create a continuity within the teacher training in Debrecen. It is a great challenge, however, to deal with the needs both towards a public and an ecclesiastical school. The mission of the college was largely shaped by political fights over power.

¹⁴ Szabó, Ferenc: Az egyházi sajtóról egyházi szempontból. In *Egyház és kommunikáció* (Edit. Hamp Gábor- Szöllősy Ágnes), Budapest, Balassi kiadó- Magyar Pax Romana Fórum, 50.p.

These fights seem to have defined the life of the school for a long time, but it also seems that finding of the new profile and the reforms made due to the needs of the local community become stronger after a while. In this respect, the essential question is, if the different aims and interests are able to co-operate or not. Thus, the college, beside of its traditional functions, stands for missions that attempt to mediate values in the uncertain processes of today's educational reforms.

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