

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Protestant Church Architecture between the Two World Wars

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Abstract

In recent decades, increasingly strong efforts can be observed in the research and understanding of Hungarian architecture in the Interwar period. In terms of volume, church architecture has a significant stock of monuments or memories from that era. However, one can hardly draw a complete picture of the various denominations' church architecture activities, because research has followed mainly a stylistic approach so far. In this historically charged era, church buildings emerged as major identity-shaping forces for the Protestant denominations, for new congregations that were developed by the church districts rearranging with the changing country borders and by the urbanization of city peripheries. The study attempts to present the Protestant church building activity of the period by examining the church architectural theories of the two largest Protestant denominations, the Reformed and Lutheran Church, thus providing a sort of typological approach.

Key words

church architecture · Protestant typology · architecture in the Interwar period · architectural theory

RECEPTION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES

The 500th anniversary the Reformation is an opportunity also for the history of architecture to reconsider the research of Protestant church architecture, to establish new areas of research, and to detect the worsening deficits. Interpreting this activity as a kind of re-reading, new results can be found by involving different points of view. This is especially true of the 21st century religious architecture's Protestant part, where niche research seek to eliminate the gaping void. This study focuses on the Protestant church architecture in the Interwar period. In the field of the Protestant architecture following the historic period border, namely World War II, the research of Zorán Vukoszávlyev revealed several new correlations, especially as a kind of connotation of the era's Roman Catholic church architecture.¹ The Interwar years, particularly the 1930 decade give a more or less credible cross-section of the then competing concepts. By that time, the demand for a kind of progression had developed in the ecclesial life – with different emphasis and in different forms for the different denominations – allowing the emergence of a new style. Typically, the church architectural trend is linked to the historical, economic and political events – almost regardless of denominations. Projected to the discussed era this means that as a result of the shock following World War I, and despite the burdens of the global crisis, the number of church constructions significantly increased in Hungary from the late 1920s, and this trend persisted until the early 1940s.² One reason for this is that the number of the capital's Protestant believers has increased substantially with people arriving from the annexed areas after the war, and soon the capacity of the existing churches proved insufficient. Major residential cluster constructions started in previously peripheral areas of the increasingly expanding city, and these projects were completed with a church building or house of worship in almost all cases. In total, around 47 Lutheran and Reformed churches were built on the territory of present-day Budapest and around 141 churches in the rest of the country. The

boosted church constructing activity was pointed out also by Gyula Sándy, the well-known and much employed Lutheran church architect of the period:

„At all times, the end of great wars encouraged the faithful souls for an intense activity in the ecclesiastical life. [...] Farther away from wartime, this kind of enthusiasm of souls usually decreases, and while we could hardly see any significant new church constructions in the second half of the last century and at the beginning of the 20th century, after the 1914-18 world war, though ended badly for us, and in spite of the critical economic situation more new churches were built in our country in 10-15 years than over a century before the war. Fortunately we can see [...] the longing for religious buildings even today: new churches rising skyward.”³

Although a magnitude less Protestant churches were built in this period than Roman Catholic ones, yet style pluralism, typical of the Roman Catholic church architecture too, can be traced in them. One possible reason for the style pluralism can be the ongoing attempts to reform the religious arts. In our case this means that historicist styles coexisted, often they were enriched by using modern materials, eventually creating a kind of coulisse-like characteristic. By the adaptation of foreign architectural influences and by the spread of new building materials e.g. reinforced concrete, modern engineering and architectural structures, as well as the stylistic features of modern architecture appeared, and also the so called “Hungarian” style became typical of the era.⁴ In case of the Calvinists, this latter characteristic is especially related to the religious situation developed after Trianon and to the impact of re-annexed areas mainly with Protestant population, since this meant an extra motivation for the architects and artists to take action for creating a uniquely Hungarian and specifically Protestant art.⁵ Naturally, “Hungarian Reformed churches” built after World War I. continue the 19th century tradition in which the national and Hungarian style is linked to the Protestant traditions.⁶ Károly Kós and the Fiatalok (the so called: *Group of the Youth*) represented one direction of the folk revival, continuously

1 Vukoszávlyev, Z.–Urbán, E.: Magyarország templomépítészete 1945-1964 között = Vázlat az alkotóművészeti értékeléssel megállapítható építészeti folytonosságról, Építés-Építészettudomány, 2016, 3-4, pp. 247-315.

2 Baku, E.: Tradition and Liturgy: Centralising Tendencies of Lutheran Church Architecture in Hungary during the Interwar Period. *Periodica Polytechnica Architecture*, 44(1), pp. 1-8, (2013). DOI:10.3311/PPar.7297

3 Sándy, Gy.: A templomépítések gyakorlati megvalósítása. in: 'Evangelikus templomok' (eds. Kemény, L., Gyimesi, K.), Athenaeum, Budapest, (1944), p. 459.

4 Baku 2013, p. 1.

5 Takács, Béla: A református templom, Református templomok Magyarországon [The Calvinist church, Reformed churches in Hungary], 1992, p. 21.

6 Marosi, Ernő: Református templomok Magyarországon [Reformed churches in Hungary], 1992, p. 45.



01 Lutheran church, Kaposvár (Hungary), Gyula Sándy

reflecting on the results of the English and the Finnish art. As for the architecture between the two world wars and especially for the Protestant church architecture, this trend mainly manifested in brick architecture and in the use of decorative folk motifs. It can be linked most to the work of Gyula Sándy and Bálint Szeghalmy; and also István Medgyaszay should be mentioned, who consistently adhered to the national roots and tried to develop a specific style by combining tradition with his functionalism and by creating folk motifs from reinforced concrete. Although the Lutheran and the Reformed churches were different in terms of liturgy and the use of space, but in terms of principles similar motivations can be discovered in them in the discussed period. (Fig. 1)

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH INTERIORS

In this period, unlike the Roman Catholic liturgy defined by the Council of Trent, the Protestant church is the place of encounter with God, however, it is not the house of God; according to its function it is not only intended to delimit and designate the space but also to exclude it from the profane world. The church is a congregation shelter, a closed place of

concealment, built close to the members of the congregation, but surrounded by an open space.⁷ In addition to these principles, the most important aspect of Protestant worship is to perform the main liturgical moments right in front of the congregation. This means that the pastor should always be visible and can be heard, and the congregation can get closer to the pulpit and the altar or around the Lord's Table, thus being involved in the liturgy.⁸ The two liturgical centers were designated by the places of the sermon and Communion, in other words by the pulpit and the altar for the Lutherans or the Table of the Lord for the Calvinists, and the congregation was grouped around these elements.⁹ The two focal points determined the interior layout and the placement of benches; while in case of new churches they led to the development of new floor plan forms. In the design of Protestant buildings it is essential to position more seats near the

7 Ravasz, László: A református templom [The Calvinist church]; Kováts J., István ed.: Református templomok Magyarországon [Reformed churches in Hungary], p. 2.

8 Raymond A., Menzer Jr., The Reformed Churches of France and the Visual Arts, Seeing Beyond the Word. in 'Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition' (ed.: Corby F. P.), William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Canada (1999), p. 133.

9 Medgyaszay, I.: Templomstílusok. in: 'Magyar református templomok' (ed. Kováts, J.I.), Athenaeum, Budapest, (1942), p. 49.

pulpit, and this can be best solved with a combined arrangement of the longitudinal and cross naves.¹⁰ In order to let the congregation see without obstacles and hear undisturbed, both the church's layout and the design of the interior spaces had to be reinterpreted. In this case, it meant a kind of purification of the interior, that is, a demand emerged to remove the columns and pillars from the church that would obstruct vision and affect the acoustics. These expectations inevitably transformed the church interiors, because from that time on the main architectural task was to solve the centralization of the space.¹¹ The main trends have not changed substantially in the 20th century either, which on one hand meant that the essentially longitudinal structures, which were inherited from the Roman Catholic church architecture, remained. On the other hand, although from different directions, there was a strong pursuit towards centralization, primarily for the purpose of creating an independent Protestant church type.

PROTESTANT CHURCH-ARCHITECTURAL THEORIES

The unconditional compliance with the liturgy well define the church types which were found the most suitable for the construction of Lutheran and Reformed churches. Simultaneously, the Hungarian and international – especially German – Protestant church architectural trends and theories influenced the Protestant church architecture in the Interwar period. In the following, theories are presented that were emerged along architectural, spatial, liturgical and functional principles and which influenced the Protestant church architecture of the era.

Frigyes Schulek's church architectural theory in connection with his church in Szeged

As an architect, Frigyes Schulek summarized the spatial approach of the Reformed church buildings in line with the liturgy in 1885, in connection with the building of the Calvinist 'Kakasos' (=Rooster) church in Szeged. The main component of the old – Catholic – church type is the sanctuary, e.g. the altar space,

which is emphasized also architecturally. In contrast, the Protestant church has no altar, so functionally it is not necessary to separate the sanctuary, therefore the whole organizing principle of the old Catholic church type collapses. This leads to the need of developing a type that stems from the use of the building.¹² According to Schulek, from the religious ceremonies' point of view there are two main starting points:

*„One of them is the Lord's Table where the whole congregation receives the Lord's Supper, where baptisms and wedding receptions, namely actions that are the subject of public attention, are usually performed; and the other one is the pulpit, which, as the center of religious education, should be placed somewhere in the middle of the interior, requiring the centralization of the building.”*¹³

The Lord's Table should be centered, and the pulpit, having an outstanding appearance by its form, may be placed to a geometrically secondary location. For the ideal Reformed church building a connection should be found between the old Catholic church type and the centralized gallery-model. And to find this link, a form of centralization imposed by the need has to be invoked; at the same time the elements should be kept which ensure the dignity of the building. According to Schulek these elements are the belfry, the stand-alone positioning of the church building and the style that must be harmonic, different from everyday modern architecture, and should strive for the strict geometric layout of the medieval monuments.¹⁴ This is achieved by using a complex geometric system, which is essential for the Reformed churches, since in them the architectural design provides the major added artistic value instead of any work of art. For Protestant churches, the cost-effective implementation of the building is also an important principle, which should be in line with the previous principle.¹⁵ Referring to Frigyes Schulek as the creator of the new type of Protestant church architecture, but especially that of the Calvinist church buildings, Samu Pecz formulated his own principles in connection with the design of the Great Reformed Church in Debrecen. (Fig. 2)

12 Schulek, F.: A református templom, Építési Ipar, 9 (04.01.1885.), p. 6.

13 Schulek 1885, p. 6.

14 About the medieval relations of Schulek's principles and his design theory see more: Krisztina Fehér: Frigyes Schulek's Calvinist Reformed Church in Szeged - A Particular Case of Medieval Design in the Historicism (*Researches on Protestant Church Architecture. Historical Building Typology Conference*, Budapest, 26.05.2016.)

15 Schulek 1885, p. 8.

10 Pecz, S.: A protestáns templomok építéséről, kapcsolatban a debreceni kálvinista új templom részletes ismertetésével, Magyar Mérnök és Építész Egylet Közlönye, Budapest, (1888), 197.

11 Foltin B., Az evangélikus templom. in 'Evangélikus templomok Magyarországon', Hegyi&Tsa, Budapest, 1992, p. 18.



02 Reformed church, Szeged (Hungary), Frigyes Schulek



03 Reformed church, Budapest, Szilágyi Dezső tér, Samu Pecz

Samu Pecz in connection with the church in Debrecen, Kossuth street

During the sessions of the Hungarian Association of Engineers and Architects, Architectural Works and Public Buildings Department (Magyar Mérnök- és Építész Egylet mű- és középítészeti szakosztály), held on 20th and 27th February 1888, Samu Pecz explained his Protestant church architecture principles in details in connection with the presentation of his church in Debrecen. In his essay he published the ideal church plan of a pentagon-shaped layout, designed prior to the floor plan structure of the church on Szilágyi

Dezső tér. With this ideal plan he also attempted to solve the greatest problem of the Protestant church architecture's central tendency: the collation of the geometric and liturgical center. Samu Pecz pointed out that Frigyes Schulek was the first one who created something new in this area with his Calvinist church in Szeged, therefore his building could serve almost as a model for later ages. The basic objective of Pecz's study was to establish and organize the rules that are to be kept in mind when building Protestant churches. Basically, both the sermon of the Calvinist and the Lutheran religion consists of songs, oration and receiving Communion. The latter is served at the

altar or the Lord's Table. In case of the Lutherans, the use of space becomes directed due to the location of the altar; the entrance and the altar together appoint a longitudinal axis. Therefore, according to Samu Pecz, the longitudinal nave layout is the best arrangement for the Lutheran churches, especially the one-, two- or three-nave basilica composition (by reducing the side aisles to corridors) or the aisleless church with or without a transept.¹⁶ In case of such arrangements the sanctuary section will be significantly shorter than in the Roman Catholic churches, and also the longitudinal nave should be shorter for a better audibility. So Samu Pecz, although he emphasized the functionality of the longitudinal layout, continuously inclined towards a centering kind of tendency. For Lutheran churches, Pecz found the central spatial arrangement functional only in special cases, when local conditions – e.g. the site's features – forced the architect to use this layout; and he also provided a proposal for the floor plan layout for these special cases. For Lutheran churches, floor plans created from even number sided polygons i.e. rectangular, hexagonal or octagonal regular polygons can be used by emphasizing the longitudinal axis.¹⁷

The case is somewhat different for Protestant churches, where the goal is to place the Lord's Table at an equal distance from the benches, which clearly leads to a central arrangement and organizes the building along a vertical axis. In Pecz's opinion, the most appropriate form of a Calvinist church is a central floor plan that places the Lord's Table in the center, where the dimensions of the polygon forming a tight core are relatively constrained, but the capacity can be increased with the construction of galleries. In a church with an even number sided polygonal layout, the entrance opening on one side of the polygon is always located opposite another side of the polygon, where the sanctuary can be placed. In contrast, in an odd number sided polygonal layout opposite the entrance there is one of the vertices of the polygon, which is more suitable to accommodate the pulpit, making it clearly visible from all parts of the church, and the believers arriving from the main entrance can be distributed symmetrically around the pulpit. Therefore Samu Pecz proposed the triangular, rectangular or pentagonal polygons to be the basic forms of Calvinist churches.¹⁸

In the Reformed churches, by placing the Lord's Table in the center a complete centralization is achieved, and the liturgical center and the physical center of the building coincide. This means that the place where the most important part of the religious ceremony is performed forms a center architecturally as well, and the emphasis may be expressed either with a dome-like superstructure or with a central tower.

„When comparing the centrally organized Calvinist church to the church buildings with Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Lutheran central layout, one will find that the liturgical center can be harmonized with the building's center only in case of the Calvinist churches.”¹⁹

The disadvantage of central churches appears in the costs increased by the roofing solution (vault or dome). In addition, when searching for the acoustically best form Pecz noted that the circular or elliptical floor plans and the flat ceiling, barrel vault or dome did not create good acoustic spaces, he also referred to one of the most important principles of the Protestant church buildings.²⁰

In summary, Pecz divided into three groups the church floor plans he found more or less suitable for Protestant churches. The first type is the church with hall-like layout, which he found most often in Calvinist churches built after the German model, then comes the group of circle and polygon shape floor plans and finally the cross-shaped church types.²¹ (Fig. 3)

Synthesis work of Gyula Sándy

The principles of Frigyes Schulek and Samu Pecz had the greatest influence on the Protestant church architecture between the two world wars through the works of Gyula Sándy. In his memoirs Sándy wrote that Samu Pecz summarized the Protestant church types in 6 figures. The first one shows the possible conversion of the Roman Catholic church type by installing seating in the sanctuary. This model became popular and the longitudinal layout was used also in the construction of new churches with an elongated rectangular form, without an apse, expanded with entrances and galleries on the two end sides. This model was followed until the 19th century. Later, essentially with the transformation of this latter type a

16 Pecz 1888, p. 195.

17 Pecz 1888, p. 197.

18 Pecz 1888, p. 199-200.

19 Pecz 1888, p. 200.

20 Pecz 1888, p. 205.

21 Pecz 1888, p. 244.

centralizing cross floor plan developed. In case of larger churches a layout was used where a *large rectangular* shape was placed in the cross, the main entrance was in the middle of the long side, and the side walls were completed with galleries. The towers' location arose as an issue for the certain types, but in the above case the tower is to be placed at the end of the longitudinal nave. One of the fundamental limitations of this type is that the faithful are too close to each other, which is less fortunate for the ladies.²² Also Sándy highlighted Schulek's innovative church type, which, breaking with the previous principles, developed a new kind of space structure from odd number sided polygon and equilateral triangle, where the Lord's Table could be placed in the middle of the central space. Since the walls are not parallel, this is an acoustically adequate arrangement, which was implemented by Samu Pecz in an improved form, starting from a pentagon. Sándy raised the question whether Pecz's plan, which he published prior to the construction of the church on Szilágyi Dezső tér, could affect the floor plan of the similarly innovative Reformed church in Szolnok, designed by Ottó Sztehló. Gyula Sándy's essay, presenting his church architectural works in an autobiographical manner, remained only in fragments so his church architectural principles may only be concluded. It is certain, however, that the influence of Samu Pecz can clearly be demonstrated in the oeuvre of Sándy, one of the most prolific Protestant church architect of the Interwar period. (Fig. 4)

István Medgyaszay

István Medgyaszay formulated some architectural principles regarding the ideal Protestant churches. In his work, *A templomstílusokról* [On the styles of churches] one of the key principles in line with the liturgy is simplicity. The goal is that the church should be as clearly understandable as the worship itself, besides it should be modest, only a few architectural decorations are allowed that are thematically inspired by the Scriptures. Both the 60° angle of view, in which the pastor can see its congregation and can affect the floor plan, and the 90° angle, within which the sound spreads well and the sermon is understandable, are necessarily taken into consideration in the design of

the church.²³ In connection with the style of the new churches to be built, Medgyaszay primarily found the creation of a kind of independent, Hungarian-like style achievable. This style should emerge basically from the motives rooted in ancient Hun-Hungarian form treasury:

*„Some Hungarian-like, Transylvanian village churches are the closest to the future image of our true Hungarian church. Ancient Hun-Hungarian form elements can also be found on these churches, which motifs bud under the homeland skies long ago.”*²⁴

In respect of the floor plan forms, Medgyaszay gave an overview of the most commonly used varieties. The so called long church or long-hall church is often used inter alia because of tradition. Its main advantages are the easy and quick constructability and the unity of space. The disadvantage appears with the expansion of the size because the use of pillars and columns becomes inevitable beyond a certain span, impairing the hearing conditions and visibility. Another difficulty is the functional placement of the organ gallery. In Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches the organ gallery is placed to a suitable location above the main entrance, however, its drawback is that the organ hides the most beautiful window of the church, situated on the main facade. Since in the Roman Catholic churches the sanctuary can be found in the main part of the church, just opposite the people who enter the building, it is obvious that the organ and the singing are of secondary importance in terms of the liturgy, they only come after the altar. In case of the Reformed churches, if the organ gallery is arranged in accordance with tradition, a huge, confusing empty space will remain around the pulpit, opposite the entrance. And it is also embarrassing that the songs, being so important for the worship, can be heard behind the congregation. This problem can be eliminated if the organ is removed opposite the entrance, however, the pastor and the choir get too close to each other this way. Weighing the options, in long-hall churches the organ gallery was usually placed along the side wall.²⁵

Double long church is the type that consists of a small and a large hall, where the normal worship is celebrated in the larger hall, while the smaller room, separated with a curtain, can be used independently as a small church. Between the two rooms there is the common Table of Lord. During greater religious

22 Sándy, Gy.: Hogyan lettem és hogyan voltam én templom-építő, -tervező és művezető építész? In: 'Lapis Angularis VI.' (eds. Fehérvári, Z., Hadik, A., Prakfalvi, E., Zászkaliczky, Zs.) Magyar Építészeti Múzeum, Budapest, (2005), pp. 38-39.

23 Medgyaszay 1942, p. 50.

24 Marosi 1992, p. 46.

25 Medgyaszay 1942, pp. 53-54.



04 Lutheran church, Miskolc–Diósgyőr (Hungary), Gyula Sándy

feasts the two spaces can be used together.²⁶ This solution was less popular in Hungary between the two world wars, rather Danish and German examples can be found from that period.

In addition to the basically longitudinal layout the solution Medgyaszay called the wide church type, spreading out from the Netherlands and showing the signs of centralization, was also suitable for Reformed churches. Besides, the Greek-cross plan was also in use, in which the seating could be functionally arranged.

The next type, the solution recommended also by L. Ch. Sturm, is the corner church that can easily be integrated in the existing urban tissue. The location of the pulpit, however, is not entirely fortunate because of the pastor's position, who stands half to the right and half to the left, and also the congregation is completely divided into two parts.²⁷ Another solu-

tion is the fan-shaped floor plan, which eliminates the shortcomings of the corner church. As a specific solution, Medgyaszay published a triangular floor plan, which proved to be useless as it may be suitable with regard to seeing and hearing, but the interior narrows and it is also difficult to fit the church to the external environment. A further disadvantage is that the number of seats is limited compared to the cost of construction. The space, indicating a more centered layout, is remarkable for its unified spatial effect, since it makes the implementation of a complete centralization possible by placing the Lord's Table in the center. In addition to the above, the elliptic²⁸ and the parabolic²⁹ church forms were also in use, the examples of which can be found in the Interwar period as well. (Fig. 5)

26 Medgyaszay 1942, p. 54.

27 Medgyaszay 1942, p. 56.

28 Medgyaszay 1942, p. 63.

29 Medgyaszay 1942, p. 65.

The liturgy-rooted church architectural principles of László Ravasz

László Ravasz, leading figure of the Hungarian Reformed Church between the two world wars, Bishop of the Reformed Church of Dunamellék, approached the church architectural principles from the liturgy's direction. As for the Reformed churches, he found those floor plans the best suited to the liturgy where the pulpit was in the center, being clearly visible from everywhere, therefore he accepted the clover leaf, lily, and horseshoe shapes the most. The formulation of the above theories show that the principles of proper hearing and visibility are determinant, as they influence the size of the churches too. In an ideal Reformed church the Lord's Table and the baptismal font are in front of the pulpit, around which more space is needed where the service of Communion, confirmation, and baptizing can take place.³⁰ The organ is located opposite the pulpit, so the pastor can see the cantor and choir members. Furthermore, a fundamental requirement to the church building is to have a bright interior: to let abundant natural light in and also to have precisely designed artificial lighting. The brightness is associated with evangelical purity, which comes with white walls and the elimination of representations. That is why architecture plays a pronounced role for church buildings, as the visual arts are banished from the church and the significance of architecture is appreciated.

„We should not, therefore strive to build large, expensive churches standing for centuries or millennia, but to raise small, pretty, classy church tabernacles and to fill them with devout, praying brothers. [...] Any reformed congregation could be drawn if we gave them the church of St Peter as the congregation space. They would be forced to build a “tabernacle” inside.”³¹

In his opinion, the Reformed Church was not able to develop their own church style, since they either used the Roman Catholic churches or fought for survival. However, his proposal to establish church art commissions for the conduction of church plan permissions gave a forward-looking solution for the future.³² (Fig. 6)

Sándor Csikesz on Protestant churches

Sándor Csikesz, Protestant pastor, professor, dean of the Faculty of Theology published his study in 1934 with the title *A református istentiszteleti hely fogalma és megépítésének irányelvei* (=The concept of Protestant place of worship and its building guidelines). In this work, starting from the liturgical rules, he formulated some principles for the construction of the Reformed Churches. He found the consideration a mistake that the Reformed Church would have no specific architectural requirements for the construction of a place of worship in Hungary or abroad, and also the assertion that there was no specific Reformed church style.³³ The pre-World War era of the II 20th century established and launched the spiritual reformation of the Hungarian Calvinists. In connection with the building boom arising from this reformation, it was necessary to select the direction regarding both the theoretical and practical aspects, because the theological renewal perceived after the war did not pay sufficient attention to the church arts.³⁴

While the most important equipment of the place of worship is the altar according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic liturgy, for the Calvinists the Word of God has the greatest importance, which is linked to the pulpit, which is the special place of preaching. Actually, however, the Protestant worship takes place where the presbyter preaches the Gospels.³⁵ As for the architectural design, Sándor Csikesz apparently did not support nor opposed the use of any one style. However, he spoke against the historicist styles when he noted that architecturally the truth must prevail in the building materials and furniture of the place of worship, because churches symbolize the celestial world, therefore no parts of them can be imitations.

„That is why the Protestant place of worship should speak the truth in every inch. The wood should not lie itself being iron, mortar should not pretend the illusion of stone and carved marble, while plaster, stucco, Rabitz and all other Potemkin architectural tools should be prohibited in the House of God. [...] Stone fits to be used as the fundamentum of the church, and the masonry should be brick tested in fire.”³⁶

30 Ravasz L., A református templom, in: Református templomok Magyarországon (ed. Kovács, J. I.), Athenaeum, Budapest, (1942), p. 3.

31 Ravasz 1942, p. 3.

32 Ravasz 1942, p. 3.

33 Csikesz S., A református istentiszteleti hely fogalma és megépítésének irányelvei, Különlenyomat a Debreceni M. Kir. Tisza István-Tudományegyetem 1933-34. tanéve évkönyvéből, Debrecen, 1935, p. 1.

34 Csikesz 1935, p. 1.

35 Csikesz 1935, p. 4-5.

36 Csikesz 1935, p. 15.



05 Reformed church in Kelenföld, Budapest (Hungary), István Medgyaszay



06 Reformed church, Debrecen, Szabadság street, Imre Dolhay



07 University's Church, Debrecen (Hungary), József Borsos



08 Reformed church, Szeged (Hungary), József Borsos

Other important aspects are the acoustics, namely, avoiding the vaulted or domed topping of space, the creation of an appropriate size of space for the preacher, which means dynamics, and also the mutually implemented good visibility of both the preacher and the congregation. This latter principle reasons for avoiding columns, niches, too high pulpit and gallery. These considerations are completed with the feature described by Sándor Csikesz as the typical character of the Church's mission, namely that the reformed places of worship should be in close relation with the congregation spaces.³⁷ (Fig. 7)

The framework of this study allowed only the presentation of the principles and opinions found the most significant for the Protestant church architecture of the era, so the essay tried to focus primarily on the architectural mindset. In respect of the principles

it can be clearly stated that the aspects of cost-effective construction, simplicity, the acoustically correct topping of the space, and also floor plan layouts suitable for the sermon almost coincide, thereby allow the establishment of more or less unified viewpoints. Of course, there are significant differences in emphasizing the principles, but essentially all of the above were considered as accepted by almost everybody. These aspects are clearly detected in the church architecture of the discussed period, and the buildings prove and support the statements contained herein. (Fig. 8)

The paper was supported by the Reformation Memorial Committee of Hungary, Grant No. REB-15-KUT-0004.

37 Csikesz 1935, p. 13.

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