



HÁLÓ **Network of Catholic Communities**

Church building through communities, self-identity

Founded in 1990 Háló (= Net), in its full name the Network of Catholic Communities, was established on the initiative of a few base communities of adults in Budapest to enhance contacts and flow of information between Catholic communities.

The function of Háló Christian Association for the Development of Communities is to support small communities in Hungary and in other CADSES countries (Central Adriatic Danubian South-eastern European Space: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia). We strive to connect the various, multi-coloured, mostly 8-15 strong small communities, to open them towards each other and to make their values visible and living also for the outside world. More than one third of Háló communities in Hungary are based in the countryside, and the majority of all communities are made up by the Transylvanian groups scattered over a large area.

Háló defines itself as a movement; essentially its activity is tracing and attracting the living Christian communities into a network of information and friendship. This task is done by the 'weavers', the most dedicated activists of Háló. Connections, both direct and indirect are established between communities by the net-weavers.

One of the aims of its activities is to enhance the independent coming together and mutual assistance of communities within their own region. In addition to such net-weaving activities, meetings based on friendly connections are also organized by Háló on local, regional and national levels as well as that of the Carpathian Basin.

In the spirit of the tradition worked out during the past few years one national meeting, one for the CADSES level and, according to local needs, one or more regional meetings are organized every year, not just within but also beyond national boundaries. Some of these were thematic meetings with a programme built around a particular subject. There is also an other type of meeting for concept forming and enriching each other's views for a smaller group of leaders organized usually in one of the countries at the beginning of a year.

Háló is a Catholic movement, which means that our members are only drawn from Catholic communities whose attitude towards their Christian brethren of other denominations is that of joy, thereby witnessing to the unity of Christ's Church and are champions of ecumenism, the unity of

Christians. At the same time it declares its solidarity with and is open towards all Catholic communities, however, it does not engage in debates or battles on church policy. Neither will it allow any community or trend to use it as a mouthpiece of his own. In this sense of the word Háló takes a neutral stance. As its activists usually put it: 'Háló is the place of meetings not of division'. It belongs to its self-identity that opportunities for dialogues are provided and preferred in contrast to monologues.

A major feature of the Háló identity is friendship, which always means friendship undertaken for a cause, a human commitment to each other and a community-type one to the building of the church. This friendship is built on personal love; the members pay attention to each other and to those who are addressed answer to their call. Its church ideal is the Community Church, in which the role of the laity is accepted in line with 'kingly priesthood' and the communities are viewed as parts of the same body in the sense as Saint Paul regarded it.

Personal encounters can be supplemented by means of the media and those of the information revolution. Making use of the Internet Háló works on the creation of a network, by means of which pieces of information can be relayed in a few seconds to the Catholic communities hiding in various corners of the regions of CADSES countries. The database has already been established and through the Internet it may become visible for communities in the future. By the effect of these a faster, more intensive and direct communication can be established and maintained between the communities not only in Hungary but also those of the neighbouring countries.

Háló publishes an internal periodical 'Tarsoly' (Satchel). The title of this publication is derived from developing the idea in the name of Hungarian movement reminiscent of the symbol of the Gospel: – the fish – treasures – caught by the net are gathered in the bag, fisherman's 'purse'. The purpose of this is not to keep them for himself but to offer to and share it with others.

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