

## **The Principles of Synodical-Presbyterial Church Government**

This work reflects the principles of the synodical-presbyterial church government, which are referred to in the church constitutions of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia. The author draws attention to the importance of the principles of church polity in ecclesial life, pointing to their occasional inadequate reflection. In this context, the author points out the introduction of the Führerprinzip in the German Evangelical Church in the 1930s. In addition, he highlights examples of churches that have been able to clearly formulate the principles of church polity, and some of them have even incorporated them into their church law.

The author goes on to clarify the basic terminology used in his work, focusing on the naming of Protestant churches in different languages. He deals with the division of churches into families according to the categorization used by the World Council of Churches, paying special attention to the family of United and Uniting churches. He describes five types of these churches, and considering the need to introduce another, a sixth type of United and Uniting churches. Next, he deals with the basic characteristics of Reformed, Presbyterian and Evangelical Lutheran churches.

The following part is devoted to the description of the principles of the pure Reformed church polity, as defined by German lawyer Karl Rieker in 1899. The author analyses the formal and material principle of the pure Reformed church polity and also deals with the realization of these principles in church law. The content of the formal principle is the biblicality of church polity. The material principle says, in the positive definition, the exclusive dominion of Christ over the Church, and in the negative definition, the removal of elements of human government in the church.

In the last part of the thesis, the author deals with the term synodical-presbyterial church government. After describing the usual meaning of this term in foreign literature, he analyses excerpts from Czech church journals that explain this term, from the publication of the Protestant Patent in 1861 to the present. The author intends to explain the development of understanding of the synodical-presbyterial church government in this period. He points out the influence of foreign Presbyterian churches on the understanding of the synodical-presbyterial church government in the Czech culture. He describes the predominant understanding of synodical-presbyterial principles in the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, highlighting the perils of this concept. The author is more inclined towards the concept of Karl Rieker, which he considers to be compatible with most of the United and

Uniting, Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran churches, including the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.

**Keywords:** church law, Protestantism