

Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ - Volume I



Welcome to volume one of "Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ"—our first complete book on the UCC Website!

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Beyond historical orthodoxy

Written by Barbara Brown Zikmund

"Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God." [1 Corinthians 2:6-7 RSV]

The United Church of Christ (UCC) is a denomination that reflects the pluralistic story of American Protestantism. Created in 1957, it is known for bringing together ecclesiastical bodies rooted in English Puritanism, American frontier revivalism, and German religious history. It takes seriously the calling of Christians to oneness in Christ and participates actively in the contemporary ecumenical movement. The prayer of Christ "that they may all be one" is central to its self-understanding.

Louis Gunnemann, who has written about this young denomination in *The Shaping of the United Church of Christ*, notes:

The formation of the United Church of Christ was a venture of faith, a response to a vision created out of the heritage of the past and in the context of new responsibilities. To know the beliefs, movements and events comprising that history is to begin to accept ownership and to be shaped by it. [1]

History, however, as with many academic ventures, sometimes gets into habits. Popular patterns of interpretation prevail for a time and then "revisionists" come along and new interpretations emerge. "What actually happened" does not change; it is simply seen with new eyes and shared with new understanding.

History is organic; it grows and flowers, it dies back and goes to seed. It needs tending, like a garden, to produce its best blooms. Sometimes it benefits from fertilizer. At other times careful pruning and even the grafting of old branches on to new stock will revive its beauty.

The United Church of Christ organizes its history around the legacy of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. These two denominations, which were themselves the result of earlier unions, provide the raw material for the "historical orthodoxy" of the United Church of Christ. In UCC historical work, therefore, one commonly finds a careful balance between the "four streams which become one"—Congregational, Christian, Evangelical, and Reformed. Churchpeople have come to expect that each tradition will receive its "one quarter time." But this is a distortion of history.

What happens when historical orthodoxy governs the exploration of the past? First, some parts of the history are lost forever when only half the story is told. Certain individuals and groups remain invisible. After a time they seem to have never existed or certain events seem to have never happened. The histories of women and of many racial and ethnic groups do not fit into the scope of historical orthodoxy, and they are forgotten or selectively remembered. Often those who were on the losing side of controversies are not given fair treatment.

Second, when historical orthodoxy prevails, the methods used to retrieve historical information and the type of research deemed legitimate are consciously and unconsciously limited. In some instances the oral traditions and unofficial memorabilia of a group are ignored because they fail to fit scholarly criteria. Again, the experience of ethnic groups or of peoples marginal to the dominant history is overlooked because it exists in stories and songs and languages foreign to the researcher. In such cases certain types of historical material are not recognized as being important.

Third, when historical orthodoxy dominates, typical research sources (such as letters, diaries, and journals) are read from only one perspective. Good history, however, approaches such materials with an open mind. For example, the records of missionaries contain profound insights into "native" world views and values. If these materials are read only through "white" or "colonial" eyes, the history of mission and the church is distorted. When they are examined from the standpoint of mission recipients, the picture changes.

Fourth, when historical orthodoxy governs the approach to materials, current events and special movements seem to emerge unrelated to any historical context. Yet few things in the church exist without some previous expression. The legacies of contemporary special interest groups are grounded in histories that need to be discovered and understood. But when historians settle into standard ways of "seeing" the past, the sources of contemporary change are difficult to discern.

History is not always neat and fair. And the UCC history is more complex than the historical orthodoxy that informs its self-image. The United Church of Christ is an extremely pluralistic and diverse denomination that is nourished by many "hidden histories." These important stories out of its past do not appear within the traditional fourfold history. Yet, as Gunnemann says, only when churchpeople know the beliefs, movements, and events that make up their history will they be able to accept ownership and be shaped by that history.

"Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ" attempts to move beyond UCC historical orthodoxy. The hidden histories of the United Church of Christ are unknown. They need to be preserved and adequately shared within the denomination to enable ownership. This book seeks to expand knowledge about the diversity of contemporary church life. It will especially stretch leaders in their understanding of the UCC. It connects the United Church of Christ with some significant developments in American religious and ethnic history. More chapters could have been included, but this is a beginning. Another book exploring the histories of the Chinese, Hispanics, Hawaiians, and others could be developed.

This book began with plans for an optional event sponsored by the UCC Historical Council in cooperation with the Coordinating Center for Women at General Synod XIII of the United Church of Christ held on June 29, 1981, in Rochester, New York. Because of the interest generated in the "Unity and Diversity of the UCC" during that session, authors were found to write the eleven

chapters that make up this collection. In rough chronological order the chapters document some of the hidden histories.

The first chapter is about the American Indian. Although contemporary historiography speaks of Native Americans, this essay retains the historical label Indian. The author of the chapter is not a member of the Indian community but writes from the perspective of the mission boards that initiated and maintained Christian work with American Indians for more than one hundred fifty years. In the not-too-distant future perhaps this story can be retold from a Native American perspective.

Most black history in the United Church of Christ is linked to the antislavery crusade of Yankee Congregationalists who worked throughout the nineteenth century to uplift and support their black sisters and brothers in the South. Some black UCC churches, however, do not come from that past. They are related to the development of the Christian denomination and evolved in the tidewater regions of Virginia and North Carolina, unconnected to black Congregationalism. This Afro-Christian connection is described in chapter 2.

The history of the German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania is the concern of the third chapter, which presents the nineteenth-century controversy between the Mercersburg movement and those who called themselves "Old Reformed." Some of the tensions within the United Church of Christ today are similar to this conflict between "high church" and "low church" factions.

Foreign mission activities set the stage for the fourth chapter, on Armenian Congregationalism. Because of the work of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the nineteenth-century, Armenian Christians of "evangelical persuasion" grew in numbers throughout the Ottoman Empire. Later, when Armenians came to the United States seeking refuge from persecution, they brought that legacy with them. From missionary beginnings Armenian Congregationalism moved to become part of the United Church of Christ.

The German heritage of the United Church of Christ is usually associated with the Evangelical and Reformed story. Chapter 5 tells how some German churches in the UCC were Congregational. These churches were organized on the midwestern frontier by German emigrants who came from Russia in the late nineteenth century. The emigrants were befriended by American Congregationalists but retained some of the Pietism they had nourished in Russia for several generations.

The image of the American Missionary Association (AMA) that is usually conveyed is one of white New England school teachers who went into the South after the Civil War to raise the educational level of blacks. Chapter 8 looks at that history from a different perspective and documents the involvement of blacks who worked for the AMA in education and in church development throughout the entire century.

Chapter 7 retrieves an important and often overlooked story of women in the church. Building on a German movement, in the late nineteenth century, the Evangelical Synod of North America offered women the opportunity of becoming deaconesses. These women shared their gifts in many health and welfare ministries sponsored by the church. Furthermore, their consecrated service gave them unique leadership opportunities as pioneer professional women.

The United Church of Christ has incorporated many diverse groups in its long history. Chapter 8 tells about a group—the Schwenkfelders—that seriously considered becoming part of the United Church of Christ but never did. Descendants of a sixteenth-century German reformer, they came to Pennsylvania in the colonial era and have been good neighbors to the German Reformed people for centuries.

Reformed hospitality, however, did result in a formal connection between the United Church of Christ and the Hungarian Reformed people. Chapter 9 explores the Hungarians' history in the United States and their independent status as the Magyar Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Within the United Church of Christ the Calvin Synod, a conference without geographical boundaries, continues to support UCC churches of Hungarian Reformed origins.

Chapter 10 returns to the story of women in the churches. This chapter explains how independent boards and organizations for women in the four denominations that formed the United Church of Christ provided a special power base for women at the turn of the twentieth century. It argues that these churchwomen changed the mission movement, helped women around the world, and set the stage for great changes in women's lives in the twentieth century.

The last chapter in the book, chapter 11, explores the development of Japanese Congregationalism in America. From Neesima Jo, who smuggled himself out of Japan in 1864, to the concentration camps of the 1940s and into the post-World War II period, the story of Japanese participation in the United Church of Christ is impressive.

Any examination of "hidden histories" is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, learning these stories is disturbing. Preconceptions and assumptions are stretched and challenged. This experience is painful, because these histories show how deeply captive the church is to cultural patterns of ethnocentrism, racism and sexism.

On the other hand, studies of this type highlight the strengths of pluralism. There is power for the entire church in knowing these stories; and for those who stand outside UCC historical orthodoxy these histories bring justice. The United Church of Christ seeks unity within its diversity. Only as it is able to locate, preserve, and share the fullness of that diversity will it be enabled to embrace the oneness of Christ.

American Indians, missions, and the United Church of Christ

Written by Serge F. Hummon

From early Colonial writings we know that many white Christian settlers were concerned about the native peoples they found living in North America. Although the violence done to indigenous peoples can never be redressed, it is important to recognize that the churches did not always accept the popular insensitive attitudes about American Indians. Indeed, stories of important Christian mission work among the Cherokee, Choctaw, Dakotas (Sioux), and Winnebago can be traced through the records of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and in the letters of Reformed Church missionaries. Recently this legacy has moved from well-meaning missionary paternalism to ecclesiastical self-determinism. Today the Council for American Indian Ministry of the United Church of Christ supports the churches and ministries of American Indians in the denomination.

Colonial concern

The colonial period began with the landing of the Pilgrims and ended with the American Revolution (1620-1783). Because the Pilgrims desired good relations with the Indians, a treaty of peace was drawn up between Gov. John Carver of Plimouth and Massasoit of the Wampanoag tribe, which read in part:

1. That neyther he nor any of his should injure or doe hurt to any of our people.
2. And if any of his did hurt to any of ours, he should send the offender, that we might punish him.
3. That if any of our Toolles were taken away when our people were at worke, he should cause them to be restored, and if ours did any harme to any of his, wee would doe the like to them.
4. If any did unjustly warre against him, we would ayde him; if any did warre against us, he should ayde us. [1]

During the early years the English purchased the land they needed for colonization from the Indians. However, both parties were soon involved in land disputes. The years from 1620 to 1675, when King Philip's war broke out, were dark times. The story of the mission to the Indians was "glorious and often terrible. ... Every promising beginning was brought to a sad end by the injustice of the white citizens to their red brethren." [2]

Yet the Massachusetts Bay Colony had deeply religious intentions toward the Indians. Its charter vowed "to wynn and invite the Natives . . . [to] the onlie God and Saviour of Mankinde." John Eliot, the minister at Roxbury, was concerned about the remnants of the tribal people in his area. He learned the Massachusetts language and by 1646 was preaching at Dorchester Mills and Newton. Eliot enlisted others in the mission. He believed that Christian Indians should be segregated from their tribes into towns of "Praying Indians," where they could be supervised and nurtured in Christian knowledge. Natick was the first town established, in 1651, on land provided by the General Court. A church was organized. By 1674 fourteen towns of Praying Indians, with a total population of four thousand, were in existence. Activities included preaching, teaching, catechizing, Bible reading, and devotional literature. Indians were taught English, agriculture, and domestic crafts.

John Eliot's mission attracted attention in England. A missionary society was founded in 1649 to solicit contributions for the work, which was explained in a tract titled "New England First Fruits." Parliament appropriated funds and in the same year established a Corporation for Promoting and Propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England.

But King Philip's War devastated the towns of Praying Indians. Caught between traditional Indians and whites who suspected them of tribal loyalties, the tribes in eastern Massachusetts and Connecticut were broken up, and the survivors were forced to move west of the Connecticut River.

The Housatonic band of the Mahican tribe was one remnant group that received mission attention. The chief welcomed John Sargent, a young tutor at Yale, as a missionary. Sargent was ordained at Deerfield, Massachusetts in 1735. He began a mission at Stockbridge, Massachusetts that was successful in establishing a church and a day school as well as in organizing a Christian town. The Indians who came together here assumed the name of Stockbridge Indians. Sargent died at age thirty-nine and was succeeded by Jonathan Edwards.

Another active missionary in the 1700s was Eleazar Wheelock. Graduating from Yale in 1733, he was ordained and called to the Second Parish of Lebanon, Connecticut. To supplement his income, he opened a boys' school in the parsonage. One of his students was Samuel Occam, a Mohegan youth. As a result of his experience with Occam, Wheelock conceived the idea of a school and mission where Indian boys and white boys would be trained together. The Indian boys would learn English and be introduced to Christianity and the skills of white society. The white youths would learn Indian vernacular and the ways of Indian life. Later the youth would be paired in the mission enterprise with remote tribes and sent out to establish churches and schools. Wheelock's vision was ambitious. He was sent Delaware and Mohegan youth and established the Moor-Indian Charity School at Lebanon, in 1755. All students were on scholarships. By 1765 he had enrolled twenty-one Indian boys, ten Indian girls, and seven white boys. Being continually short of funds, Wheelock quarreled with his sponsors over support.

In the 1760s the flow of Indian students declined, and Wheelock turned his attention to the education of white youth. He accepted a land grant at Hanover, New Hampshire, where he received a charter for the founding of Dartmouth College. He associated the Moor-Indian Charity School with the new college. By the time of the Revolution, Indian mission work was almost at a standstill.

Wheelock must be remembered for the Calvinist he was. The wrath of God was real to him. He desired to save the perishing souls of the "heathen." He had contempt for the Indian culture—a shared view of his time—and felt that conversion of the Indians [was] easier, more effective, and far cheaper in lives and money than military conquest.

Gratitude, duty, and loyalty to the King required vigorous prosecution of missions, and the King laid this duty on the colonies in the colonial charters. . . . Furthermore, the savages cannot be expected to keep treaties as long as they remain savages, for they will keep such contracts only when they have been civilized by Christian education. [3]

Mission societies and government action

During the waning years of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth century (1783-1830) Indian missionary activity was furthered by associations formed to provide personnel, literature, and Bibles for the expanding frontier. A fear existed that people on the frontier would be paganized. In 1787 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America was organized and incorporated in order to give inspiration and leadership to regional societies. One such group was the New York Missionary Society, which sent a mission to the Chickasaw in the South, in 1799. At this time overseas missions were an emerging concern, but frontier settlements and Indian work were priorities. Not until the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was organized, in 1810, did foreign missions receive major focus.

The young country faced the question of relations with the tribes. The new Constitution of 1787 vested policy formation in the Congress. In 1806 the office of Commissioner of Indian Trade was established. The tribes were dealt with as foreign nations that possessed treaties with the government. Administration was placed in the War Department. Henry Knox, the first Secretary of War, shared the view of mission society executives that Christianity and civilization went hand in hand. He wrote:

Missionaries of excellent moral character, should be appointed to reside in their nations, who should be well supplied with all the implements of husbandry, and the necessary stock for a farm. ... They should be friends and fathers.

Such a plan, although it might not fully affect the civilization of the Indians, would most probably be attended with the salutary effect of attaching them to the interest of the United States. [4]

The American Board worked closely with the government in establishing the Brainerd mission to the Cherokee in Chickamauga, Tennessee, in 1817. Cyrus Kingsbury opened the work with the tribe's consent. The government built a schoolhouse and a home for a teacher, which also boarded Indian youth. Two plows, six hoes, and six axes were provided initially. A similar plan for girls was launched with spinning and weaving equipment. An annual report from the mission to the Secretary of War was required. Congress appropriated the funds for the work on the basis that, as one of its committees wrote, "the sons of the forest should be moralized or exterminated." [5]

In 1819 Congress passed a bill providing for a "Civilization Fund." This statement of public policy provided the basis for government and church cooperation until 1873. Although the major denominations might differ in doctrine, they could enter into a partnership with the government to "civilize" the Indians. The government benefited, because the churches paid the salaries of the missionaries and, more important, provided dedicated personnel.

Government resources greatly extended the scope of mission activity. Kingsbury moved on from the Cherokee mission to the Choctaw. He proposed that the government fund four large schools and thirty-two small ones, a fourth of each to be located west of the Mississippi. The large schools would accommodate eighty to one hundred scholars; the small ones, twenty to forty. The government never funded all the schools, but their numbers increased as rapidly as the American Board found funds and government monies were appropriated.

For the most part government and church mission policy was congruent in the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century. The westward movement of Americans, however, gave rise to a clamor for the removal of tribes settled near expanding frontier communities. On the question of removal, a minority of the missionaries spoke in behalf of Indian rights. The American Board took the leadership in opposing the removal of the Cherokee in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama. Although the Cherokee had fought with Andrew Jackson against the Creek and the British in 1814-15, they found him no friend when he became President, in 1829. The Cherokee had made remarkable progress in self-government and in literary and economic development. In 1827 they adopted a constitution modeled after the U.S. Constitution. This act incensed the state of Georgia, which claimed jurisdiction over Cherokee lands. It clamored for removal of the tribe and blamed the missionaries for insisting on tribal rights. Jeremiah Evarts, chief executive officer of the American Board, proved a powerful advocate for the Cherokee. He wrote eloquently in their behalf in the press of the day. The Cherokee had powerful friends in government, especially in New England, where liberals like Ralph Waldo Emerson opposed their removal. But the political tides were too strong, and the Removal Act was passed by Jackson's administration in May 1830.

Five missionaries—two from the American Board, one Moravian, and two Methodists—refused to take the oath of allegiance to the state of Georgia against the Cherokee. They were arrested and publicly maligned. All but the two American Board missionaries, Samuel Worcester and Elizur Butler, were eventually released. These two men were sentenced to four years of hard labor, but the American Board stood behind them by taking the case to the Supreme Court, which ruled in their favor in 1832. The governor of Georgia offered a pardon. Rather than accept the pardon, they were counseled by the Board to withdraw the case from further prosecution.

Even though the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of the Cherokee as a sovereign nation, President Jackson refused to enforce the law. He said, "John Marshall has pronounced his judgment; let him enforce it if he can." [6] Such was the political climate of the day.

Mission to the Dakotas

Work with the Cherokee, Choctaw, and other civilized tribes was phased out reluctantly by the American Board in the 1830s because of the removal of these tribes to land west of the Mississippi and because of the general disarray of these tribes' existence. The mainstream of mission activities moved to Minnesota and focused on the Sioux, who called themselves Dakotas. Sioux was a Chippewa word meaning snake or enemy; Dakota stood for friend, ally.

Thomas Williamson, a Presbyterian, was sent to the Dakotas by the American Board, in 1835. In these years the American Board was supported by Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Williamson was joined shortly by Stephen and Mary Riggs. Both these families were to collaborate in long careers with the Sioux. Riggs became an eminent scholar in the Sioux language, publishing a grammar and a dictionary in 1852. He and Williamson translated the Bible, which was published by the American Bible Society.

The Riggses first worked in missions along the Minnesota River, where the Sioux were congregated after cession of large amounts of Minnesota land to the United States. The Riggses felt that civilization and Christianization were "Siamese twins" in mission strategy and set out to reform Indian life. In appraising their work a contemporary scholar describes the difficulties they encountered:

Persons of mixed blood and women tended to convert almost easily, the former because of their already ambivalent status in Indian society, and the latter because the missionaries did not require a major dress and role change. In the case of males, a convert was required to dress in an alien fashion (Western clothes) and to do work relegated to women (in the Indian's eyes). This was no subtle change. ... Unconverted tribesmen quite correctly viewed the whole civilization-Christianization approach as a threat to their way of life. They retaliated against converts and missionaries with such measures as ostracism, threats, cattle killing, and destruction of property. [7]

In 1862 American Board mission activity was disrupted by the Sioux uprising in Minnesota. The Lincoln administration, distracted by the Civil War, had not come through with promises of food for the 1861-62 winter. In waiting for their grants from the government, the Sioux had neglected their hunting. After a winter of great privation the warriors took supplies from government storehouses and killed several soldiers. This action ignited feelings on both sides. About 700 white settlers were killed. Indian losses were also large. Although they took many captives, the Sioux did not have the resources of the army to sustain prolonged conflict. Some of the Sioux fled to Canada. Fifteen hundred were rounded up as prisoners and three hundred were condemned to death. President Lincoln commuted the sentences of all but thirty-eight warriors, who were hanged.

The Riggses and their colleagues lived through this dangerous time with the help of new converts, such as Simon Anawangmane (Walks Galloping On), who rescued white mission personnel after their capture. More than twenty years before, Anawangmane was the first full blood to convert to Christianity. He withstood the taunts of proud Dakota braves, who reminded him that his church was made up of women. Anawangmane adopted Western dress and turned from the hunt to agriculture.

In the Riggses' account of the mission one senses the heroism of Sioux converts. Artemas Ehnmane, who became pastor of Pilgrim Church at Santee, Nebraska, had been a fine hunter and was the son of a war prophet. Before his death his father had said, "The white man is coming into this country, and your children may learn to read. But promise me that you will never leave the religion of your ancestors." [8] Ehnmane promised but reneged because "his gods were worsted by the white man's God" in the great Sioux uprising. So he believed.

The mission work had a genuine vitality among the Sioux. Eight congregations had been formed by 1871, led principally by native pastors in Minnesota and the Dakota Territory. In that year the *WordCarrier* (Iapi Oaye) was published and became important to the Dakota people. It was a four-page newspaper, with a motto in Dakota: "To help what is good, to oppose what is bad."

The Santee Normal School, on the Missouri River near Yankton, was opened in 1870 by Alfred Riggs, a son of Stephen and Mary Riggs. American Board support continued for the school through 1883, when the American Missionary Association took over. In the 1880s as many as two hundred students were enrolled yearly. A standard curriculum of reading, writing, and arithmetic was supplemented by industrial arts training and Christian education. Much of the instructing was done in Dakota, in contrast to other schools, where English was insisted on. Graduates were expected to return to their tribes in leadership roles.

The Dakota Home for Girls was started on the Santee campus in 1872. Its central purpose was the training of future homemakers: "They learn to cook and wash, sew and cut garments, weave, knit, milk, make butter, make beds, sweep floors, and anything else pertaining to housekeeping, and they can make good bread. [9]

Theological education was organized at the Santee School during this period. Native pastors had asked for it. A short course of four weeks was devised in "Bible geography and history, in the main doctrines of the Christian faith, in the best methods of teaching Bible truth, [and in] the founding and growth of the Christian church." [10] The school was finally closed in the late 1930s.

The Fort Berthold Reservation mission, in North Dakota, was begun by Charles Hall, who was ordained in the South Dakota mission at Yankton, in 1876. He had served a new non-Indian church at Springfield, South Dakota immediately preceding his decision to go to Fort Berthold. He had met his bride, Emma Calhoun, in the congregation. After Hall's ordination the *Word Carrier* extended the right hand of fellowship, saying as the couple departed, "They must be part of us. They will, in fact, form a part of the Dakota Mission.... Go and plant the standard of the cross on Ft. Berthold.... You will entreat the Holy Spirit to beget in the Hidatsa and Ree and Mandan people a soul-hunger that can only be satisfied by the Bread and Water of Life." [11]

Charles Hall was born in England, in 1847. He was educated at City College and Union Seminary in New York and at Andover Theological Seminary in Newton Centre, Massachusetts. The Halls's mission efforts were begun at Like-a-Fish-Hook village on the Missouri River. The chiefs of the three affiliated tribes—Son of the Star, Crows Breast, and Red Cow—deeded the mission sufficient land for its work and promised to "protect the American Board and their Missionaries in their rights." [12]

Hall worked in English, loved to sing Indian lyrics, and was called *Ho Washte*, or Good Voice. He did not develop indigenous ordained church leadership and used Indian people as helpers in both church and secular work. The mission developed slowly, and nine years elapsed before Hall organized the first church at Arickara, in 1885.

Mission to the Winnebago

The nineteenth-century story of the Winnebago is a tale of broken treaties between these ancient residents of Wisconsin and the federal government. The Winnebago were removed to locations west of the Mississippi in the 1830s, but many returned to central Wisconsin in the decades that followed. By the 1870s they were permitted forty-acre homesteads in the sandy pinelands.

The German Reformed Church in Wisconsin began its mission with the Winnebago near Black River Falls, in 1878. Henry Kurtz, a Mission House College [13] professor, had been saved from freezing

to death by neighboring Indians. The Sheboygan Classis raised funds to support a missionary to bring "the Gospel also to the heathen living in our own land, the Indians; this duty, alas, we have too long neglected." [14]

Jacob Hauser, who had been a missionary in India, began the Black River Falls mission. His work was legitimized at the lodge of the great chief Blackhawk, who said, "The words you have spoken are good. We also believe in Earthmaker. We love our children. It will make us glad to see them well taught. We are glad that you have come." [15]

Hauser opened a school in a log building the tribe had erected. He had major difficulties because he did not know the Winnebago language, but he learned it slowly in working with the children and calling in the homes and developed a vocabulary of about 1,500 words. Before his retirement, in 1885, a chapel was built to enlarge the school facilities.

Jacob Stucki joined the mission in 1884 as Hauser's assistant. Born in Switzerland, he came to Toledo, Ohio as a boy of sixteen, where he found the life of the Reformed Church challenging. He attended Mission House College and Seminary, in Wisconsin, and with his bride, Rachel, took over the work when Hauser retired.

Mission development after 1890

Outstanding missionaries among the Sioux were Thomas and Alfred Riggs, sons of pioneers Stephen and Mary. While Alfred concentrated his work at the Santee Normal School, Thomas ranged over Indian country. He founded missions with the Teton Sioux and their many bands, progenitors of today's Dakota Association. A graduate of Beloit College and Chicago Theological Seminary, Thomas lived with the Teton and knew their life in the declining years of their existence on tribal lands.

On the Standing Rock, Cheyenne, and Rosebud reservations young Indian leaders responded to the missionaries. Often several men in a family became pastors and community figures. The Tibbits and Frazier families were eminent in South Dakota. Arthur Tibbits became the native pastor at Cannon Ball, North Dakota. His son and daughter-in-law, Percy and Emma (Frazier) Tibbits, carried on the work on the Standing Rock reservation and at the Rapid City Indian Center under the sponsorship of the National Council of Churches. Philip Frazier attended Oberlin College and Chicago Theological Seminary and returned to South Dakota for his pastorates. He was elected to head the Dakota Mission in 1932, the first Indian to hold such a position. Harold and Eva Case came to the Fort Berthold Mission in 1922. They were friends of Charles Hall's son, Robert, who encouraged them to take over the Fort Berthold work. With eastern roots, Harold Case had gone into YMCA work and settled in Denver. He and Eva decided to go to Fort Berthold for one year and ended up staying for the remainder of their careers!

The Cases were genuine Christian friends to the Affiliated Tribes in troublous times—the depression of the 30s, the drought years, the uprootings of World War II, and perhaps most difficult of all, the erection of Garrison Dam. This dam, built on the Missouri River, flooded Fort Berthold, forcing people from their historic lands. The tribes were moved to higher grounds and separated by Lake Sakakawea. The Cases were indefatigable in church and community development. They advocated good schools, organized public health programs, assisted in forming libraries and cooperative laundries. They even pioneered in silent movies with portable electric power.

The Cases were proudest of the achievements of young Indian people. Emerging in their time was Robert Fox, who attended the mission school at Fort Berthold, Santee, and Cook Christian Training School, in Arizona. He served as pastor at Twin Buttes, Halliday, and his home church, Arickara. Always interested in public affairs, Fox became tribal chairman. Other Indian leaders were Ina Beauchamp Hall, elected North Dakota Mother of the Year in 1969, and the Walkers—Hans Jr., Melvin, and Tillie—who were educated for professional careers.

A similar mission development was occurring in Wisconsin. John Stacy, a young Winnebago, was challenged to Christian ministry and was one of the first four Winnebago baptized, in 1898. He had worked closely with Jacob Stucki in translating important parts of the Bible, and this translation

appeared in 1907, an issue of the American Bible Society. The work was no little accomplishment because of the extreme complexity of the Winnebago language.

Mission work and church life were slow in developing because of the Winnebago style of ostracism of Christians. Stacy's children were taken by his father, a traditionalist, when Stacy declared his faith. His mother-in-law threatened to poison him and did not speak to him for years, although she was provided living space on the Stacy farm. Yet Stacy, his wife, and her brother, King of Thunder, persisted in their Christian profession and eventually won the grudging respect of the tribe. More converts joined the mission, and the Winnebago Indian Mission Church was organized, in 1922. Through the years the Indian School, supported by the Sheboygan Classis, gained acceptance by the tribe. In 1917 its support was turned over to the Reformed Church, and in 1928 the national Women's Missionary Society provided gifts for its expansion.

Benjamin Stucki, Jacob's son, fell heir to his father's work. Growing up among the Winnebago, he spoke their language and knew the tribe intimately. He directed the work of the Indian school and became the church's pastor in the early 1930s. In 1942 he was adopted into the tribe as Najkehunka—Chief in Heart—one who had demonstrated a love for the people.

Mitchell Whiterabbit grew up through the church and mission school. Having attended Mission House College, in Wisconsin, and Lancaster Seminary, in Pennsylvania, and been ordained in 1945, he became the Mission Church's pastor and served the community and Indian cause in Wisconsin with distinction. As tribal chairman, he was able to provide leadership in the 1960s, when the Winnebago won tribal recognition from the government.

Beyond White paternalism

In a sense the enumeration of Indian achievements can be a form of white paternalism. It implies that what was common for non-Indians was special achievement for Indians. An awareness of this condescension helped prepare white leaders for the 1960s. As this decade dawned three important streams came together: The white leaders discovered the racism in the church's mission; the young Indian leaders brought up through the church's ministry agreed with them; and the United Church of Christ became a reality.

Galen Weaver pioneered in recognizing white racism in Indian mission terms. He developed Indian leaders through the United Scholarship Service, a program that provided a ferment that raised fundamental questions about decision making in the church's mission. Indian leaders spoke of self-determination, a human rights concern. Wesley Hotchkiss of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries (UCBHM) had written an important position paper on the relation of Christ to culture, in 1958. He spelled out the implications of H. Richard Niebuhr's seminal work as to how the Christian faith should approach a culture: "The churches were really out to destroy the Indian culture although they proposed to do it in a most beneficent manner and under the guise of doing good for the Indian. Christ was against culture in this presupposition." [16]

Hotchkiss called for an approach in which Christ is seen as a transformer of culture, the whites' as well as the Indians'. All cultures could find fulfillment in Christ from the injustices they embody. This mission stance related anthropology to theology in a creative way. It saw mission with Indian people as a two-way bridge: missionaries able to learn from tribal life and religions while proclaiming the gospel. Hotchkiss lamented that Indian religion and culture were so devastated from Western contacts and that this new approach would not be simple or easy.

Mission workers struggled with the concept of "mission with" rather than "mission to" Indian people. In 1964 I was liaison between the Board, the conferences, and the Indian churches, assembled at Aberdeen, South Dakota, a major Consultation on a mission strategy for the remainder of the decade. All facets of Indian work were represented. The Consultation spoke to the denomination in saying: "The Church ... is a People of compassion.... The United Church seeks to use skilled staff in its mission.... [It must be] ... increasingly guided by Indian people. ... The cultural gap between white and Indian people is still large." [17]

Understanding the human misery in Indian homes and communities, the Consultation sought sensitively to guide the limited resources of the church into the work with children and youth. The leaders held that major social welfare loads were the government's responsibility. A group home for high school dropouts was recommended for North Dakota. The outgrowth was the Charles Hall Youth Services. A group home was recommended for Pierre, South Dakota. The merits of the Winnebago Children's Home were recognized.

The Consultation noted the migration of Indian people to urban centers and recommended that the United Church work ecumenically in ministering to Indians in the city.

Council for American Indian Ministry [CAIM]

The ferment for self-determination in both Indian and white thinking bore fruit in the formation of the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM), in 1970. After a historic style of dominantly white decision making the mission was turned over to Indian people for shaping of basic policy. The UCBHM took the leadership in this step. Bylaws were drawn that made CAIM a nonprofit corporation in the state of North Dakota. Representatives were provided for from the three Indian associations—North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. In addition, youth and urban members were added to the board of directors.

CAIM began its work on January 1, 1971. Robert Fox was chosen as the first executive director, with Juanita Helphrey, from Bismarck, North Dakota, as assistant director. CAIM's task was many fold: to provide counsel to the reservation churches; to distribute the funds from the United Church to churches and other projects on and off the reservations that made claims on them; to relate the United Church of Christ mission to those of other denominations; and to interpret the ministry to the church at large.

In 1971 General Synod VIII increased the funding for the mission by designating an American Indian Sunday offering to be transmitted by the Executive Council to CAIM. CAIM was to report to the Executive Council regarding its ministries. In June 1974 I observed:

The reservation people would prefer to deal with the BHM for their funding rather than with CAIM. This is true of South Dakota [the Dakota Association had withdrawn from CAIM] and Wisconsin. North Dakota has more confidence in CAIM because the office is located in Bismarck and the staff is Fort Berthold people.... They see the value in a Council which has some decision-making power even though it is expensive." [18]

Non-Indian leaders in the mission were disillusioned with CAIM and probably too impatient with its difficulties. Native Americans were not adequately trained in decision making or accountability. A new set of problems faced the United Church.

General Synod X approved part of the Neighbors in Need offering as support for CAIM in lieu of American Indian Sunday and created a Strategy Assessment Team to recommend long-term Indian mission policy. The team was composed of Mitchell Whiterabbit as chairperson, Robert Fox, Carol Little Wounded, Beth Thunder Cloud, and Carol Boney, with Norman Jackson and myself as staff consultants. It reported to General Synod XI and recommended that "CAIM [be] an agency of the United Church of Christ," with four priorities for the foreseeable future:

1. The Indian congregations ... shall be the top priority for CAIM.
2. General leadership training for pastors and lay leaders of Indian congregations [be supported] through the Native American Theological Association.
3. Urban and conference ministries [be funded] ... such as establishing a new Indian congregation in an urban area.
4. Involve[ment] in the struggles for justice and development for Native Americans ... in public issues. [19]

Native leadership and native theology

CAIM and the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities had taken an active role in creating the Native American Theological Association (NATA). The ecumenical effort grew out of extensive research at Cook Christian Training School regarding the leadership crisis in native churches. With Lilly Foundation help and Howard Anderson as executive director, NATA was launched. It sought to engage Native Americans and whites in serious theological dialogue in order to impact seminary curricula. It also commissioned courses for native students and a system of theological education by extension in which the seminary was taken to local reservation churches. NATA recruited students and raised funds for scholarships.

This development has caused denominations to rethink their non-Indian standards for the ordination of Native Americans.

After serving NATA for five years Anderson wrote: "NATA is far more successful, despite its failings, than it has any human right to be. Only the Holy Spirit could be guiding NATA to this success." [20] He warned, however, that a major threat to NATA is, and would be in the future, a denominationalism that would fail to invest adequately in training native church leaders.

The importance of NATA for the native church cannot be overstated. At long last theological leaders are reexamining the Christian gospel in native terms. After analyzing this mission in terms of the Dakota people, Donald Gall, part Sioux and current UCBHM liaison in Indian ministry, holds that the white missionaries expected acculturation among his people; they failed to see how deeply rooted the Dakota culture was. Unable to accept Western ways, the Dakotas felt the gospel was part of the white people's church and held it at arms' length. Gall argues that the whites took this stance because of an unjustifiable identification of the Christian faith with their own European culture. White missionaries could not distance themselves from the assumptions of the white society, which assumed that Native Americans were "heathen, pagans or savages." These views were ingrained in the myths of white society regarding Native Americans. Gall writes:

But what was really on the table at that first Thanksgiving besides venison and turkey? The other menu was the question of human nature, the understanding of humanity's relationship to the natural world, the process of knowledge, the meaning of creation and the use of symbols for communication. The Wampanoags had assumptions and beliefs about all these subjects, as did the Pilgrims, but they were unable to communicate with each other. It was such a disastrous failure of communication that within a few years they were in a life and death struggle with each other for living space. That struggle continued for more than two and a half centuries, and resulted in a decimated and demoralized Indian population which has ever since suffered the effects of cultural and religious genocide. [21]

The gospel emerged from tragedy. Can it do the same in Native American missions if both white and Indian persons recognize the unique gifts of all in Christ? Such an expression of hope is the All Nations Indian Church, which was founded in 1981, in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. At the first service Avery Post, president of the United Church of Christ, noted the significance in this congregation's joining the United Church family:

Thanks be to God for the faith and commitments of the people gathered for the first service of worship of All Nations Indian United Church of Christ. The whole family of the United Church of Christ greets you and prays for your life and mission. We rejoice in your unique gifts in the service of the gospel of peace, justice, and new life. [22]

Serge F. Hummon was Secretary for Church Development and liaison for American Indian Ministries with the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries from 1958 to 1982.

Notes

1. In Amelia Bingham, *Mashpee: Land of the Wampanoags* (Mashpee, MA: Mashpee Historical Society, 1970), p. 9.
2. R. Pierce Beaver, *Church, State and the American Indians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), p. 6.
3. R. Pierce Beaver, *Pioneers in Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), p. 212.
4. In Beaver, *Church, State and the American Indians*, op. cit., p. 64.
5. Ibid., p. 67.
6. Ibid., p. 113.
7. Jon Willand, introduction to 1969 edition, Stephen Riggs, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux* (Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, 1880; reprint; Ross and Haines, Inc., 1969), p. xii.
8. Riggs, *Mary and I*, op. cit., p. 283.
9. Ibid., p. 313.
10. Ibid., p. 312.
11. Ibid., p. 315.
12. Harold and Eva Case, *100 Years at Fort Berthold* (Bismarck, SD: Bismarck Tribune, 1977), introductory page.
13. Mission House College and Seminary was started by German Reformed people to prepare pastors for their churches. Today its work is continued at Lakeland, College, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in Minnesota.
14. Arthur V. Casselman, *The Winnebago Finds a Friend* (St. Louis: Heidelberg Press, 1944), p. 60. A classis is comparable to an association in the UCC today.
15. Ibid., p. 63.
16. Wesley A. Hotchkiss, *Some Presuppositions in the Work of the Church Among American Indians* (Minneapolis: United Church Indian Work Consultation, 1958), p. 1.
17. Serge F. Hummon, *Mission to Indian Americans, United Church of Christ, Aberdeen Report and Mission Strategy: 1965-1970*, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1964.
18. Serge F. Hummon, *The Present Situation: A Working Paper*, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1974, p. 1.
19. Minutes of the Eleventh General Synod, United Church of Christ, 1977, pp. 79-80.
20. Howard Anderson, "NATA After Five Years: The Executive Director's Perspective," *NATA*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1982), p. 3.
21. Donald A. Gall, *Marginal Religion Among the Lakota Sioux: A Study of Conflict in Values and the Indian Mission of the United Church of Christ*, Eden Theological Seminary, 1982.

22. All Nations Indian Church, UCC, Minneapolis/St. Paul, vol. 1, no. 1. (1981), p. 2.

The Afro-Christian Connection

Written by Percel O. Alston

It is commonplace to read in the historical writings on the United Church of Christ about German immigrants who came to American shores seeking economic well-being. They established the Reformed Church in America in the eighteenth century and the Evangelical Synod of North America in the nineteenth century. It is equally commonplace to read about the Pilgrims who left their homes in England in quest of religious freedom. They landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 and subsequently established the Congregational Churches. A fourth stream fed into the formation of the United Church of Christ: the Christian Church, the first indigenous American denomination.

The Christian Church itself resulted from a "flowing together" of three different groups, in Virginia, New England, and Kentucky. These groups all had strong feelings about democracy in church government and the importance of Christian character for church membership and agreed that denominational concerns and labels were unnecessary. They took the simple name Christian. [1]

Life in nineteenth-century America was not simple, however. In the South, where there were many Christian churches, blacks were influenced by this movement. The Afro-Christian Connection began even before the Emancipation Proclamation.

The story goes back to Providence Church in Chesapeake, Virginia, which was established in 1852 by free black persons. Most Afro-Christian history, however, documents the movement of black people from the slave balconies of the white churches in North Carolina and Virginia to an abandoned cabin, stable, or "bush arbor."

Whatever else may be said about African people, they are notoriously religious. African scholar John S. Mbiti writes that it is never correct to speak of any one African religion. Africa throughout its history has been replete with a wide variety of religions that shape the lives of its people. [2] So it is not surprising that after the Civil War former slaves of African descent developed their own indigenous religious response to the God of their ancestors in ways appropriate to their needs in their new environment. The founders of the Afro-Christian Connection did not assimilate completely the Christian religion of their slave masters because they were not welcomed into the established Christian household of faith and because they yearned for the religious experience of their forebears.

It is not surprising, therefore, that "when the war closed in the Spring of 1865, Blacks began almost immediately to organize churches of their own, after the Master's denominational pattern." [3] Although early Afro-Christians patterned their organization after the white Christian churches, they developed their own idiom, style of preaching, liturgy, and worship, which still prevail in many of the one hundred fifty original Afro-Christian churches. [4] Soulful preaching from scriptural passages, long-meter hymns, ardent rhythmic prayers, Negro spirituals, and later, gospel songs were all part of the joyful, shouting services of worship in Afro-Christian churches.

Early history

Afro-Christian churches experienced rapid growth and development in North Carolina and Virginia during the decade after the Civil War. The Southern Christian Convention made a paternalistic response of conscience to its black sisters and brothers by appointing three white ministers—W. B. Wellons, J. W. Wellons, and H. B. Hayes—to assist the "Colored brethren" in organizing churches of their own and in organizing the Colored Conferences in keeping with the Cardinal Principles of the Christian platform. [5] These men were widely accepted by the early Afro-Christians and gave instructions in the licensure of the first black preachers and the ordination of black ministers. They helped to establish the Colored Christian Conference (predecessor of the Afro-Christian Convention), founded several black churches, and became their pastors. As "fraternal messengers" from the white Christian Convention they attended sessions of the Colored Christian Conference during the

first decade of its existence and participated in discussions and transactions. A major influence of these three ministers can be seen in the theological and doctrinal principles rigorously adhered to by Afro-Christians. These principles were taken verbatim from the Five Cardinal Principles of the Christian Church. [6]

Apart from the Bible these Principles, which are given below, provided the most essential basis for church polity, discipline, preaching, and teaching.

- Jesus Christ is the only head of the Church
- Christian is a sufficient name for the Church.
- The Holy Bible is a sufficient rule for faith and practice.
- Christian character is a sufficient test for Church membership and fellowship.
- The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience are rights and privileges which should be accorded to and exercised by all.

By 1867, under the guidance of the North Carolina Conference, a conference of Negro people was formed and named the Colored Christian Conference. When the Colored Christian Conference convened at Christian Chapel in Wake County, North Carolina, in 1873, twenty-seven ministers were listed. At the same meeting a new conference was recognized in Eastern North Carolina, and it was decided that the name of the Colored Christian Conference be changed to the Western North Carolina Colored Christian Conference. In the same year a group of Afro-Christians in Virginia met at Mount Ararat Church in Suffolk, Virginia, to form the Virginia Colored Christian Conference. Here again, the Reverends J. W. Wellons, H. B. Hayes, and W. B. Wellons were present as "fraternal messengers" from the white Southern Christian Convention. Six churches, two ordained ministers, and six licentiates of the Afro-Christian Connection participated in this organizing effort. [7]

It is remarkable that within a decade after the Civil War ended this small group of former slaves, many of whom could not read or write English, had moved out of the "Nigger" balconies of their former white masters' churches, established more than fifty churches, organized three conferences, and ordained forty ministers in North Carolina and Virginia. With a minimum of technical assistance from their white Christian counterparts, the Afro-Christians demonstrated that what they may have lacked in formal education and material resources, they compensated for by their faithfulness and dogged determination to develop and expand a Christian Church that captured and perpetuated something of the glow and exuberance of the African religious experience.

Worship

Preaching was central in the service of worship in Afro-Christian churches. It consisted of exegesis of biblical texts and vivid stories of biblical characters and racial oppression. The preacher did not always make application to the broad social issues of the times, but application was always made to what was perceived as personal Christian morality and ethical behavior. In this regard the Afro-Christian preacher was as severe as any New England Puritan. No Afro-Christian preacher would conclude a prayer or sermon without sounding a clear eschatological note of hope. The congregation never departed without being assured that despite the oppression, the suffering, and the pain experienced daily in this life, joy will surely come in the morning. The following quotation is a classic example of the expressions of hope with which Afro-Christian preachers concluded their sermons:

But things will be alright bye and bye
Bye and bye, when I come to press my dying pillow
After while, when I'm done climbing the rough side of the mountain
After while, when the big bell tolls in Zion
Bye and bye, when I've prayed my last prayer and sung my last song
Bye and bye, when I've come down to the chilly stream of the Jordan to pull off mortality and put on immortality

I'm going to be done with the troubles of this world
I'll hear the welcoming voice of Jesus saying, "Come ye blessed of my Father. You have been faithful over a few things. Now I'll make you ruler over many." [8]

A typical prayer handed down orally from generation to generation and usually a part of the worship service every Sunday morning went like this:

This morning, our heavenly Father,
It's once more and again, that a few of your handmade servants
bow humbly before your throne of grace.

We come before you this morning,
not for form nor fashion
not for outside show to the world,
But to confess our sins as wayward children
and to ask you to forgive us and
try us one more time.

We want to give you some humble and sincere
thanks, O God, for waking us up this morning
with your finger of love.
We want to thank you for waking us up in
time and not in eternity.
So that our bed was not our cooling board
and our covers were not our winding sheet.
We want to thank you this morning, Holy Father,
for articulation of speech and the blood
that still runs warm in our veins.

We want you to come by here this morning, O Lord,
and baptize us with the Spirit from on high,
Bless the preacher who shall stand in the
shoes of John this morning,
Lower him in the deep treasures of your love,
Crown his head with wisdom and give him
the utterance to call sinners to repentance.
Visit the sick in their affliction, and cool their
scorching fevers,
raise them up from their beds of suffering and pain,
Visit the prisoners and care for the dying
and I will be careful to give you the praise.
This is my prayer. Amen and Thank God.

This prayer, as well as the preaching and singing, was of high emotional intensity so characteristic of the African dance and music. Preaching and singing were always punctuated with loud amens and shouts of joy.

Education

During the early years of Afro-Christian formation a deep and abiding concern for the education of ministers and laypeople of the churches was paramount. The yearning for an educated and enlightened ministry reached its fruition in the period from 1871 to 1873, when the Conferences of North Carolina and Virginia decided to tax each member ten cents a year to purchase a site and build a school at Franklinton, North Carolina. This action proved to be the most significant event of the Afro-Christian Connection. [9]

The post-Civil War South was very poor. The economic condition of the ex-slaves was even more desperate but not so much as to dim the vision of a people whose determination to build a school far exceeded their economic means. By 1880 the Afro-Christians, assisted by modest contributions

from Christian Church members in the North, had raised enough money to purchase land, erect a building, and move to the new location.

The American Christian Convention took a firm hand in governing the Franklinton school. It appointed a Board of Control to manage the affairs of the budding institution and sent George Young, a young, white minister of the Eastern Christian Conference of New York, to serve as the first principal. A prominent black minister, Henry E. Long, became his assistant. The school was incorporated in 1883 under the name of Franklinton Literary and Theological Christian Institute. During its early years the Institute attracted more than two hundred students, ranging in age from five to forty-five. Fathers, mothers, and children often attended as families, studying a wide variety of subjects from the alphabet to Latin, algebra, physiology, and theology. None was turned away, no matter how poor.

Letters published in the Herald of Gospel Liberty, a publication of the American Christian Church, indicate that widespread interest and support existed among northern white Christians for this pioneering effort in black education and leadership training at Franklinton. [10]

After visiting Franklinton the Rev. John G. Wilson, of Philadelphia, wrote:

The school building occupies the most eligible site in the area. The ground is sufficiently elevated to command a prospect of the entire village, and large enough for the building of a first-class college and campus which it may become someday. At all events it bids fair to attain the rank of the Literary and Theological Institute of the North Carolina and Virginia African Conferences of the Christian Denomination.

The Rev. W. G. Clements, pastor of a white Christian church in Wake County, wrote in a letter to the Herald of Gospel Liberty:

For some of the brethren and sisters of the North who have given material aid to the Colored Christians of North Carolina, I thought it might be of interest to those donors to know that the Lord was blessing their efforts to do good. Having been raised up among the Colored people, and having watched their progress since the Civil War, I think I can speak advisedly as regards their improvements, and I do not hesitate to say, when we take into consideration the means at their command, they have made fair improvements. There is much ignorance among them yet, but where they have had an opportunity of going to school they have generally learned very well.... Those who have given their money to this institution of learning [the Franklinton school] have done a great work.

Another white visitor to Franklinton, the Rev. D. L. Putman, wrote:

This school is no longer an experiment. A fine location, suitable buildings and three years of school, in which there has been with each successive year an increasing interest and a permanent growth in numbers, have placed Franklinton permanently among the institutions that be. The work done has been excellent, equal to that of any institution of its character and advantages. The proficiency made in the studies in academic and theological departments has been highly commended. The Franklinton School is a great power for good.

Fourteen years after George Young arrived to serve as the first principal of the Franklinton school his assistant, Henry E. Long, became the first black president. From 1904 on great progress was made under Long's able and inspiring leadership. The Afro-Christian Conferences of North Carolina and Virginia gave one thousand dollars to purchase a new site for the school, now called the Franklinton Christian College. Gifts from the Northern Christian Churches and the Afro-Christian Churches were used to erect buildings. The years between 1905 and 1930 were the golden years of Franklinton Christian College. Although it never achieved the full status of college by reputable standards, it provided the essential education and training for pastoral and lay leadership for the Afro-Christian Church. Franklinton also provided strong institutional support for the substantial growth in the number of churches and membership in North Carolina and Virginia, without which the organization of the Afro-Christian Convention would have been impossible.

In an eloquent address to the Afro-Christian Convention in 1916, the Rev. Smith A. Howell, who later became the president of Franklinton Christian College, articulated the importance of Franklinton and the necessity for an educated ministry.

The Schoolhouse is the foe of ignorance whether in or out of the pulpit. Rapid intellectual advancement of the pew is an imperative call for a trained ministry. Is the calling of the ministry of less dignity and importance than the call of such honorable professions as law, medicine, etc.? Possessing the opportunities so earnestly desired by our fathers, what justifying excuse is there for a lack of intellectual training on the part of the ministry of today? We are persuaded that our ministry is so well aware of these truths that no argument is needed to enforce the ammunition to scrutinize with care the candidates for admission to our Conferences and insist on a high standard of qualifications. The future of our church largely centers upon the School of Theology at Franklinton Christian College. This school is to be considered the theological center from which goes a trained ministry. There is an imperative need that there be a thorough awakening to this truth. Our plea is for an educated ministry! An educated ministry!! An educated ministry!!! On this the respectability and influence of our church depends. [11]

When the school closed in 1930, in the depths of the depression, a dream was shattered and the hope for an educated Afro-Christian ministry was lost for many years to future generations. Afro-Christians had no way of compensating for this loss. They were denied access to Elon College, the prominent educational institution of the white Southern Christian Convention. Bricks Junior College, in Enfield, North Carolina, an institution established by Northern Congregationalists, through the American Missionary Association, for the education of black Americans, had also closed. After the merger of the Congregational and Christian Churches, in 1931, theological seminaries were open to blacks, but few were considered to be qualified for admission. In the absence of an educational institution of their own, many Afro-Christians reverted to a mischievous anti-intellectualism and spiritualism to compensate for their lack of formal training.

Compare these words of the Rev. J. J. Farmer to the Eastern Virginia Conference of Afro-Christian Churches in 1946, with those of the Rev. Smith A. Howell, quoted above:

All I have heard at this annual meeting is education. Education! I'm sick and tired of hearing about it. I want to hear about Jesus. He's the source of my salvation, not the college or seminary. I want to tell you that you can go to the college and you can go to the school, but if you ain't got the religion of Jesus, you're an educated fool. [12]

This burst of anti-intellectualism received some loud applause but did not go unchallenged. The Rev. Zanda P. Jenkins, a new breed of Afro-Christian minister, with college and seminary training, eloquently challenged what he called "that anti-education garbage unfit for consumption by those who love Jesus and care about His Church."

Although the educational level of the pastoral leadership and membership of the former Afro-Christian Churches within the United Church of Christ has improved substantially, many churches continue to bear the tremor of the closing of Franklinton Christian College.

The Afro-Christian Convention

In May 1892, at Watson Tabernacle, New Berne, North Carolina, the various black conferences organized into the Afro-Christian Convention. By that time the Eastern North Carolina Conference had become the Eastern Atlantic Christian Conference; the Western North Carolina Conference had returned to its original name—the North Carolina Colored Christian Conference. The Eastern Virginia Conference continued under the same name. [13]

Two other conferences had come into being: the Cape Fear Conference, which eventually faded out of existence, and the Georgia-Alabama Colored Christian Conference, organized in 1887. In 1910 the Lincoln Conference was formed by mutual agreement with the North Carolina Colored Christian Conference and a group of churches located in the Burlington, North Carolina, area. In 1912 the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York Christian Conference was organized. By 1916, according to the oldest minutes of the convention that have been found, there were seven conferences, four

mission churches in British Guiana, South America, and one mission church in Trinidad, British West Indies. [14]

The Afro-Christian Convention experienced significant growth and expansion under the able leadership of the Rev. Smith A. Howell, who was elected president in 1914 and served in that office for twenty years. During this period the number of churches grew to more than 150, with a membership of 25,000. Included in the Convention were 185 ordained ministers and licentiates; 150 Sunday schools and Christian Endeavor Societies; more than 12,000 Sunday school pupils; several Sunday school conventions; a Woman's National Home and Foreign Missionary Convention, which organized and trained the women of the church; and an active Afro-Christian Publishing Association, which was based in Franklinton, North Carolina, and served the churches and organizations of the Convention. [15]

Black Congregationalism

Before the organization of the Convention of the South, a later union of black Congregationalists and Afro-Christians, the Afro-Christian Convention operated virtually independently of both the Christian Church and the Congregational Churches, despite the Christian and Congregational merger of 1931. Afro-Christians separated from their black Congregationalist sisters and brothers and from their white Christian counterparts for different reasons.

Black Congregationalists were beneficiaries of the education, acculturation, and religious orientation of the American Missionary Association (AMA), whereas Afro-Christians were the victims of neglect by their white Christian counterparts. The AMA schools founded for the education of blacks in the South were oases of racial goodwill in an otherwise hostile, white racist society. The late Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, distinguished president of the black Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia, North Carolina, used to describe her school as "a little hunk of New England Congregationalism in the deep South." Black Congregationalists identified freely with New England Congregationalism, and for many years they were considered objects of mission by the Congregational Church.

Afro-Christians had no such sense of identity with the white Christian Church. They had no alternative but to build their own church connection. Even after the organization of the Convention of the South, black Congregationalists remained virtually separated from Afro-Christians by maintaining their own separate Associations. As late as 1957, at an annual meeting of the black Western North Carolina Association of Congregational Churches, the Rev. W. M. McRae reminded the Superintendent of the Convention of the South, Dr. J. Taylor Stanley, that "we are not Christians, and despite your efforts to make us so, we remain American Congregationalists."

The Convention of the South

In 1941 there were 106 black Congregational churches, scattered throughout the South in eleven states, with a total of 6,975 members; there were 129 black Christian churches, concentrated almost entirely in North Carolina and Virginia, with a total of 12,640 members.

Comparisons between Black Christian and Black Congregational churches in the South were inevitable. The average membership of a Congregational church was sixty-six; average membership of a Christian church was ninety-nine. Nearly all Congregational pastors had had at least some college and seminary training; many had both college and seminary degrees. Very few Christian pastors had training above the high school level; none had completed requirements for a seminary degree. The Congregationalists had had large financial assistance toward ministers' salaries and church buildings and facilities, as well as opportunity for liberal educational and religious training in church-related schools and colleges, conveniently located throughout the South. The Black Christians paid the meager ministers' salaries themselves, built their own churches, and developed their own church organizations, with very little encouragement, financial or otherwise, from their white Christian neighbors. [16]

The birth of the Convention of the South of the Congregational Christian Churches, in 1950, was pivotal in the history of the Afro-Christian churches. Up to this point Afro-Christians had not only operated virtually independently of the Congregational Christian denomination but also had had

little contact with black Congregationalists. Under the able and sacrificial leadership of J. Taylor Stanley, the Convention of the South was organized in Greensboro, North Carolina. This organization brought together all black Congregationalists and Afro-Christians in the South, from Virginia to Texas. A few Afro-Christian churches in New Jersey and New York were also included. For the first time a mechanism for the inclusion of Afro-Christians in denominational life and work was in place. Even though the divisions between Afro-Christians and black Congregationalists persisted among the older generation, the young people began to discover a common Congregational Christian identity through Pilgrim Fellowship, youth rallies, and youth camps and conferences. By the mid-1950s the new generation of Afro-Christians was reclaiming the aspirations for higher education that was characteristic of their forebears who had founded Franklinton Christian College. The adults began to identify with the denomination through Woman's Fellowship and Layman's Fellowship groups that were keyed into national programs. Christian education training institutes and workshops and pastor training events contributed to a new level of consciousness and a sense of common identity.

Another event that facilitated the transition was the merger of the remnants of Franklinton Christian College with Bricks Junior College, in the early 1950s. This new conference center, Franklinton Center at Bricks, North Carolina, provided the institutional support for the training of pastors, youth, and adults of Afro-Christian and Congregational backgrounds. At Franklinton Center, Afro-Christians were grounded in the history, heritage, theology, and mission of the Congregational Christian denomination. Church school superintendents and teachers were introduced to denominational curricula and taught how to use them creatively. Increasingly, new patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving appeared. "Congregational Christian" began to replace "Christian" on the bulletin boards of the churches, Pilgrim Fellowship replaced Christian Endeavor Society, the Kansas City Statement of Faith began to replace the Five Cardinal Principles of the Christian Church, and in some instances the assortment of "Christian" hymnals were replaced by the Pilgrim Hymnal.

The United Church of Christ

Throughout the 1950s the Convention of the South moved toward becoming a self-supporting and self-directing conference of black Christians and Congregationalists. In 1957, when the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches formed the United Church of Christ, there was concern that the new denomination be inclusive as to race and previous religious and cultural background. The UCC constitution, adopted in 1961, insisted that all conferences and associations include all churches within stated geographic bounds. This decision fragmented the Convention of the South.

Most of the churches of the Convention of the South became part of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ when it organized in 1965. Thirty-two churches from the Convention eventually related to five other conferences within the new denomination. Although this inclusiveness was right in the minds of many Afro-Christians, it made it even more difficult to keep the Afro-Christian tradition alive. [17]

The Afro-Christian legacy

From the beginning of Afro-Christian church life, immediately after the Civil War, until the formation of the United Church of Christ, Afro-Christian churches preserved their essential character. This legacy can be summarized in four statements: They were fiercely independent; they maintained simple organizations; they upheld the centrality of Christ; and they preserved the African idiom.

Afro-Christian churches and leaders guarded their independence and autonomy with great zeal. Unlike many of their Congregational sisters and brothers, who had become dependent on subsidies for pastoral leadership and church buildings, Afro-Christians graciously declined such subsidies in rigorous regard for their pride, dignity, and independence. Until recently, they rejected aid from the denomination, fearing that help from sources other than local church members had strings attached that might infringe on their freedom and autonomy. They were suspicious of centralized ecclesiastical authority located in the conference, convention, or national bodies. As a consequence of such zeal for independence, Afro-Christian churches suffered a lack of educated pastoral leadership and adequate facilities.

Afro-Christians were deeply committed to fellowship and covenant while at the same time insisting on autonomy and independence. Annual meetings of Afro-Christians showed this paradox. Heated debates revolved around the authority of the Conference over local churches. But the high quality of fellowship at worship and at meals sustained a deep and abiding sense of covenant that usually led to consensus.

Organization, worship, and mission in Afro-Christian churches were simple, never complex. Informality characterized these structures. The deacons in charge of the church's affairs were ordained for life. The chairperson of the board usually remained in that office until death. The essential role of the pastor was to preach, care for the sick, and bury the dead.

Complicated, formal processes of planning were conspicuous by their absence. The congregation met to transact business when urgent matters required action by the membership. Otherwise, the congregation trusted the deacons to "fix it." Members of the congregation were informed on essential matters and often voted during the regular worship service, which usually followed this pattern:

Prayer and Praise Service
Opening Congregational Hymn
Prayer
Hymn
Scripture
Negro Spiritual
Deacon's Prayer
Negro Spiritual
Announcements
Congregational Hymn
Sermon
Opening Doors of the Church (music)
Poor Saints' Offering
Regular Offering
Pastor's Remarks
Closing Hymn
Benediction

Such worship services moved at a slow pace, with little regard for a time to begin and end. It was not uncommon for a service to last three hours.

The preaching, teaching, music, liturgy, and mission of the Afro-Christian churches all evolved out of the affirmation that Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. Sometimes this Christocentric rhetoric got in the way of the formation and pursuit of an explicit social vision. Furthermore, the rhetoric was not always matched by the behavior and attitudes of the deacons, who ruled with an iron hand. Even charismatic pastors sometimes forgot the first Cardinal Principle as they led the "flock."

The Christocentric affirmation of Afro-Christians was not only a theological focus, but also served as a mechanism for the containment of overly aggressive and assertive pastors and deacons. When a pastor or deacon exceeded the limits of power and authority, he was reminded by members of the congregation that "Jesus Christ is the Head of this church, not you."

The preaching, singing, and shouting in the Afro-Christian churches were related to African experiences. The preaching and singing looked back to African chants; the shouting was closely akin to African dance. The feeling aspect of religion dominated. One of the gifts that Afro-Christians brought to the Convention of the South, and subsequently to the United Church of Christ, was their capacity to feel religion and express the same with fervor and great joy.

Great changes have and are taking place in the former Afro-Christian churches. Their relatively small numbers and limited geographical focus precluded their high visibility in the formation of the

United Church of Christ. The unique character of these churches, however, continues to provide an invaluable presence.

With the formation of the United Church of Christ, Afro-Christians, by and large, accepted the mandate to become an integral part of the new denomination. They have contributed to the rich pluralism, social vision, viable congregational polity, and "soul" of the United Church of Christ.

Percel O. Alston was General Secretary of the Division of Christian Education, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries. He also served churches in the Afro-Christian tradition, as did his parents.

Notes

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5. J. Taylor Stanley, *A History of Black Congregational Christian Churches in the South* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1978), pp. 50-54.
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7. Milo True Morrill, *A History of the Christian Denomination in America, 1794-1911* (Dayton, Ohio: Christian Publishing Association, 1912), p. 270.
8. Robert J. Alston, "Things That Matter Now" (Sermon, 1945).
9. Stanley, *History of Black Congregational Christian Churches*, op. cit., p. 62. 10. Letters reprinted in *ibid.*, pp. 63-68.
11. In *ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
12. Percel O. Alston (Notes on the Eastern Virginia Conference of the Congregational Christian Churches of the Convention of the South, Newport News, Virginia, 1951).
13. Morrill, op. cit., p. 271.
14. Stanley, *History of Black Congregational Christian Churches*, pp. 57-60.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 138-39.

The Ursinus School and the reaction against evangelical catholicism

Written by John C. Shetler

During the course of development of the United Church of Christ a number of splinter groups and subgroups came into being as a result of various conflicts. Race and immigration have shaped the denomination over and over.

In the mid-nineteenth century, however, there was a theological and liturgical controversy within Pennsylvania Reformed history that rocked the entire church. A college and a seminary were founded to promote a theological point of view in opposition to the much-celebrated Mercersburg perspective. The new viewpoint was called the Ursinus School, or Ursinus Movement, not because it related to the work of Zacharias Ursinus, author of the Heidelberg Catechism, but because it was centered around a school located in southeastern Pennsylvania named Ursinus. At the heart of the struggle were two strong personalities: John H. A. Bomberger and James I. Good.

The story begins when Philip Schaff, a German historian on the faculty of the seminary at Mercersburg, delivered his famous address on "The Principles of Protestantism," in First Church, Reading, Pennsylvania, on October 24, 1844. The address "stood against the inadequacies of American Christianity: its unhistorical character, its provincialism, its subjectivism and sectarianism." [1] Soon after Joseph Berg, pastor of the German Reformed Church (Race Street), Philadelphia, and others attacked the person and theology of young Schaff and accused him of heresy and attempting to Romanize the Reformed Church. Schaff spoke of the continuity of the church, its evangelical and apostolic nature, and lifted up the importance of the incarnate Word—Jesus Christ. The attack resulted in Schaff's being tried for heresy. Those who sat in judgment—one of whom was Bomberger—supported Schaff, and he was cleared of the charge.

Pulpit versus altar

What were the marks of the Ursinus movement at its inception? James I. Good, chief historian of the Ursinus position, summarized them in the April 24, 1861 issue of the Reformed Church's "Messenger" as opposition to the use of congregational responses, the inclusion of a priestly absolution of sin, and the incorporation of spiritual regeneration at baptism in the liturgy presented to General Synod in 1859 and 1860.

These differences in liturgical desires became strong convictions that were described in terms of pulpit liturgy and altar liturgy. The Ursinus movement emphasized the pulpit liturgy, which omitted responses and prayers spoken by the people and consisted principally of forms for special services and rites, such as the Lord's Supper and baptism. This liturgy was centered in the pulpit and in preaching that may have been expository and to a large extent hortatory. It focused on the human interpretation of the word and an exhortation to moral living in obedience to the word.

The Mercersburg movement celebrated the altar liturgy, in which the pastor and people joined together in response to God. This liturgy was centered in the mighty acts of God through the grace of Christ and Christ's spiritual presence. The sermon was a proclamation of what God had done in Christ as symbolized by the altar and pulpit. The obedient acts of the people were understood to be offerings of thanksgiving and praise, spiritual sacrifices offered gratefully because of what God in Christ had done for them.

The difference between the two views came to a climax in January, 1862, when the liturgical committee of the church divided six to one in favor of the altar liturgy, Bomberger representing the one opposing vote. All had agreed previously that revision of the provisional liturgy was necessary, but Bomberger, under the influence of Berg and other low-church pastors in the Philadelphia Classis, changed his liturgical position. [2] From this point on he became the symbol of the free church, or low-church movement.

John Nevin, also a professor at Mercersburg, Schaff, and Bomberger referred to the same European Reformers and liturgies but produced different interpretations. In assessing the controversy The

Messenger's editor wrote on May 22, 1861: "The controversy about the liturgy in the Messenger must be closed because of its danger of climbing into huge proportions and because it has run into personalities." [3]

Controversy spreads

The controversy spread westward. The Rex. Max Stern attacked the liturgy in the western German church paper, *The Evangelist*, on January 23, 1861. The free church tradition represented by Stern was not of recent vintage. When, in 1838, the Ohio Synod inaugurated J. G. Buettner as seminary professor, one of Buettner's reasons for accepting the position was to train pastors to oppose revivalism. But many Ohio ministers favored revivalism, and the seminary soon faded for want of students. The conflict over new measures and revivalism continued during the 1840s, and the development of a theological seminary was delayed until 1847, when the synod voted to raise money for an institution. In 1849 Jeremiah H. Good became professor of theology at the Ohio Literary and Theological Institution. After an unsettled period the theological institution became part of Heidelberg College, which opened its doors at Tiffin, Ohio, on November 18, 1850, with E. V. Gerhart as president and professor of theology. J. H. Good was professor of mathematics, and Reuben Good, rector of the academy. Later Gerhart moved to Lancaster Seminary, and the Goods became prime movers in the low-church, or Old Reformed, movement. [4] In Pennsylvania the debate over the liturgy continued at each meeting of the Eastern Synod. The leaders of the debate were members of the liturgical committee. Schaff and Nevin were the principals on the so-called high-church side. They were soon joined by such eminent pastors as Henry Harbaugh, S. R. Fisher, and Daniel Ganz. Supporting Bomberger were George W. Willard, Joseph Berg, and James I. Good. The positions hardened into two movements, with delegate elders and congregations taking sides.

Although the principals conducted the debate on a scholarly level and referred back to German and Swiss sources, some anti-liturgical supporters got their ammunition for the struggle from the revivalism of the Great Awakening. The revivalistic trend increased in Pennsylvania. The new measures movement included, in addition to daily Bible reading and prayer, prohibitions against smoking, drinking, swearing, and associating with those who do. The impact of revivalism had reached the congregation in Mercersburg, and it was this fact that originally started Nevin on his writing career with the publication of "The Anxious Bench," a polemic, or tract, against revivalism and its "new measures."

Ursinus founded

The high-church movement was headquartered in the seminary at Mercersburg. The low-church movement had no headquarters. It became evident that if Bomberger and his supporters were to maintain their strength, they too needed an administrative center and a training school for leaders. The only other seminary was in Ohio, but that was too far away and was also caught up in the struggle between high-church and low-church factions.

The Philadelphia Classis, in which pastors Bomberger and Berg served, became the focal judicatory within Eastern Synod for the founding of a headquarters. If the anti-liturgical movement was to succeed, pastors needed to be educated. Individual support also came from pastors in other Classes, for the liturgical question had been referred from the Eastern Synod to constituent Classes. Several locations for a college were considered, but the villages of Freeland and Trappe, in Montgomery County, near Philadelphia, proved a logical setting. Here were the Washington Hall in Trappe, conducted by Abel Rambo; Freeland Seminary, conducted by Adam H. Fetterolf; and the Pennsylvania Female College at Freeland, headed by J. Warren Sunderland. Nearby, in Norristown, was the Elmwood Institute, conducted by John R. Kooker, a former pastor at St. Luke's Church, Trappe, and then pastor of the Reformed Church of the Ascension. All these institutions were small and struggling. The buildings for Freeland Seminary and the Pennsylvania Female College were built by Abraham Hunsicker, a Mennonite minister who conducted worship in Freeland. The congregation served by him later became Trinity Reformed Church, Collegeville.

Under the leadership of Bomberger the ways and means committee of the Philadelphia Classis raised more than \$25,000 for the establishment of a college. The buildings in Freeland were purchased in January 1869 for \$20,000; the organization of a college began in February. On June 7 of that year Bomberger was elected president of the college. His election as pastor of St. Luke's

Church, Trappe, provided the security necessary to accept the presidency of the college, which at its inception faced uncertainties of developing a faculty, a student body, and a sound financial base. [5]

The Heidelberg Catechism and the Palatinate Liturgy served as takeoffs for Bomberger's theological and liturgical positions. Out of this context he chose the name of the eminent author of these documents—Zacharias Ursinus—to be the name of the college. Thus the headquarters for the Old Reformed party had an appealing, symbolic name. Bomberger suggested the design for the corporate seal and participated in writing the movement's constitution.

The college was planned as a four-year baccalaureate institution, but Bomberger and the Classis had in mind the preparation of students for the ministry. On receiving the first students, in September 1870, the announcement indicated that theology would be offered in the curriculum. The Philadelphia Classis gave approval to the purpose, and Bomberger, with James I. Good, developed a theological faculty that included John Van Haagan, H. W. Super, A. S. Zerbe, John H. Sechler, Philip Vollmer, George Stibbitz, George W. Willard, and William J. Hinke.

On Bomberger's death, in 1890, James I. Good succeeded in the leadership of the theological school and as the head of the Old Reformed movement. Good sought to widen the sphere of influence of the Ursinus School. After moving to Philadelphia, Edward S. Bromer was added to the faculty. Good made numerous trips to Germany, Switzerland, and Hungary to study the Reformed history and to recruit students. Even though enrollment figures remained low, the school provided excellent preparation for the pastoral ministry.

The School of Theology continued at Ursinus College until 1898, when it was moved to 33d and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia. The relocation was prompted by a desire to be close to the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, which had no theological school.

The "Ursinus School"

At the same time that Bomberger was developing educational institutions to reach the minds of youth, he was calculating how he could adequately respond to the high-church articles in *The Messenger*. In 1868 he launched the *Reformed Church Monthly*, in which he and his followers answered and challenged his liturgical opponents.

As the leader of the low-church movement, Bomberger desired a theological base for the doctrine of the church, the ministry, and the sacraments. He did not succumb to revivalism and the new measures. The term low church was not to his liking, and he referred to the emphasis of the anti-liturgical group as the Old Reformed, preferring not to be thought of as antiliturgical. Bomberger sought revision of the provisional liturgy to allow free prayer, rather than liturgical prayers and responses, to remove the absolution after confession of sin and to give prime importance to preaching so that, practically speaking, it preempted at least fifty percent of the Sunday morning service. His liturgy, as a pulpit liturgy, put the pastor in the position of the chief speaker. The members' participation was reduced to singing hymns and praying the Lord's Prayer.

The controversy increased in intensity for ten years, from 1861 to 1871. Bomberger's opponents accused him of becoming an antagonist because he was not given proper recognition and because he was not called to the professorship at Mercersburg after Harbaugh's death. Bomberger refuted these accusations and said that although it was true he was a member of the original liturgical committee of General Synod and favored the liturgy, he reversed his position on the basis of principle in 1860-61. [6]

Debate became personal between men on both sides of the question. It seems appropriate to cite the fact that Nevin was of Scotch-Irish descent and Bomberger, of German descent, two ethnic strains known for their stubbornness. Behind the principle was plain stubbornness.

The "Ursinus School" became a term that symbolized the Old Reformed movement. At times the term free worship was used, as over against the Mercersburg School and liturgical worship. Some have incorrectly used the label free church movement; this it never was. There was no movement

toward sectarianism or separatism. The Ursinus School remained within the Classis, Synod, and General Synod structure, which was presbyterial in order. Although conflict was present, so also was respect for church order, and the debates occurred on the floor of the judicatory meetings.

The Philadelphia Classis generally supported the initiation of theological education at Ursinus College. The Rev. S. R. Fisher contested the work of Bomberger as being unconstitutional on the basis that a theological professor was to be elected by the General Synod. Bomberger cited the precedent of pastors privately teaching theology and preparing students for the ministry and further insisted that there is no difference between theological professor and minister. Every minister is a theological teacher. The Mercersburg view was that whereas every pastor teaches theology, not every pastor is called to be a professor of theology, and that by the constitution the church elects the theological professor. The controversy reached the floor of the General Synod of 1872, at Cincinnati, Ohio.

The church was becoming weary of the controversy, and because theology was already being taught at Ursinus, it was probably expedient for the Synod to vote in favor of Bomberger. Although it was true that on the frontier theology had been taught in parsonages, the church was now maturing and seeking to bring order to theological education as well as to other areas of work. A theological/liturgical controversy at such a time made the maturing process more complex.

The high-water mark of the Ursinus School was reached in 1878. The Goods, one in Colledgeville and one in Tiffin, were links in the chain of alliance between Pennsylvania and the Middle West. It was advantageous for the Ursinus School, the Pietists, and the revivalists to join forces to stop the advance of the Mercersburg leaders. The strength of Mercersburg increased to the point where the placement of pastors became a political issue. The Old Reformed accused the Mercersburg proponents of appointing committees for the call of pastors without the consistories' consent. Benevolent assessments on the congregations were refused because of their being used to send students to liturgically oriented seminaries.

When the General Synod convened in Lancaster in 1878 the election of the president showed the strength of the two parties. The first ballot ended in a tie between representatives of the liturgical and nonliturgical groups. On the second ballot David Van Horne, a low-church advocater, was elected. Clement Z. Weiser proposed a peace commission to seek a compromise and heal the long-standing division. The proposal was adopted. Then began the work that eventually brought a compromise, if not a complete ending, to the controversy. [6] The degree of animosity that existed can be seen in the fact that immediately after the election of Van Horne as president, the large cross atop the altar was removed until the Synod was completed. At this same Synod, for the first time and under the influence of the revivalists, a prayer meeting was held. [8]

The peace commission was composed of an equal number of pastors and elders from both sides of the controversy. A revision of the 1866 liturgy took place, with the resultant work being called a Directory of Worship. It was agreed that the use of the Directory would be with the action of each consistory. The Directory actually had limited usage. Mercersburg congregations continued to use the 1866 liturgy, and Ursinus congregations used no liturgy except for the Holy Communion. The Directory was in reality a flag of truce.

Theological legacy

The doctrinal differences between the two movements were substantive and pronounced. Both groups referred to the same Heidelberg sources and produced different interpretations. The chief difference lay in the concept of the church. Bomberger and Good were Reformists. Their ecclesiology stopped with Zwingli, Calvin, and the Heidelberg Catechism. Thus they liked the term Old Reformed. They had difficulty accepting the fact that Ursinus was strongly influenced by Philip Melancthon when he wrote the catechism. Through Melancthon there was an underlying catholic spirit that made the catechism irenic and a bridging document.

Schaff and Nevin emphasized the continuity of the church through the Reformation and the Roman church (with its errors) back to the apostolic church. More than a century ago Schaff used the descriptive words reformed, evangelical, and catholic. The peace commission produced a statement that brought a truce in the doctrinal field.

We do not regard the visible church as commensurate and identical with the invisible church (according to the Roman theory) nor do we think that in this world the invisible church can be separated from the visible (according to the theory of Pietism and false spiritualism); but while we do not identify them, we do not in our views separate them. [9]

Architectural legacy

Evidences of the Ursinus School were seen in many churches during the latter half of the nineteenth century, in the architectural designs as well as in the chancel appointments. In fact, the word chancel would not have been used, because this was a high-church term used to describe the area behind the rail that separated the table and the pulpit from the rest of the church.

The low-church people simply referred to the area as "the front of the church." As recently as a generation ago uninformed members colloquially said "on the pulpit" when they referred to the entire area behind the rail.

The communion table usually stood one step above the main floor. It was unadorned except for a homemade runner. The colors of the church year were not acknowledged. On most Sundays the only items permitted on the table were the offering plates. As recently as the late 1950s some tables did not have crosses, because this custom was considered too Roman. Of course, no candlesticks were on the table. Lights, frequently ornate, adorned the pulpit for the practical reason to illuminate for reading.

In churches erected in the latter portion of the 1800s the pulpit was placed on a platform two or three steps above the floor of the table and was centered behind it. The pulpit was generally larger than the table and more ornate. Some tables were enclosed pieces of furniture resembling small, boxlike altars but they were still called tables. Other tables, when pulled away from the pulpit platform, revealed cupboards that could be used to store the communion service.

Worship was usually conducted from the pulpit. The Lord's Supper was often the only occasion when the pastor approached the table and that was for the distribution of the bread and wine. Turning to face the communion table during the prayer, with one's back to the people, was unacceptable. One had to pray from the pulpit. As recently as the 1940s some congregations did not look favorably on the pastor wearing the black Geneva pulpit gown.

The architectural style of the churches built in the eighteenth century presented some problems but were generally acceptable to the Ursinus School. This style, which reflected earlier German architecture, placed a four-to-five-foot-long table below the pulpit. In some churches the table stood free from the pulpit, with the benches facing in from three sides. With a balcony on three sides, the pulpit was conveniently elevated five to eight steps above the floor level of the table. A painting of Christ usually hung on the wall behind the pulpit. Because of the size, position, and respect given the table in relation to the pulpit this eighteenth-century style, remarkably enough, emphasized both the word and the sacrament. Yet it was also acceptable to the Old Reformed element, with the exception of the use of pictures or paintings.

Organizational legacy

Another area of struggle was centered in the writing of a constitution and bylaws that could embody in church structure an ecclesiology and doctrine with which both sides could live. This was finally accomplished in 1908.

The Ursinus School of Theology in Philadelphia did not develop sufficiently to maintain a separate existence. A friendly invitation was extended by Lancaster Theological Seminary for consolidation. Conversations were held with the theological seminary related to Heidelberg College at Tiffin, Ohio, because of the greater affinity for the low-church position. In 1907 the union of the two schools was consummated under the new name of Central Theological Seminary, and the new site was Dayton, Ohio. Shortly after the formation of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, in 1934, Central Theological Seminary united with Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, Missouri.

During the transitional periods some Ursinus faculty members transferred to other institutions: Edwin S. Bromer went to Lancaster Theological Seminary; William J. Hinke went to Auburn Theological Seminary; James I. Good, Philip Vollmer, and George Stibbitz went to Central Theological Seminary.

Impact today

Today if one were to visit congregations that were once related to the Ursinus School, one would find altars against the wall or large tables standing free, with a pulpit and a lectern on either side. Every congregation now has a cross on the table, fastened to the wall behind the altar or suspended above it. Most also have candles on the altar/table and an acolyte seated in the chancel. This practice is no longer seen as a Romanizing tendency.

St. Luke's Church, Trappe, where Bomberger served, now uses the Evangelical and Reformed liturgy, which is the successor to the 1866 liturgy, and at times uses the United Church of Christ Service of Word and Sacrament. The altar at St. Luke's is against the wall, beneath a reredos that bears a cross-shaped design. Candlesticks, flowers, and liturgical colors are used regularly. At Trinity Church, Collegeville, which is surrounded by the Ursinus College campus, the chancel was recently renovated to have a large, free standing table with a pulpit to the side and a cross mounted on the wall above the table. Older members of the church remember the tradition, and the confession and assurance of pardon are seldom used. However, responsive readings, litanies, a profession of faith, and the Gloria Patri are a regular part of worship.

Each group established a summer conference for ministers and members—one at Ursinus College and one at Franklin and Marshall Academy, in Lancaster. For a time the Lancaster Conference moved to Cedar Crest College but now continues as the Spiritual Conference at Franklin and Marshall College. The Collegeville Summer Assembly has ceased to function and has given its endowment to Ursinus College, with the income to be used for an ecumenical day of theological education at the college.

The interludes of history bring messages in themselves. In this sense it is interesting to note that in the past fifty years Ursinus College has twice called an Episcopalian as its president. Another mark of change in the hidden history of the Ursinus School is the graduation from the college in the 1930s of three students—Morris D. Slifer, Scott F. Brenner, and Paul E. Schmoyer—who became leaders in the twentieth-century liturgical movement. All three served on committees for the revision of the Evangelical and Reformed Book of Worship, which is the successor liturgy to the classic Mercersburg Liturgy of 1866, or have written books dealing with the liturgy.

As one looks back over that critical period in the history of the Reformed Church one can only conjecture what would have happened if Bomberger had been called to the seminary professorship rather than Henry Harbaugh. James I. Good insisted that the reasons for the

controversy were not personal. Certainly, the determination to find peace rather than schism indicates that each side believed it could find some common rock on which it could stand. Even though the reasons for the controversy may not have been personal, the antagonists were persons. Some of the German ethos, which had for so many centuries preserved small principalities and states in Germany, was operating here. One has to say that without the stubbornness of the German and Scotch-Irish participants, peace would have come sooner.

Nevertheless, the controversy did not keep the church from growing in Pennsylvania, where in 1957, when the union with the Congregational Christian Churches was consummated, there were nine hundred congregations. A more serious problem for church growth was the reluctance to surrender the German language and minister to the English-speaking people in Pennsylvania and in areas of the United States open to mission.

What are the continuing benefits of the Ursinus School? The most lasting and the one that has continued strongly to affect the lives of people and the nation is the founding of the college. Others are the education of generations of pastors, the upholding of a basic piety (over against Pietism) as an essential expression of faith, an abiding interest in theology, and a continuing witness to the confessional nature of the church. The Ursinus movement and the Mercersburg movement inherited a basic loyalty to the church and its head, Jesus Christ, which is a benefit and a heritage to receive and pass on to future generations.

John C. Shetler was Conference Minister of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ.

Notes

1. Bard Thompson and George H. Bricker, eds., Philip Schaff: The Principle of Protestantism (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1964), p. 14.
2. James I. Good, History of the Reformed Church in the U. S. in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America, 1911), p. 394.
3. Ibid., p. 382.
4. Ibid., pp. 120-23.
5. Charles E. Schaeffer, History of the Classis of Philadelphia of the Reformed Church in the United States (Classis of Philadelphia, 1944), p. 96.
6. Good, op. cit., p. 532.
7. H. M. J. Klein, The History of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States (Eastern Synod, 1943), pp. 266-69.
8. Good, op. cit., p. 579.
9. Ibid., p. 582.

Armenian Congregationalists flee from genocide and find a home in the U.S.

Written by Vahan H. Tootikian

The history of Armenian Evangelicalism goes back to the second quarter of the nineteenth century. On July 1, 1846 thirty-seven men and three women established the Armenian Evangelical Church in the mission chapel in the Pera section of Istanbul (then Constantinople), Turkey. Four years later, on November 27, 1850, the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Medjid granted formal recognition to the newly established church.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), composed of Presbyterian and Congregational mission-minded people, played a decisive role in the rise of the Armenian Evangelical Church. Founded in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1810, and incorporated in 1812, the Board was one of the earliest missionary societies. Its aim was "to evangelize the heathen in foreign lands." [1] One of the Board's prominent mission fields was the Middle East, where missionaries began work in 1819 with instructions to "evangelize" Jews and Muslims. [2] Resistance from these two established religious groups frustrated the best efforts of the missionaries, so they changed their strategy; they turned to native Christian agents to reach the non-Christians. To this end they approached various Eastern Orthodox churches. All except the Armenian Apostolic Church proved obdurate. Why?

Armenian Evangelicals

The Armenians seem to have been imbued with a tremendous desire for learning and social progress. As a result, many of them were receptive and broad-minded toward the American missionaries and their projects. [3] This spirit of educational progress among Armenians opened the way for closer contact with the Armenian clergy and laypeople.

When the missionaries of the American Board began their work among Armenians, in 1831, the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire was experiencing a cultural renaissance, a revival of thinking in the social, economic, and intellectual realms. So the soil was fertile and ready for a religious awakening. In 1836 a group of reformists established a secret society named Parebashdoutian Miapanautune (The Society of the Pious), in order to reform the Armenian Apostolic Church. [4] The organization of this Society may properly be said to mark the beginning of Armenian Evangelicalism. [5]

The reformists met the strong resistance and opposition of the ruling Armenian magnates, the amiras, and the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople. Failure to reform the Armenian Apostolic Church continued to be a basic source of conflict. The reformists pushed their demands, which provoked strong retaliation from the Armenian patriarchate. Persecution and the formal act of excommunication by Patriarch Matteos Choohajian forced them to organize themselves into a separate religious community, the Protestant Millet. [6] All along the American missionaries stood by the Evangelicals and gave them spiritual, moral, and financial support.

Within a decade after its birth the Armenian Evangelical Church had grown by leaps and bounds. In order to administer the increased scope of the missionary work that followed the growth, and because of geographical proximity and organizational considerations, Armenian Protestantism was organized into church Unions. The first Unions were organized in Turkey, in the 1860s: Bithynia Union (1864), Eastern Union (1866), Cilician Union (1867), and Central Union (1868). [7] Then, at the turn of the century, two Unions were organized in America: the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States (1901) and the Armenian Evangelical Union of California (1908). In May of 1914, immediately before the start of World War I, the Armenian Evangelicals organized the first Union in Armenia: the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Ararat. [8] Thus before World War I the Armenian Evangelicals throughout the world counted seven Unions, with 178 churches. [9]

The Turkish genocide of the Armenians between 1915 and 1922 wiped out all the Armenian Evangelical Unions and most of the churches and their members in Turkey. The survivors of the

massacres, "the Remnant," managed to organize two Unions in the 1920s in their new lands of adoption: the Armenian Evangelical Union of Syria and Lebanon (Cilicia) [10] and the Armenian Evangelical Union of France. Armenian Protestantism was reduced to four Unions. Since the merger of the two Unions in America, in 1971, the Armenian Evangelical Church has comprised three Unions.

Work of the American Board

In 1870 the two denominations that supported the American Board divided the supervision of the mission field between themselves; the Congregationalists were to be in charge of the native Protestants in Turkey and the Balkan countries and the Presbyterians were to assume responsibility for Arabic-speaking countries and Iran. [11] From then on the Armenian Evangelical churches in Turkey, and those of their members who escaped or survived the Turkish horrors and settled in the Near East and America, became closely affiliated with the Congregational denomination.

The American missionaries rendered invaluable services to the Armenian people, especially in the areas of education, philanthropy, culture, politics, and religion.

Education. Through their educational institutions, ranging from kindergarten to college, the American missionaries supplemented in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Armenian intellectual renaissance initiated by the Mekhitarists in the eighteenth century. To have an idea of the educational contribution of the American missionaries to the Armenians one has to look at the statistical account of the American schools as of 1913, the year preceding World War I: 10 colleges, with 1,748 students; 46 boarding and high schools, with 4,090 students; 3 theological seminaries, with 24 students; 8 industrial schools; 2 schools for the deaf and the blind; and 369 other schools directly or indirectly connected with the American Board, with 19,361 students. By the end of the war, in 1918, most of these schools had ceased to exist. [12]

Education became an attainable goal for all Armenians, without discrimination. Thousands of Armenian young people received their higher education at the American Board's institutions of higher learning, and many graduated from these schools to assume leadership roles in the Armenian community. Higher education became a viable option even for females, who, until the advent of institutions run by the American missionaries, had been excluded.

The missionary schools graduated a large number of women who, in turn, became educators of the younger generations of Armenians. In fact, toward the end of the nineteenth century the majority of teachers in Armenian elementary schools were female graduates and undergraduates from American missionary colleges, seminaries, and teacher-training institutions. [13] As a result of higher education, the status of women was elevated in a male-dominated society.

Philanthropy. The American Congregational missionaries rendered a valuable service to the less-privileged Armenians by their constant assistance. Through their orphanages, nursing homes, hospitals, and dispensaries they ministered to the physical needs of many. In the interior provinces of Turkey, where there were no medical facilities, the health services provided by the missionaries played a providential role. Countless lives were saved, thanks to the medical skill of missionary physicians and nurses.

During World War I, when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred with unparalleled brutality and another million were uprooted from their ancestral homeland and driven into the deserts of Syria without benefit of experienced leaders, the American Congregational missionaries assumed the role of good Samaritans. They mobilized all their resources and came to the aid of the battered Armenians. Because of their vision and initiative, the Near East Relief was organized, in 1915. A philanthropic and lifesaving institution second to none in that part of the world, the Near East Relief embraced and served almost every area need—social, educational, physical, and economic. It provided food for the starving survivors of the massacres, rescue homes for girls who had escaped from Muslim harems, medical care, relief for the sick, and orphanages. Moreover, it opened

elementary schools for children and vocational schools for young adults and organized community health and recreational programs and industrial enterprises to teach various trades. During its fourteen-year existence the Near East Relief raised and expended \$85 million for Armenians, and as Howard M. Sachar maintains, "it quite literally kept the entire Armenian people in the Near East alive." [14]

Literature and culture. One of the most valuable services the American missionaries performed was the translation of the Holy Bible into modern Armenian (Ashkharapar) by a competent team of linguists and scholars under the capable leadership of Elias Riggs. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the only Bible available to the Armenians was the classical Armenian (Krapar) Bible, which none but a small educated elite could read or understand. The Ashkharapar scripture made the Bible accessible to almost all Armenians.

In addition, the American missionaries published grammars, commentaries, religious books and educational pamphlets in modern Armenian. The missionary press in New York made a great contribution to the development of modern Armenian by publishing in the vernacular. [15]

Political freedom and social justice. The American Congregational missionaries played a decisive role in the whole area of political freedom and justice for the Armenian populace in the Ottoman Empire. The oppressive Ottoman rule and the Turkish government's harassment militated against the Armenians in Turkey economically, socially, and politically, insofar as their religious life was concerned.

Because of the Armenians' historical claim to ancestral lands and their demands for basic human rights the Turks considered them a political threat, treated them as second-class citizens, and denied them certain fundamental freedoms. For more than four centuries the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were forced to live in absolute obedience to Turkish rule. The American missionaries, coming from a free and democratic country, advocated the principle of the inviolability of freedom of thought and conscience. This principle struck a responsive chord among Armenians, who, throughout their history, had cherished freedom even at the cost of their lives. [16]

Religious and spiritual values. The Congregational missionaries made a contribution to the spiritual realm of Armenians by introducing new methods of developing a vital Christian community, by laying the foundation for the proper understanding of the role of the laity in the mission of the church, by encouraging Christian outreach, by making the Bible accessible to laypeople in a vernacular edition they could read, and by encouraging the study of the scripture. Not only did they meet the needs of the emerging Armenian Evangelical Church, but they also brought about a spiritual revival among the Armenian people. [17]

In short, the Congregational missionaries made major contributions—contributions sufficient to ensure them an important place in the cultural history of the Armenian nation.

It must be said, however, that in spite of all their great contributions, the American missionaries were not wholeheartedly welcomed by all Armenians. The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul (then Constantinople), for instance, became apprehensive in view of the headway the American mission had made among Armenians. The Patriarchate and some lay leaders of the Armenian Apostolic Church saw in the reform movement the meddling influence of the missionaries in the internal life of their church—an intrusion. The intruders in this case were foreigners with a completely different theological and psychological background. These Armenians argued that the motives of the missionaries were not so much the spread of the gospel (i.e., evangelism) as the spread of American Protestantism (i.e., proselytism). But the Armenian Evangelicals, along with the American missionaries, have insisted that the rationale for the missionaries' presence was to revive the Armenian Apostolic Church so that it in turn could reach out to non-Christian groups such as the Jews and the Muslims.

Unfortunately, the question of evangelism vs. proselytism remains unresolved. In the end, the issue is a matter of personal interpretation. Two views persist. Some people insist that since the Armenians were already Christians and did not need the good news, they were converted to Protestantism. Their evidence? The creation of an Armenian Protestant Church. Others insist that the American missionaries evangelized the Armenian nation. Their argument is that the early Armenian Evangelicals were not coerced into changing their religion, nor were they required to join a foreign Protestant denomination. By and large, Evangelical Armenians consider themselves evangelized; non-Evangelical Armenians consider the Armenian Evangelicals as proselytized.

Whatever the relative merits of these two conclusions may be, no one can deny that the American missionaries rendered invaluable services to the Armenian people.

Immigrants relate to Congregationalism

Because of their close association with Congregational missionaries, Armenians who immigrated to the United States during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century began to organize Armenian Congregational churches. The churches were composed primarily of Armenian immigrants who had fled the oppression and persecution of the Turkish government. These immigrants organized their churches not by deliberate choice, but "by pressure of necessity." [18] They were unfamiliar with the language and the customs of their new country, and in some cases they were not welcomed by the congregations of the local American Protestant churches. [19] They wanted to worship in their own language and they wanted one another's company.

During the initial period of organization most of the Armenian Congregational churches in America were founded by laity, because most Armenian Evangelical ministers were still in their homeland. These churches were the "exact facsimile of the churches the early immigrants had left behind." [20] They were typically Armenian in all respects—language, traditions, customs, and patterns of thought and belief. Thus these churches provided places of worship for an immigrant people who were by language and culture identified with the old country. They gave guidance for the spiritual growth and solidarity of the Armenian Evangelical constituency and provided benevolent and financial support for Armenians in need overseas. [21]

Although the majority of the twenty-four Armenian Evangelical churches in the United States were founded before World War I, it was not until after the Turkish massacres of the Armenians that a stream of immigrants reached America and strengthened Armenian Protestantism numerically as well as financially. [22]

The first Armenian church established on the North American continent was an Armenian Congregational church—the Armenian Congregational Church of the Martyrs in Worcester, Massachusetts—founded in 1881. [23] All the early members and ministers of the Armenian Evangelical churches in America were immigrants from Cilicia and Armenia, survivors of persecutions and massacres. They were determined to salvage and serve the Armenian Remnant and to preserve the Armenian heritage by founding new churches and cultural organizations. The majority of the early Armenian Evangelicals in America cherished the Congregational way of worship and church polity that they had learned about from the Congregational Board missionaries. They wanted to organize churches in which they could enjoy all the freedoms that their conscience directed. [24]

The Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States, which included all the Armenian Evangelical churches east of the Mississippi River, was founded in 1901, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Later, in 1960, when the Armenian Evangelical churches of Toronto and Montreal joined the Union, the name was changed to Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States and Canada.

The California Union was organized in May 1908 and was first called the Armenian Congregational Union of California, but so that Armenian Presbyterian churches might join in, its name was changed to the Armenian Evangelical Union of California. [25]

In their early days most of the Armenian Congregational churches in America received moral and financial support from the Congregational churches, [26] but the majority soon became self-sufficient. Moreover, they even extended aid to Armenian churches in the homeland and helped further the reestablishment of Armenian Evangelical churches in the Armenian diaspora. [27]

Within a brief span of time the Armenian Congregational churches organized viable Christian Endeavor Societies, missionary committees, women's and men's clubs, fellowships, church schools, and other auxiliary groups. They participated in the benevolent efforts of Armenian relief, such as Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Near East Relief, the Wheat Relief Campaign, and other compatriotic organizations. [28] The Armenian Congregational churches also provided strong leadership in Armenian community affairs. Their spiritual and lay leaders, for instance, played a decisive role in the founding of the Knights of Vartan, a pan-Armenian brotherhood. They became the largest single group of contributors to one of the most influential magazines in the Armenian diaspora, *Hayastan Gotchan*. [29] The support of both the pastors and parishioners of the Armenian Evangelical constituency in the United States combined to make the Armenian General Benevolent Union the largest Armenian benevolent organization in the world.

Understandably, the attitude of the first generation of Armenian immigrants was one of ethnocentrism. Both internal and external forces tended to keep them united and reinforced in their distinctiveness. This attitude sought the assurance of their long-range stability.

The Second Generation

The native-born children of immigrants were able to follow a different road in reacting to their American environment. The new attitude of the American-born generation resulted from the common English language, uniform secular education in the public schools, uniform political institutions, and general economic and business relationships. In this way acculturation was effected principally in the fields of education, politics, economics, and religion. [30]

The offspring of Armenian immigrants, the generation that was born in the adopted country of their parents, went through a transitional period. Members of this generation had mixed feelings about their heritage, never being wholly certain whether it was best to disown it entirely or to seek some happy but seemingly elusive middle ground. It was this generation, for example, that changed the language policy of the Armenian Evangelical churches. Until the late 1940s the principal language of the Armenian Evangelical churches and the then existing two Unions was Armenian; English, the second language, was used predominantly by youth and its organizations. The first church to reverse its language policy was the Cilician Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1949. [31] In this respect it became the pioneer of an experiment and by its success gave other Armenian Evangelical churches an example to follow.

The autonomy of individual Armenian Evangelical churches also opened the way to denationalization. For example, in some Armenian Evangelical circles in America a strong controversy existed from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s concerning the issue of ethnicity versus denationalization. Some ministers openly advocated the abandonment of unique Armenian characteristics of their churches in favor of community churches open to all nationalities. Others insisted that the *raison d'être* of an Armenian church is its unique character, that the abandonment of this Armenian character in Armenian Evangelical churches is a betrayal of Armenian history "written in the blood of countless martyrs." [32] A few churches toyed with the idea of becoming community churches, of dropping the appellation "Armenian" from the church name, of abandoning their ethnic heritage, and of opening the church to the community at large in order to attract and recruit members from the local community. Some of these churches even employed non-Armenian ministers. But their experimentation proved to be counterproductive. Not only did they fail to attract any new members from the local communities, but they also lost some of the current members in protest against changes that reflected, in their view, an "unwise policy." [33]

Armenian Missionary Association of America

One great source of pride and glory of Armenian Evangelicalism in general and of Armenian Congregational churches in America in particular is the Armenian Missionary Association of America

(AMAA). Founded on June 7, 1918, in Worcester, Massachusetts, the AMAA was not only a compassionate attempt to help the Armenian remnant materially and morally, but also a prophetic voice that perhaps more than any other influence in the postwar years kept the embers alive. Sustained at first only by their zeal and fervor, the exiled Armenian Evangelicals mustered the courage to live on as a tiny community in the Middle Eastern countries. The AMAA provided guidance at a time when a great deal of uncertainty and confusion prevailed. A joint Outreach Committee was organized, composed of representatives of the AMAA and the American Board. This joint benevolent committee devised a plan to aid the needy and developing Armenian Evangelical churches and organizations in the Near East. Gradually, the American Board decreased its contribution and the AMAA increased its portion. [34]

Since its inception the AMAA has been not only the missionary arm of the Armenian Congregational churches in North America, but also the "golden chain" binding all Armenian Evangelicals throughout the world. It has drawn them together and has become a source of assistance embodying intense concern for all Armenians in need, always answering the call for help. As a nonprofit, nonpolitical missionary and philanthropic organization, the AMAA has supplied vision and material support as well as moral inspiration to Armenians everywhere. It has achieved an outstanding record of service in educational, cultural, physical, spiritual, and moral spheres—a service broader today than ever before—and has consistently contributed to a myriad of worthy causes. The AMAA has developed a missionary outreach in thirteen countries, serving underprivileged Armenians through numerous missionary projects, such as child education sponsorships, college and seminary scholarships, medical and general relief provisions, widespread missionary outreach and activities, encouragement of neophyte mission centers, financial aid to religious publications and meeting the needs of the destitute and forgotten.

Armenian Evangelical Union of North America

Another proud accomplishment of the Armenian Evangelicals in America was the creation of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEU-NA). The AEU-NA was the product of the merger of the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States and Canada, Inc., and the Armenian Evangelical Union of California, Inc. After more than six decades of separate existence the twenty-one churches and three fellowships of these two Unions united, in 1971, into one Christian group "to uphold one another in their needs, to work together in mutual respect, ... to work for the Kingdom of God, to promote their general welfare and their missionary outreach." [35]

Since its inception the AEU-NA has embarked on a number of ventures and has accomplished some important undertakings, including:

The 75th Anniversary One-Million-Dollar Campaign for the purpose of promoting religious, educational, and cultural programs as well as sustaining and strengthening the Armenian Evangelical churches in North America.

The establishment of two new churches—one in Hollywood, California, and the other in Cambridge, Ontario.

The organization of new fellowships in California—one in San Diego and the other in San Jose.

The creation of a Long-Range Planning Committee to evaluate and reassess the present status of the AEU-NA and to chart a new course for the future.

The establishment of a Christian Education camp (Camp Arev) in California.

The publication of a newsletter, AEU-NA Forum, and a bulletin, AEU-NA Update.

The merger of the Armenian Protestant Youth Fellowship and Armenian Christian Endeavor Union of California into one body—Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship.

The establishment of the Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center in Hollywood, California.

The creation of the office of Executive Secretary.

The creation of a Task Force on Ecumenicity for the purpose of strengthening ties with the Armenian Apostolic Church.

The participation in the First World Conference of Armenian Evangelicals convened by the AMAA.

Publication of the Armenian Evangelical Hymnal in 1976.

Contemporary situation

Today Armenian Evangelicals in America are a small minority. Their constituency comprises twenty churches, with a total communicant membership of about four thousand and an additional four thousand supporting members, youth, and church school pupils. By the 1950s fourteen of these churches were part of the Congregational Christian denomination. In 1957, when the Evangelical and Reformed Church united with the Congregational Christian Churches to form the United Church of Christ, all fourteen of these Armenian Congregational churches [36] decided to become part of the larger body. Since then they have been contributing financially and spiritually to the denomination. They have dual allegiances: Ethnically, they are Armenian Evangelical and belong to the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America; denominationally, they are loyal to the United Church of Christ.

Some of these Armenian Congregational churches are small in number. Not only do they lack a central wellspring of vitality, but they are also battling for survival. They have been experiencing declining membership and attendance. Others, particularly those in California, have managed to do more than merely survive. Owing to the influx of Armenian immigrants from the Middle Eastern countries and Soviet Armenia they are growing numerically and have been showing signs of vitality, including some significant achievements in terms of building programs, finances, and religious and ethnic activities.

Overall, the contributions of the Armenian Congregational churches in America to contemporary denominational and ethnic life are noteworthy despite the churches' minority status and their many problems.

At present the Armenian Congregational churches not only support generously the local Associations and Conferences, but many of their ministers and lay leaders also serve the denomination through various agencies, boards, and committees. It is heartwarming to note that in the past two decades more than a score of Armenian Congregational pastors have ministered or still are ministering to non-Armenian churches.

In some ways Armenian Congregationalism has come of age; it is no longer a dependent movement. It is self-supporting and self-reliant and has developed its own material, intellectual, and spiritual resources to the extent of not only helping itself but also going beyond.

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Notes

1. William E. Strong, *The Story of the American Board* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1910), p. 3. 2. Edwin M. Bliss, *A Concise History of Missions* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1897), p. 128.
3. O. G. H. Dwight, *Christianity Revived in the Near East* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850), pp. 327-29.
4. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Annual Report* (Boston, 1836), p. 15.
5. Stepan Eutudjian, *Dzakoumn Yev Entatzn Avedaranaganootyan Ee Hais* (The Rise and Course of Evangelicalism Among Armenians) (Constantinople: Arax Press, 1914), pp. 10-15.
6. Yeghia S. Kassouny, *Loossashavigh* (The Path of Light: History of the Armenian Evangelical Movement) (Beirut: American Press, 1947), pp. 19-24. Also, Dicran J. Kherlopian, *Vossgemadian* (Golden Anniversary. A History of the Armenian Evangelical Movement and the Armenian Evangelical Union of the Near East), vol. 1 (Beirut: Armenian Evangelical Union of the Near East, 1950), p. 4. The word millet is derived from the Arabic milla, used in the sense of religious community. In the Ottoman Empire the non-Muslim subjects were organized in semiautonomous bodies called millets.
7. Leon Arpee, *A History of Armenian Christianity* (New York: Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1946), pp. 240-41.
8. The Armenian Evangelical historian Yeghia Kassouny states that although the "Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Ararat" was organized in May of 1914, the Armenian Evangelicals could not hold Union meetings before 1919 because of World War I. They started holding meetings after Armenia became an independent republic. Annual conventions were held regularly until 1926. By 1927, because of government restrictions, the Union was dissolved as church life was disrupted. Kassouny, op. cit., pp. 452-54.
9. A. A. Bedikian, "The Armenian Evangelical Churches in America," *The Bulletin* (a quarterly publication of Armenian Evangelical Union: New York, 1962) 8, no. 3:25.
10. The Armenian Evangelical Union of Syria and Lebanon (Cilicia) assumed the name Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAEC-NE) in 1930.
11. James S. Dennis, *Foreign Missions After a Century* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1893), p. 180.
12. Yervant H. Hadidian, *American Contribution to Armenian Culture, Armenian/American Outlook* (New York: Joint Publication of the Armenian Evangelical Union and Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc.) 9, no. 1:3-4.
13. Gorun Shrikian, *Armenians Under the Ottoman Empire and the American Missions Influence* (Ph.D. diss. Concordia Seminary in Exile in cooperation with Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1977), 450-51.
14. Howard Sachar, *The Emergence of the Middle East: 1914-1924* (New York: Knopf, 1969), p. 345.

15. Vahan H. Tootikian, *The Armenian Evangelical Church* (Detroit Armenian Heritage Committee, 1982), p. 29.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
18. Bedikian, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
19. In the annals of the Armenian Evangelical churches in America there are a number of cases of discrimination against Armenian Evangelicals in the cities of Boston, Worcester, and Fresno by local Congregational Church members. But these in no way reflected a segregationist policy on the part of official church bodies.
20. Bedikian, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
21. Vartkes Kassouni, *The Past Our Honor—The Future Our Challenge, Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Booklet of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church* (Fresno: n.p., 1974), p. 6.
22. The mass immigration of the Armenians to America began after the massacres of 1895, and later, after the Turkish atrocities of 1915, which forced thousands of refugees to find shelter on distant American shores. In 1910 the figure reached 70,000, rising to 130,000 in 1920. Today the Armenians in the United States number somewhere between 500,000 and 600,000.
23. Herald A. G. Hassessian, *The 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Worcester, Mass.*, *Armenian/American Outlook* 4, no. 3:17-18.
24. Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church, *1901-1976* (Fresno: Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church, 1976), p. 4.
25. Hagop Chakinakjian, *The Armenian Evangelical Union of California, Armenian Evangelical Union Bulletin*, 7, nos. 3 and 4 (1961):23.
26. Harry M. Missirlian, *Our Armenian Heritage, Pilgrim's Progress* (Fresno: weekly publication of Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church) 3, no. 140(1975):1.
27. A. A. Bedikian makes a significant observation concerning the relationship of the Armenian Evangelical churches in America to those of the homeland. He writes: "The providential fact should be noted that the Armenian Evangelical churches in the land of their nativity had attained some maturity during their first fifty years of their history. . . . They had, in a sense, mothered the churches in the United States, in their childhood; these, in turn, attaining robust adulthood, responded to the call of the stricken mother in her agony of death and gave her life." See Bedikian, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
28. Chakmakjian, *op. cit.* 8 (1962):31.
29. Two long-time and most prominent editors of *Hayastani Gotchnag* were two veteran Armenian Evangelical ministers, the Rev. Khachadour Benneyan and the Rev. Antranig Bedikian. Also, a host of Armenian Evangelical intellectuals, with their scholarly articles, gave the magazine a most enviable status.
30. Zaven Arzoumanian, *The Armenian Religious Cultural Community of America, The Armenian Church* (New York: Organ of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, 1978) 9:3.
31. Yervant H. Hadidian, *Our Thirteen Years Together, The Armenian Memorial Church Bulletin* (Watertown: monthly publication of Armenian Memorial Church, MS. 1963), p. 2.

32. A. A. Bedikian, *A Time for Reevaluation of the Mission of Our Churches*, Armenian Evangelical Union of America and Armenian Missionary Association of America (Barrington, VT: Armenian Information Bureau, 1960), p. 1.

33. Tootikian, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

35. Armenian Evangelical Union of North America Constitution and By-Laws (Detroit, 1974), p. 1.

36. The fourteen Armenian churches are First Armenian Church, Belmont, MA; Armenian Congregational Church, Chicago; Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit, Southfield, MI; Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church, Downey, CA; Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church, Fresno, CA; Armenian Martyrs? Congregational Church, Havertown, PA; Armenian Evangelical Church, New York City; Armenian Cilicia Congregational Church, Pasadena, CA; Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church, Providence, RI; Armenian Ararat Congregational Church, Salem, NH; Calvary Armenian Congregational Church, San Francisco; United Armenian Calvary Congregational Church, Troy, NY; Armenian Memorial Church, Watertown, MA; The Armenian Congregational Church of the Martyrs, Worcester, MA.

German Congregationalism on the American frontier

Written by William G. Chrystal

Congregationalism was ideally suited to the frontier, and Missionary Superintendent Julius Reed, one of Iowa Congregationalism's "sacred seven," thought it could provide German immigrants with a well-anchored religious life. According to George Eisenach, premier historian of the German movement, Reed "secured a number of German ministers and missionaries from Germany and Switzerland and from denominations in this country which had German preaching." He also petitioned the American Home Missionary Society (AHMS) for financial support. [1]

The AHMS, organized by four denominations in 1826 but funded and directed mainly by Congregationalists and Presbyterians, supported a variety of German pastors and churches, including Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, and Evangelical, in addition to Congregationalists. For example, no fewer than twenty-one pastors of the *Kirchenverein des Westen* (later the German Evangelical Synod of North America) received half their salaries from the AHMS between 1841 and 1862. [2]

Members of the AHMS had grown uneasy about aiding pastors and churches with lax membership standards. They abhorred the custom of admitting to full communion anyone who had a confirmation certificate, although this was a common practice in Germany.

That the membership of the German churches, in many instances, is made up without what appears to American Christians sufficient evidence of regeneration by the Spirit of God, there is no longer reason to doubt. . . . To aid in building up churches on such a foundation., would lower the standard of godliness, encourage formality, and prepare the way for a religion of external display, and thus produce the very state of things which our pious fathers crossed the ocean to escape. [3]

Congregationalism among the Germans, as championed by Reed, offered a form of church organization that was ideally suited to frontier communities. It also emphasized vital personal religion growing out of an experience of conversion. Yet the preaching of repentance and conversion was almost unknown to those who were raised in the German *Landeskirche* (State Church). Congregationalism's first missionary to the Germans, Peter Fleury, recruited by Reed in 1846, was told by one, "In our country, thieves, murderers, and such people, have to do repentance, but we are Christians, by birth, baptism, and confirmation." [4]

Not simply a polity, Congregationalism spoke a religious language as foreign to most Germans as English was. Although pastors labored with zeal, the numbers remained small. In 1883 there were

twenty-seven churches, with a total of 1,006 members. [5] They were "unaided, alone, divided among themselves, the prey of religious tramps from other churches." [6]

Viewed suspiciously by those who were affiliated with traditional German churches, German Congregational pastors were culled from many sources. The "Mission Houses" of Germany and Switzerland supplied a number of them, particularly St. Chrischona in Basel. Even though these missionaries had an ecumenical outlook, they failed to dispel the popular fear that being Congregational meant deserting the faith of one's ancestors. Peter Fleury told of a man who wanted to join a Congregational church being pulled from the room by his wife, who said, "You must not forsake the Lutheran faith." Another man, who, when asked if he liked Fleury's sermon, said, "Very much, it is all very good if it were but Lutheran." [7]

Germans in Prussia

If it were not for the influx of large numbers of German-speaking natives of Russia into the United States and Canada in the decades before and after 1900, the history of German Congregationalism could be presented in these few paragraphs, highlighting a small band of *Reiseprediger* (traveling preachers) and the congregations they gathered in the Middle West. [8] The immigration of these Germans from South Russia and the Volga region, beginning in 1872-73, brought a new urgency to the German work. Although foreign to most native Germans, Congregationalism appealed to Protestant *Russlanddeutschen* (Russia Germans), particularly those from Lutheran parishes. They had been raised in a milder Lutheranism than was often encountered in the United States, and some had actually experienced revival and regeneration in Russia. Mid-nineteenth century American Congregationalism offered a style of church life that was seemingly designed for them—a fact made clear when one looks at their unique social and religious development.

"A German is like a willow tree; stick it anywhere and it will take." This old Russian saying was a tribute to the industriousness of the thousands of Germans who immigrated to Russia beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, first to the north, or Volga region, around the city of Saratov, and later to the Ukraine and to Bessarabia, in the south. [9] The Russia Germans had transformed barren steppes into rich farmland, creating tidy communities that preserved their German heritage in unique ways.

Religion was at the center of their lives. A pledge of "unhindered freedom of worship" by Catherine the Great, in 1763, helped lure the Volga Germans from their homeland. Yet the colonists brought their own religious backgrounds. Of the 104 colonies established on the Volga from 1764 to 1768, for example, 29 were Catholic. Of the remaining colonies, three fourths were Lutheran and the rest, Reformed. [10]

A chronic shortage of clergy existed from the beginning. Priests sometimes ministered to Protestants, and theological differences between Lutherans and adherents of the Reformed faith were often minimized. [11] Although Russia German Lutherans embraced the *Konkordienbuch* (Book of Concord), as did Lutherans everywhere, one observer nonetheless noted: "The confessional status of the colonies is unclear." [12] Provincial in many ways, Russia German Protestants heard good sermons. Sometimes, however, the sermons were read by the local schoolteacher from a *predigtbuch*, or book of sermons, because the large parishes and scarcity of pastors made it impossible for all places to have a minister to officiate each Sunday.

Russian pastors were well trained, even by German standards. Many pastors, however, did affect one Russian Orthodox decoration. A number of pastors' pictures show them wearing the traditional pulpit gown and linen tabs, with a large crucifix suspended from a chain around the neck. [13]

A theological seminary had been founded at the University of Dorpat, in 1833, to train pastors for the Protestant colonies. [14] Some of Germany's best theologians taught there, including Luther scholar Theodosius von Harnack, who himself had attended Dorpat and whose son Adolf, one of Protestantism's most famous scholars, also studied there. The elder Harnack and church historian Moritz von Englehardt, who made a lasting impression on young Adolf, grappled with modern theology's weightiest themes. A strict Lutheran, Theodosius Harnack had even written a book condemning Herrnhut (Moravian) influence on the Lutheran church in Livonia, and Englehardt,

teaching textual and source criticism almost radically, had reportedly known Herrnhut Pietism in his youth. Without doubt, Dorpat's seminary offered a theological spectrum as broad as any found in Germany. [15]

Pastors of Russia German churches, like all who deal in practical theology, spoke to concerns and temptations of everyday life: Aware that most parishioners owned only three books—the Bible, either Luther's catechism or the Heidelberg Catechism, depending on whether one was Lutheran or Reformed, and a *gesangbuch* (hymnal)—pastors illustrated sermons biblically and exhorted people to live their faith. They preached in irenic terms, appealing to the Bible rather than the symbolic books of the Reformation.

People wishing to scoff at us call us "Lutherans." Now, we are not ashamed of Luther's name. But when people mean our Lutheran church was built by Luther, so we say with Luther himself: That is untrue. Not Luther but Christ is the ground and cornerstone of our faith. [16]

Pastor C. Blum, of Krasnojarsk on the Volga, author of the sermon from which the above excerpt was taken, included it in *Gnade um Gnade* (Grace upon Grace), a book of sermons intended for church use in the pastor's absence. This book offered a sermon for each Sunday of the church year and for special days, opening and closing with a hymn selected from the *Volga Gesangbuch*. Each sermon was built around a biblical text, which was quoted. The emphasis in the *predigtbuch* is uniform. Blum urged his hearers to live holy lives. On Reformation Sunday he sounded his theme plainly enough: "We Evangelical Christians are clever enough at debate, but are lazy at a holy way of Life." [17]

Despite strong faith in many homes, enough people turned their backs on the church to be noticed.

If the pastor's exceptionally sensitive
Singing and drinking arouse his anger.
He thunders and he threatens;
Has done so many years;
But in our village
It's like it's always been. [18]

Heinrich Peter Ehlers, a Volga villager, liked to amuse his friends by imitating clergy. However, he was eventually brought to his knees and conversion. Ehlers became a leader of the Brotherhood, a lay movement outside the church proper that introduced prayer meetings in many villages, effecting the kind of regeneration the AHMS looked for in frontier German-American churches. About the same time a similar movement began in South Russia, but more pastors took part there than in villages along the Volga. [19]

The Brotherhood gained special prominence during the Great Revival of 1872 (which continued until the early 1890s). It owed its origin to a number of influences, including various Anabaptist and millenarian neighbors: Moravians, Mennonites, and Stundists. Prayer meetings held in private homes by itinerant members of such groups, coupled with the irenic Pietism already prevailing in the village churches, quickly spread a new personal religion. In lay meetings, always attended by church members—sometimes without the pastor's blessing—people sang, read scripture and offered testimonials that spoke of fellowship with God in Jesus Christ. [20]

Life in America

Although confirmation remained important for Russia Germans who joined Congregational churches in the United States—a catechism was written for that purpose—prayer meetings stayed at the center of their religious lives. They honored the German tradition of religious education while maintaining the prayer meetings of Russia, which had brought them closer to God than they had imagined possible.

Were it not for the Brotherhood, Russia Germans would not have joined Congregational churches after their immigration to the United States. Participation in the Brotherhood required membership in a church, and Congregationalism's emphasis on the autonomy of the local church and the

priesthood of all believers appealed to them. Because so many members of the Brotherhood belonged to Congregational churches, in some towns the church was called *die Bruderschaft der Kirche*. [21]

Unlike in Russia, where there was only one church in a village, many denominations wooed the Russia Germans in the United States, confusing them with competing claims. Among the denominations that organized congregations made up of Russia Germans were the Missouri Synod, American Lutheran Church, Reformed Church in the United States (German Reformed Church), German Evangelical Synod of North America, German Methodists, German Baptists, and Adventists. Roughly 45 percent of those from Protestant churches in Russia remained Lutheran, 20 percent were divided among Methodists and Baptists, and 5 percent joined the Reformed Church. Yet 30 percent of the Russia German Protestants in the United States by the 1930s had joined Congregational churches. [22]

The immigration of Russia Germans to the United States re-sulted from several causes. The most significant was Czar Alexander II's revocation, in 1871, of one of the guarantees made to the first Volga colonists by Catherine the Great: freedom from military service. In 1892 Alexander III curtailed land acquisition by non-Orthodox citizens in the west. To land-starved colonists who had established many new colonies and who doubtless had plans to start more, such a policy seemed to aim at their freedom of religion, which Catherine had also guaranteed.

Many families did send sons off to the army and navy. Even today pictures of young Germans in Russian uniforms are found in the homes of their American offspring. An anti-German wind was blowing across the steppes, however, and the colonists felt it. They had lost faith in the manifesto that brought their ancestors to Russia. Consequently, many sought new homes, some going to the United States and Canada and others journeying to South America.

Beginning with a few scouts who located cheap land in the early 1870s, Russia German immigration eventually reached massive proportions. By 1920, 303,532 first- and second-generation Russia Germans resided in the United States. [23] They constituted the third and final great wave of German immigration; the first arrived in colonial times and the second, in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Russia Germans were different from earlier German immigrants. Their speech was laced with Russianisms, and German-Americans considered it archaic. Along with their English-speaking neighbors, German-Americans referred to them as "Russians" and to their settlements as "Russiatown." [24] They were at the bottom of the social ladder and did jobs that others avoided. Women were domestics; men worked on railroad construction or farmed. All who encountered them, however, admired their ability to work. [25]

The prejudice felt by most Russia Germans made Congregationalism even more attractive. The Congregational Church— which came out "congraese" when they tried to pronounce it—was made up of people just like them. Eventually, the church was being served by Russian-born pastors or by pastors whose parents were Russian-born.

The first Russia German ordained to the Congregational ministry was Emmanuel Jose, who founded many churches in Nebraska and the Dakotas. Jose traveled widely, establishing and maintaining contact with little groups, because there were few resident pastors. A pastor who accompanied Jose on one such trip described a visit with a group of Russia Germans living in a remote part of Nebraska.

Isolated, these people live in their sod-houses, scattered all over the prairie. Here they pray and sing praises to the Lord. Brother Jose, who resided in Sutton, served these people once in about three months. They are as sheep, having no fold and no shepherd. Not a church of any kind did I see in that whole region of country.

After supper we had prayer meeting ... to which all the German railroad hands working there were invited. The house was filled, and we had a blessed time. The next evening a number of the brethren and sisters gathered for another prayer meeting.... The people were not satisfied with an

hour and a half; they remained until about 11 o'clock that night, singing their accustomed German-Russian melodies, intermingled occasionally with prayer.

The Sabbath was a glorious and blessed day. The house was packed full. Brother Jose preached with great effect.... At 2 p.m. the house was overfilled again, and with much joy and freedom of heart I delivered the Lord's message, which was gladly received.... After the people were dismissed they requested us to have another meeting at night, to which we gladly agreed. [26]

Large groups of Russia Germans settled in Nebraska, the Dakotas, Kansas, Colorado, Washington, and California. They responded eagerly to the ministrations of Congregational *Reiseprediger*, who gathered them into small congregations, but the shortage of pastors presented a major stumbling block. The pastors supplied by the "Mission Houses" were not Russia German and sometimes had difficulty ministering to the people. Occasionally, however, particularly able Russia Germans were brought into the ministry. For example, Johannes Koch, an evangelist in Russia, was examined for ordination by several English-speaking Congregational ministers through an interpreter and went on to found a number of Pacific Northwest churches. [27] And in South Dakota, John Lich, a country schoolmaster, was ordained in 1885 and served many years in Lincoln, Nebraska. [28]

Organizing a denomination

On October 3, 1883 a small group of German pastors met in Crete, Nebraska, and organized *Die Allgemeine Evangelische Kirchenversammlung der Deutschen Kongregationalisten* (The General Evangelical Church Assembly of German Congregationalists). The new organization dealt with four items of business. One centered around theological education, another discussed the appointment of a general superintendent for the work, and the other two dealt with the publication of a newspaper and church manual.

George E. Albrecht, a native German who graduated from Oberlin College and served an English-speaking congregation in Ohio, was appointed superintendent in 1883, just after completing a stint with the AHMS in Davenport, Iowa, where he directed the Sunday school efforts. Albrecht himself was a product of regeneration.

I was working in a machine shop in Ohio, as far from God and Christ as the East is from the West, as much lost in sinful pleasures as any of my shopmates. A young Englishman, member of a Congregational church, who worked near me and heard my godless speech, began to pray for me, and with kind words induced me to go to church, afterwards to Sunday School. After a few weeks I was in his pastor's study on my knees beseeching God to have mercy on me, and since then the Lord has led me on with marvelous love.

He provided a solid organizational base on which the German movement could grow. "God seemed to have called the Congregational church to a new work, and the voice was obeyed," he wrote in a report.

Old and erroneous ideas pertaining to various methods by which the Germans should be approached were cast aside, and the pastors simply went to the Germans with the plain Gospel. It was this method that bore the most fruit. [29]

By 1885 German Congregational churches had been established in nine states. The churches were no longer only in rural areas. Although the going was tougher in cities, persistence paid off, as one pastor demonstrated.

When I began to call upon the people to invite them to gospel services I often had the pleasure (?) to see the door shut on me, instead of inviting me to come in and call again. I generally left my card of invitation behind me, telling the hours of service and Sunday School, and also a tract or two. In a week I went again to the same places, taking my wife with me. I hoped they would not shut the door on her; but found only a few who did not. Some braced themselves in the door and listened to the inviting words; then remarked: "If we find time, we may come once." The next time I went I took my wife and daughter. I went every two or three weeks. Now, thank God, there is a great change. The doors are open to us, and we can have a Christian conversation, and sometimes even

reading the Word of God and prayer. I opened the Sunday School in a fire engine hall, which I fixed up with a stand, seats, chairs, stove, etc., also books for the service at my own expense. I began with three children and six teachers. The teachers were my wife, three sons and two daughters, the youngest being fifteen years old. In a short time we had twenty-seven scholars and three visitors, and from that time continual growth. We now have sixty-eight scholars and the same six teachers. [30]

In 1886 Albrecht explained that the work now had "a good start," but the dangerous shortage of pastors hampered its growth. "We need money," he wrote, "in order to get men; not to buy men, nor to coax them, but to pay them living salaries, and above all to train them for lasting work." Albrecht held a special conference with Prof. Samuel Ives Curtiss, who was on the faculty at the Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS); several American ministers; and representatives of some German churches. Sometime later Albrecht wrote:

Nothing is more trying and discouraging to a home missionary than to see the doors swinging wide open in scores of places, and to call and write in vain for men to enter them. Golden opportunities are lost. Important fields pass into the hands of others, or, what is worse, remain wholly uncared for. The whole work is dragging heavily for want of workers. [31]

Albrecht resigned as general superintendent in 1887 to become a foreign missionary. [32] He was succeeded the following year by Civil War veteran Moritz E. Eversz, also a native German and Oberlin College graduate. Eversz had been converted while serving in the 20th Wisconsin Volunteers and throughout the war had participated in a small prayer group. During his superintendency "centers of influence" began to be identified, and "people who longed for more spiritual life and for freedom from arbitrary domination of stricter denominations" discovered Congregationalism. [33]

Lutheran in name only, some Russia Germans found the kind of spirituality they had known in Russia in the small Congregational churches. By 1890 the pastors who were trained in CTS's German department had begun serving in local churches. Russia Germans, they understood the people and their ways. Revivals broke out in many places. New churches were founded. In 1895 there were 110 churches with a combined membership of 4,728. Fifteen years later the numbers had grown to 202 churches with 11,435 members. [34]

The growth of German Congregationalism spawned associations and state conferences in areas where churches were concentrated. The first German association was organized in Iowa, in 1862, and the first state conference, in Nebraska, in 1879. [35] Although German Congregational associations and conferences were separate from their English-speaking counterparts, they did maintain relations with them, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on local leadership.

A similar relationship existed between the General Conference of German Congregational Churches of the United States and the National Council of Congregational Churches of the United States. Superintendent Albrecht attended the sixth session of the National Council, which met in Chicago in 1886, [36] but it was not until 1927 that the Council officially recognized the General Conference of German Congregational Churches as having "parity" with state conferences. [37] This move was undoubtedly influenced by the 1925 "recognition" of the Evangelical Protestant Conference, a group of twenty-two "union" churches (Lutheran and Reformed), some dating back to the colonial period. Interestingly, some of those churches were served by German Congregational pastors. [38]

After Superintendent Eversz retired, in 1920, Herman Obenhaus became superintendent, serving until 1936, when Russian-born Jacob Hirning was appointed. Hirning was the first Russia German to head the German work. In the first year of his superintendency the state conferences numbered six and the state associations, three, representing 197 churches with a total membership of 22,166. [39] By this time many churches no longer functioned only in German. Native-born young people rapidly became Americanized. At the end of World War II most worship services were in English—a trend reflected by the publication in 1952 of an English-language hymnal. Only the Brotherhood clung to German, their prayer meetings offering a window into an increasingly distant past.

Education

In 1878 a seminary was founded in Crete in conjunction with Doane College. Too few students and a lack of money kept it from taking hold. In 1882, however, it began serving as a feeder school, or proseminar, for the newly organized German department of CTS. This department flourished because of the efforts of Professor Curtiss.

Curtiss, who had earned a Ph.D. in Germany, was a gifted scholar and pastor. He started several Chicago mission churches and the Chicago Congregational City Missionary Society. "Throughout his career at the seminary," Arthur Cushman McGiffert Jr. wrote, "Curtiss did the work of three men." One of the three took a particular interest in the German work, seeing to it that two German faculty members were appointed. His influence and that of colleague Hugh Macdonald Scott helped CTS become a "polyglot seminary," whose foreign department trained not only Germans but also Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes. [40] As German-trained church historian Scott put it:

With immigrants landing in this country at the rate of 750,000 a year, ignorant of American life, strange in speech, not a few opposed to our civilization and our Christianity, the eyes of the most obtuse have at last been opened to the need of thorough Gospel work among this part of our population. Until very recently our Congregational churches paid no attention to this field. [41]

Growth led to more stable educational institutions. In 1894 the Crete proseminar was moved to Wilton, Iowa, and reconstituted the Wilton German English College. The poorly financed, two-building college merged with Redfield College, in Redfield, South Dakota, in 1904, forming "a Christian institution of learning under the general supervision of the German Congregational churches of the United States of America," with the mandate "specifically to provide an academic and college course for all German young men looking toward a German Congregational ministry."

Redfield was a good location, because most of Wilton's students had been Russia Germans from the Dakotas. Although finances remained a problem, Redfield College survived, and in 1916 the German Institute at CTS moved there, becoming the Redfield College Seminary. The depression signaled an end to Redfield, but the School of Theology moved to Yankton College in 1932 [42] and later became one of the institutions that formed the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities.

Publications

At the founding of the general conference, in 1883, two of the four items of business centered on publication. *Zionsfreund*, an eight-page newspaper founded by Prof. Theo. Falk of Crete Seminary in 1880, had a two-year run before folding. *Der Kirchenbote* (Church Messenger), which followed *Zionsfreund*, was published by Henry Hess until 1888, when the Congregational Publishing Society, at the instigation of Prof. Curtiss, purchased it and placed it under the editorship of Gustav Zimmermann, who taught in CTS's German department. A semimonthly until 1897, when it became a weekly, *Der Kirchenbote* was avidly read by most German Congregational families. It contained devotional articles as well as denominational news and along with the *Illustrierter-Kirchenbote-Kalendar*; a daily devotional with scripture lessons, a brief message and prayer, and sometimes a hymn— was standard reading.

The German Congregational publishing operation was located in Chicago from 1888 until 1895, when it was moved to Michigan City, Indiana. In 1905 it was moved back to Chicago. The German Congregational Publishing Society—as it was officially known—printed works bearing an illustration of a Pilgrim and the name "The German Pilgrim Press." [43]

The first *Gesangbuch* was authorized by the General Conference that met in Chicago in 1896 and was in use by 1898. Both the first and second editions were *ohne Noten*—without music—requiring someone to lead the singing who had memorized all the melodies. [44] The third and final edition contained the music and all the words. This edition was the preferred hymnal of most church members, who proudly carried the books to worship services and prayer meetings.

Two supplementary hymnbooks were used in prayer meetings. Social Gospel theologian Walter Rauschenbusch and Ira Sankey, who had accompanied Dwight L. Moody on so many of his tours, produced a collection of American gospel songs in German translation—*Evangeliums-S?nger*—that was popular. *Der K?stliche Schatz* was prepared for Brotherhood use by a Russia German

Evangelical Synod pastor in Portland, Oregon, Elias Hergert, who had been an Eden Seminary classmate of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. It contained some Brotherhood songs from Russia as well as recent compositions by Hergert and others, a few of which were in English. [45]

A Catechism for the German Congregational churches first appeared in 1904. Attempting to include the basic teachings contained in Luther's Small Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism, it had 150 questions and answers and 50 questions to be answered by confirmands during a final oral examination before the entire congregation. The Catechism was divided into five sections: the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Uses of the Law, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments.

Unlike Luther's catechism or the Heidelberg Catechism, the German Congregational *Katechismus* began by asserting the centrality of scripture.

How can one discern that Holy Scripture is God's Word?

- a) The divine strength of so many souls in life and death has proven it already;
- b) because it has been confirmed through divine prophecy and miracles, and
- c) because it was written by holy men of God at the impulse of the Holy Spirit [46]

Rather than beginning with the Law as did Luther's Catechism, or with humanity's delight in belonging to Christ, as did the Heidelberg Catechism, the *Katechismus* started by establishing the place of the Bible in people's lives.

After World War II, English-language materials became widely available. In 1947 the General Conference of German Congregational Churches, meeting in Lodi, California, elected a hymnal committee to select songs and hymns that "could be used with both our own German Hymnal and the Wolga Gesangbuch." [47] The resulting Pioneer Hymnal, which came out in 1952, included many familiar American hymns as well as translations of some better-known German hymns.

The Pioneer Press of Yankton, South Dakota, publishers of the new hymnal, succeeded the Redfield College Press, which had taken over The German Pilgrim Press in 1923. The Pioneer Press remained in operation until 1968, publishing hymnals, catechisms, and church and Sunday school materials in both English and German. [48]

The *Katechismus* was first translated into English in 1928 and was revised and reissued in 1955. Instead of 150 questions, as in the original version, there were 119 questions plus an appendix of 14 questions and answers on "The Congregational Fellowship." One question asked: "What institutions and projects do our churches especially sponsor through the General Conference?" The answer: "The Yankton College School of Theology, the Pioneer Press and our South American Mission." [49]

Mission work

The mission to Argentina was the second foreign field tended by German Congregationalists. (In Canada, the first foreign field, thirty-one churches that had been affiliated with the General Conference became part of the United Church of Canada when that denomination came into being, in 1925.) [50]

The work in South America began in 1921, when four Argentinean churches urgently requested that denominational recognition be given George Geier, who was serving them. The Illinois Conference licensed Geier, who worked among Russia Germans who were alike in every way to those in the United States and in Canada. In 1924 general missionary John Hoelzer, in Argentina for a brief visit, organized six churches.

The South American Germans from Russia had learned about Congregationalism in letters from relatives in the United States. Despite attacks from the Missouri Lutheran La Plata Synod, the Congregational mission grew. By 1937 thirty-six churches had been established with a total of 3,015 members—all served by five ministers. [51] The need for a trained ministry was acute, and eventually a theological school was founded. Even today, the South American churches are in contact with the United Church Board for World Ministries, although they, like their American cousins, have adapted to the surrounding culture.

In the United Church of Christ

Most German Congregational churches became affiliated with the United Church of Christ (UCC), which came into being in 1957 with the merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Itself a merged denomination, the Evangelical and Reformed Church represented the 1934 union of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America—two groups that had labored among Russia German immigrants. Since then a number of former German Congregational churches have withdrawn and many more are served by pastors of other denominations.

The descendants of the Russia Germans who embraced Congregationalism are often troubled by the UCC's emphasis on social action. To them, the UCC seems too political and not grounded enough in scripture. This reaction is characteristic. The unique heritage of the Russia Germans laid great stress on the Bible, religious experience, and sanctified living. It was an individual gospel, expressed in prayer meetings, worship, and performing kind deeds among one's neighbors. [52] Although prayer meetings have almost disappeared and revivals are no longer a feature of church life, such piety remains powerfully latent. German Congregationalism has made a unique contribution to the United Church of Christ. Even though its outward form is changed, the inner spirit continues to radiate.

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Notes

1. George J. Eisenach, A History of the German Congregational Churches in the United States (Yankton, SD, 1937), p. 3. 2. Carl E. Schneider, "The Home Mission Zeal of an Immigrant Church," in Missionary Trails: The Story of Missions in the Evangelical Synod of North America as told by missionaries and friends of missions (St. Louis, 1934), p. 5.
3. Home Missionary, January 1851. Reprinted in Carl E. Schneider, The German Church on the American Frontier (St. Louis, 1939), p. 494.
4. Eisenach, op. cit., p. 7.
5. Ibid., p. 51.
6. In Arthur Cushman McGiffert Jr., No Ivory Tower: The Story of The Chicago Theological Seminary (Chicago, 1965), p. 60.
7. Eisenach, op. cit., p. 7
8. The oldest congregation still in existence is Sherrill United Church of Christ in Sherrill, Iowa, which was organized by Peter Fleury in 1849.
9. The saying is quoted in Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago, 1918?1956, V?VII (New York, 1979), p. 400.

10. George J. Eisenach, *Pietism and the Russian Germans in the United States* (Berne, IN, 1948), p. 31, and Adam Giesinger, *From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans* (Battleford, Saskatchewan, 1974), p. 156. Giesinger places the Lutheran and Reformed mix at 80%-20%.

11. Eisenach, *Pietism*, op. cit., p. 31, quotes Catholic priest Gottlieb Beratz, *Die deutschen Kolonien an der Unteren Wolga in ihrer Entstehung and ersten Entwicklung* (Saratov, 1915), p. 230, regarding the clergy shortage.

12. "Russland" in *Real-Encyklopadie fur protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, zweiter Auflage, Dreizhenter Band (Ritschl bis Scotus) (Leipzig, 1884), p. 126.

13. Photos of pastors wearing crucifixes may be found in *80th Anniversary of The Free Evangelical Lutheran Cross Church, 1892? 1972* (Fresno, CA, 1972), pp. 14, 16, and Karl Stumpp, "Verzeichnis der ev. Pastoren in den einzelnen deutschen und gemischten Kirchenspielen in Russland bzw. der Sowjetunion, ohne Baltikum und Polen" in Joseph Schnurr, ed., *Die Kirchen und das Religi?se Leben der Russlanddeutschen*, *Evangelischer Tell* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 120?82.

14. See Harry Anderson, "Die Universit?ts-gemeinde in Dorpat und ihre Kirche" in Schnurr, op. cit., pp. 310-15.

15. See G. Wayne Glick, *The Reality of Christianity: A Study of Adolf von Harnack as Historian and Theologian* (New York, 1967), pp. 23?34, for a glimpse of Dorpat and its influence on Adolf.

16. C. Blum, *Gnade urn Gnade. Evangelien-Predigten f?r dos ganze Kirchenjahr* (Jurjew [Dorpat], 1901), p. 613. Stumpp, op. cit., p. 198, lists Blum as "Johannes Nikolaus Blum."

17. Blum, op. cit., p. 615.

18. Quoted in Eisenach, *Pietism*, op. cit., p. 64.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

20. Some pastors forbade such meetings in their parishes; in other places meetings were broken up and Elders were punished. See Eisenach, *Pietism*, op. cit., pp. 174?76.

21. The church in Endicott, Washington, was one. See Anna B. Weitz, *A Century of Christian Fellowship: Evangelical Congregational Church, Endicott, Washington, 1883?1983* (Colfax, WA, 1983], p.6.

22. Richard Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, trans. Lavern J. Rippley and Armand Bauer (Fargo, ND, 1974), p. 90.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

24. See S. Joachim, *Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans* (Moorhead, MN, 1939), for a contemporary attempt to explain faulty impressions of the Germans from Russia.

25. Roland Bainton, in his biography of his father, Herbert Bainton, who served the Congregational Church in Colfax, Washington, noted that the only domestic help available to his mother "were some German-speaking immigrants lately come from Russia whose women would come sometimes for half a day." See Roland Bainton, *Pilgrim Parson: The Life of James Herbert Bainton, 1867? 1942* (New York, 1958), p. 74.

26. Eisenach, *History*, op. cit., pp. 45?48.

27. Koch was a moderator of the Brotherhood conference in Russia, working with Ehlers. Gottfried Graedel, in an undated newspaper article entitled "German Congregational Churches in the State of Washington," in the possession of Richard Scheuermann, states: "It was in 1888 when our own Atkinson, Walters and Jonathan Edwards met in Endicott. Johannes Koch represented the Germans. He used to be an evangelist in the old country. The three former ministers informed themselves about the condition of things and found it advisable to ordain Mr. Koch. As Mr. Koch before that had organized two churches, Ritzville and Endicott, the two were accepted into Congregational fellowship with their pastor, and so the Pacific German Congregational church was established."

28. Eisenach, *History*, op. cit., p. 60.

29. *Ibid.* pp. 49, 57-58.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 70.

32. William E. Strong, *The Story of the American Board* (Boston, 1910), p. 362, reveals that Albrecht served in Tokyo, Japan, where he helped translate many works into Japanese.

33. Eisenach, *History*, op. cit., p. 75.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

35. See Henry Vieth, "A History of German Congregationalism in Nebraska" in *A History of the Churches and of the Present Conference, Nebraska Conference, United Church of Christ*, vol. 1, 1976, pp. 114-42.

36. E. Lyman Hood, *The National Council of Congregational Churches of the United States* (Boston, n.d.), p. 125, lists Albrecht as being from "the Nebraska phalanx." This session of the Council commended the attempt to create a German Academy at Crete, Nebraska. See Eisenach, *History*, op. cit., p. 172.

37. Louis H. Gunnemann, *The Shaping of the United Church of Christ* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1977), p. 161.

38. Eisenach, *History*, op. cit., p. 145.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

40. McGiffert, op. cit., pp. 54-64.

41. Eisenach, *History*, op. cit., p. 175.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 183-202.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 204-7.

44. Family tradition recalls the author's grandmother was a song leader.

45. Walter Rauschenbusch and Ira D. Sankey, eds., *Evangeliums-S?nger* (Kassel, n.d.), and Elias Hergert, ed., *Der K?stliche Schatz* (Portland, OR, N.D.). Both books went through many editions.

46. *Katechismus der biblischen Heilswahrheiten fur die evangelischen Kongregational-Gemeinden von Nord-Amerika* (Chicago, 1919), p. 10. English editions omit this question.

47. "Preface," *The Pioneer Hymnal* (Yankton, 1952), p. 3.
48. Walter Kranzler, "German Congregationalism." in Edward C. Ehrensperger, ed., *History of the United Church of Christ in South Dakota, 1869-1976* (Freeman, SD, 1977), pp. 199-200.
49. *Congregational Catechism of Religious Instruction* (Yankton, 1955), p. 46.
50. Eisenach, *History*, op. cit., p. 213.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
52. An exception to this pattern was the massive relief effort to Volga Germans in the post-Revolutionary War period, bankrolled by Russia Germans in the United States. See Emma D. Schwabenland, *A History of the Volga Relief Society* (Portland, OR, 1941).

Blacks and the American Missionary Association

Written by Clara Merritt DeBoer

The average American history student learns about William Lloyd Garrison and the Quakers as the leaders of the antislavery cause. How many hear about the "evangelical" abolitionists or the American Missionary Association (AMA) and its predecessors, the Amistad Committee and the Union Missionary Society (UMS), covering the years 1839 to 1878? Garrison's periodical, *The Liberator*, had perhaps two thousand subscribers at its height, whereas *The American Missionary*, organ of the AMA, was read by twenty thousand church members. Garrison's repute is helped by the glowing biography written of him by his children and by the fact that *The Liberator* was preserved by the Boston Public Library and has been available for reading during these one hundred plus years. The AMA had no central repository for its archives. Its papers were sent to Fisk University, where they were stored in a room with an open window. Ten percent of them were destroyed by weather. In 1969 the papers were removed from Fisk for microfilming and were then housed temporarily in the newly created Amistad Research Center, which occupied several rooms of the Dillard University library, in New Orleans. In 1973 the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries relinquished control of the Center to a private board, on which it maintains only a minority presence.

The AMA was founded by leaders of both races who had much in common: All were political abolitionists, members of the Liberty and the Free Soil parties; all were opposed to colonization (the return of blacks to Africa); and all were church members of liberal communions. Most of the whites were Congregationalists. The blacks were Congregational or Presbyterian ministers. All believed in the equality of the races and insisted on integration in their activities. In this they stand in contrast to Garrison and his followers, who talked and wrote much about freeing the slaves but used blacks only in servile positions in the office or as oratorical performers on the lecture circuit. Even most of the Quakers, who historically have high marks as antislavery workers, were not comfortable enough in their race relations to admit black members into their societies.

Among its officers and members the AMA counted persons of stature in public and private life: the vice president of the United States, the governors of Massachusetts and of Connecticut, members of Congress, ministers of the gospel, and a state supreme court justice, all of whom were white. Its black members included newspaper editors and publishers, leaders of the Negro Convention movement, authors, members of Congress, ministers of the gospel, and a state supreme court justice—"men of mark," as Lewis Tappan called them.

The AMA was established because two older ecumenical bodies, the American Home Missionary Society (AHMS) and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), refused to take forthright stands against slavery and accepted contributions from slaveholders. In addition to missions in Africa, Hawaii, Siam, Jamaica, and Egypt as well as among the American Indians, the immigrant Chinese, and the poor whites of the United States, the AMA founded more than five hundred schools and colleges for the freedmen of the South during and after the Civil War, spending more money for that purpose than the Freedman's Bureau of the federal government. [1]

Just to name some of the schools in which the AMA played a major role is to see the scope of its influence in the field of education in the South: Howard University, Berea College, Hampton Institute, Atlanta University, Fisk University, Straight (now Dillard) University, Tougaloo College, Talladega College, LeMoyné (now LeMoyné-Owen) College, Tillotson (now Huston-Tillotson) College, Avery Institute.

This was the gift of New England to the freed Negro; not alms, but a friend; not cash, but character. It was not and is not money these seething millions want, but love and sympathy. . . which once saintly souls brought to their favored children in the crusade of the sixties, that finest thing in American History, and one of the few things untainted by sordid greed and cheap vainglory. The teachers in these institutions came not to keep the Negroes in their place, but to raise them out of the places of defilement where slavery had wallowed them. The colleges they founded were social settlements; homes where the best of the sons of the freedmen came in close and sympathetic touch with the best traditions of New England. They lived and ate together, studied and worked, hoped and hearkened in the dawning light. In actual formal content their curriculum was doubtless old-fashioned, but in educational power it was supreme, for it was the contact of living souls. [2]

To tell the story of the AMA fully is to explore its New England heritage and the minds of those, like Tappan, who were instrumental in its origins: the influence of Charles G. Finney and the distinctive revivalism associated with him and with Congregationalism; the influences of Oneida Institute, Yale University, and Oberlin; the interaction of liberal nineteenth-century theology and radical abolitionism. It is also to tell the story of many black Americans who worked for the cause of Christian freedom and justice.

Although the AMA was not begun primarily for black persons, more of them served on its board and were commissioned by it than is true of any other predominantly white benevolent organization. More than five hundred black persons—officers, teachers, and missionaries—can be identified (not always easy in view of the color-blind nature of the AMA) among the AMA workers during the period covered by the archives. This remarkable record was achieved because of the uncompromising belief in freedom and equality on the part of the founders of the AMA. [3]

Most of the great black heroes of the nineteenth century had at least some relationship with the AMA. Even Frederick Douglass, who was aided in publishing his paper by officers of the AMA and who often worshiped in the First Congregational Church of Washington, DC, although castigating other benevolent organizations for their paternalism, excepted the AMA and described it as a "society honestly laboring to disseminate light and hope amongst us."

Amistad incident

In the spring of 1839 African slavers kidnapped and sold a group of their compatriots to a Portuguese trader, who transported them in irons to Havana, Cuba, and resold them. Thus began the celebrated **Amistad incident**. [4] Fifty-four of the slaves mutinied, murdered some of the crew, and caused the remainder to sail into Long Island Sound and the jurisdiction of the American courts. New England antislavery forces rallied to form a committee to cover court costs and help the Africans return to their homeland. Before it ended the affair involved Presidents Martin Van Buren and John Tyler, former President John Quincy Adams (who acted as defense attorney in the final appeal before the Supreme Court), the possibility of war with Spain, and the establishment of the Mendi Mission in Africa. The Amistad Committee—Lewis Tappan, Simeon Smith Jocelyn, and Joshua Leavitt—chosen after the adjournment of a meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, raised the funds for the care of the Africans and for their trials. [5]

The effort and the money that were expended turned out to be good investments. The Amistad case was not only a propellant for the antislavery cause, but also something more: Coming as it did at the time of schism in the American Anti-Slavery Society, it provided Tappan and the evangelical abolitionists with a new direction for the war on slavery and a national voice with which to address church members and speak for them. (This was particularly important for the Congregationalists whose denomination had no national organization until the start of the Congregational Union, in 1854.)

Tappan, New York merchant and transplanted New England Congregationalist, was the organizational genius of the abolition movement. He gave the AMA its spirit, its name, and his services as treasurer without pay for nineteen years. This magnificent American, for whom no definitive biography exists, lived his Christian faith although his life was threatened, his home ransacked and his possessions burned, and he was forced out of his church. He taught an integrated Sunday school and advocated integrated public schools in the belief that blacks and whites could know each other as adults only if they grew up together. When one of the Mendi (Africa) missionaries wrote to the "Rooms" in New York asking what the AMA officers would think if he were to marry an African woman, Tappan's answer was, "White or black, whom God puts together let no man put asunder." Small wonder that such a man and his fellow workers attracted leading black abolitionists to the AMA. [6]

Union Missionary Society

Prompted by the plight of the Amistad Africans on trial in his own state, James William Charles Pennington, pastor of the Talcott Street Congregational Church (black), in Hartford, Connecticut, issued a call for a Missionary Convention of black persons to consider the needs of Africa "because the exigencies of that country are great" and "because we are desirous that something should be done by us for the land which our fathers loved as the land of their nativity." The time was right, for blacks had no missionary society and Christian duty demanded that they follow the Great Commission of Jesus.

Blacks like Pennington who overcame the enormous infirmities of slavery gave abolitionists irrefutable evidence of their equality. Pennington had no known white ancestors. When he escaped slavery, at age twenty-one, he could not read, yet within five years he was an accredited teacher at New Town, Long Island. After his escape he worked during the day and studied at night to make up for the deprivation his mind had suffered in childhood. To prepare himself for the Christian ministry he went to New Haven. Pennington lacked the educational qualifications to enter Yale Seminary as a student but was allowed to audit courses. At the same time he served the Temple Street Congregational Church (founded by Simeon Smith Jocelyn and later served by Amos Gerry Beman), having been licensed in 1838. Two years later he began his work as pastor of the Talcott Street Congregational Church of Hartford.

The convention that created the Union Missionary Society (UMS) in Hartford, on August 18, 1841, was composed "chiefly" of "people of color" from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania. Pennington was chosen president; the Rev. Amos Gerry Beman of New Haven, corresponding secretary; the Rev. Theodore Sedgwick Wright of New York, treasurer; and the Rev. Josiah Brewer (who was white) of Wethersfield, Connecticut, chairman of the executive committee. Tappan was elected to an office in absentia but declined. He did not think the time was right to enter into competition with the ABCFM. He still hoped that the foreign mission board would be persuaded to denounce slavery. Lewis, his brother Arthur, and many other abolitionists were convinced that the means for defeating slavery lay in the institutions of evangelical Protestantism. Slavery could not stand for one hour, they said, if the churches denounced it. The Amistad Committee agreed to sever its ties with the Africans and turn over its funds to the ABCFM, "provided assurance was given that it should be an anti-slavery mission" to be founded when the Africans were returned home. The Board declined the offer, and three New York abolitionists found themselves—rather reluctantly—in the missionary business. The group of missionaries sent to Africa with the Amistads included a black man and his wife under the care of the UMS. Tappan wanted the new mission to be headed by Pennington, but Pennington could not be persuaded to accept the position. His congregation had doubled in the year he had served it, but he feared what would happen if he left so soon. And he was also the president of the infant UMS, which would "need much labor to make it go." At its first annual meeting, in 1842, the UMS absorbed the Amistad Committee. This time Tappan accepted the office of corresponding secretary, but the organization was still predominantly black, with few sources of funds and little interest shown in it by most white abolitionists.

American Missionary Association founded

The action that finally prompted evangelical abolitionists to found a missionary society of the "whole gospel" took place two weeks before the Liberty Party convention in 1845. The ABCFM issued a

statement to the effect that it was against slavery but would not direct its missionaries among the American Indian tribes to refuse church membership to Indians who owned slaves. One hundred people—one tenth of those at the convention—held a special meeting and decided on action. They reluctantly chose to start another missionary society in the place of those they had long sustained with their gifts. They determined that it would be democratically organized, unlike the old societies, whose boards were self-perpetuating and independent of their supporters.

After an initial meeting in Albany, part of the so-called burnt-over district and birthplace of so many nineteenth-century enthusiasms, the AMA was born in 1846.

Black leadership before the Civil War

Of the twelve men who served on the first board of the AMA four were Afro-Americans: Theodore S. Wright, Samuel Ringgold Ward, James Pennington, and Charles Bennett Ray. In later years Samuel E. Cornish, Henry Highland Garnet, Amos N. Freeman, and Sella Martin also served as officers. They were unusual men. Each had taken full advantage of the grudging opportunities afforded his race for education in the North. And having secured that hard-won prize for himself, each entered the fight to secure the blessings of education and first-class citizenship for all his race. Most of them had edited newspapers at some period of their lives, and all contributed widely to black and abolitionist publications. Although their lives were quickened by the urgency of the larger task, with the exception of Cornish, their purposes were tempered by the necessity of earning enough money to support their families. Their towers were neither covered with ivy nor made of ivory. These men were in the ranks daily, battling for and among their fellows.

Ray and Wright were free-born New Englanders. Freeman may have been as well, for he was ordained in Maine in 1841 and served the Fourth Congregational Church in Portland. Ray and Tappan were two of the founders of an integrated church in New York. Ray also served the AMA as auditor and as urban missionary in New York City, starting another Congregational church there. In 1828 Wright graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary, the first black person to receive a theological degree in the United States. He was a fervent critic of the colonization scheme. His time on the AMA executive committee ended with his death, in 1847.

Cornish was born in Delaware and educated in Philadelphia. He founded the First Colored Presbyterian Church in New York in 1822 and served it until Wright became its minister, in 1828. Later, as Shiloh Presbyterian Church, it and its minister removed to the Free School Presbytery. Cornish was an editor of the first black newspaper in America and remained a vice president of the AMA until his death, in 1858.

Pennington, Garnet, and Ward were slaves who escaped from Maryland. Garnet and Ward were brought north by their parents as young children. Garnet, second (perhaps) only to Frederick Douglass in leadership among black Americans, was a magnificent orator. In 1865, on the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, he was the first black person to address Congress. He died in Liberia in 1882, having been appointed U.S. Minister by President James A. Garfield, who served the AMA as trustee of Hampton Institute.

Ward was a home missionary of the AMA as well as a member of the executive committee. During the time he was one of the managers of the UMS he served the Congregational church at South Butler, New York. This church was well known for its progressive leadership. In 1853 it was the first church in a major American denomination to ordain a woman. Still later it sent the AMA its first superintendent to work among freed slaves.

Martin was born in North Carolina. His father was also his owner. He grew up in urban areas and managed to learn to read. Unlike most escapees, Martin made his way north from the deep South when he was twenty-three. His escape did not come until 1855, five years after the Fugitive Slave Law had wrought such havoc in the lives of Ward, Pennington, and Garnet, all of whom were forced to flee the country. Garnet left his position as a home missionary for the AMA, commissioned to start integrated Congregational churches in New York State, to flee to Great Britain and then on to Jamaica as a missionary of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (antislavery and not the established church). Pennington went to Great Britain. Under AMA auspices Ward chose to go to the

Canadian West, because the AMA thought this field was the most difficult in its home mission work. He started a newspaper for the black refugees who were there, and then he also went to Great Britain.

Not all the AMA home missionaries before the Civil War were men. The most interesting of the women and probably the most "temperamental" of them all was Mary Ann Shadd Cary. She eventually became one of the first black women lawyers in North America, but before that she took over Samuel Ward's paper in the Canadian West and became the first woman editor, white or black. The AMA found her to be both an able teacher of the fugitive slaves and a worthy opponent in disputes. She took on the eminent black men of her time, including Frederick Douglass, in the surviving portions of her newspaper. She also challenged the men at AMA headquarters for their lack of faith in her dedication to integrated schools. Despite her vitriolic attacks in letters and in her paper, the AMA recognized her ability. She later worked for the association at the Lincoln School, in Washington, DC.

Schools for freed slaves

The coming of the war found the AMA ready and in place with a decade and a half of experience as a missionary society. AMA missionaries and teachers followed the Union armies, establishing schools wherever and as soon as the military situation permitted. That the freedmen were taught by New England schoolmarm was a myth. True, a number of the teachers were women, but fully a third were men. Many came from New England, but a large number also came from New York, Michigan, Ohio, and elsewhere. Most important: Some of them, men and women, were black. Some, like their white counterparts, had received their higher education at Oberlin College, remarkable in its day for its acceptance of blacks and women.

Men or women, black or white, what courage they needed! And what stamina! Ignored, insulted, hated by the white population, they persevered through disease and terror and suffered many hardships. Refused housing by whites, they often shared the poor homes and poverty of black families. All week they taught: children in the daytime; classes at night for the adults; sewing, homemaking, and manual arts on Saturday; Sunday school on the sabbath. They worked when yellow fever, dengue, malaria, typhoid, and tuberculosis were scourges everywhere. Some died; some never fully recovered from fever contracted while in AMA service. The worst disease of all, however, was the prejudice and hate of the whites in the South. Letters in the archives document the shocking record. Male teachers were beaten and warned to leave or be killed. Some disappeared. Their schools were burned and they rebuilt them with their own hands. They started orphanages for black children and adopted some of the orphans themselves. The first teacher of the freedmen was one hired by the AMA. She was a woman but not a Yankee schoolmarm. Mary Smith Peake was a free citizen of the state of Virginia. She was born Mary Smith Kelsey in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1823. Her father was a white "Englishman of rank and culture" and her mother, a free mulatto. Thus a black woman had the honor of teaching the first day school for the freedmen. Her school in the Brown Cottage was the seed from which Hampton Institute would grow. Mary Peake's school included more than fifty children during the day and twenty adults at night. She became seriously ill but would not rest. On Washington's birthday in 1862 she died of tuberculosis. AMA secretary Simeon Smith Jocelyn called her a saint, and Brown Cottage became a sacred place.

Even when one discounts the Victorian's love of sentiment, one is awed by the evidence of affection bestowed on Mary Peake after her death. Two ministers wrote accounts of her life for publication. A brigade surgeon wrote an eulogy, and a regimental doctor wrote a poetic tribute. The Rev. Lewis C. Lockwood, AMA superintendent at Fortress Monroe, wrote that Mrs. Peake was missed "more and more" each day and that "she was indeed a queen among her kind." He had learned that the home and its furnishings that she had lost in the fire at Hampton almost equalled "the best in that aristocratic place." Yet she had been content to live in one room above the school, which Lockwood likened to the upper room of the Last Supper. She had erected to herself a "monument more enduring than brass or granite, by impressing her own image upon a group of susceptible pupils," in whom she would live again. "We never shall see her like again."

Until the AMA schools raised up their own teachers about 5 percent of the AMA workers were blacks. They were special folk indeed. They had acquired an education when most colleges were closed to blacks and women. At one point all the AMA teachers in Maryland were black women, an experiment

to show how capable black women were. The idea was dropped immediately, however, lest white Southerners use it as evidence that black teachers and white teachers were incompatible. The names of these women do not appear in published histories. One of them was Edmonia Highgate, who, at nineteen, was already the principal of a school in Binghamton, New York. She and her family were members of Plymouth Church in Syracuse. Highgate had taught at Norfolk, Virginia; Darlington, Maryland; and New Orleans, Louisiana. In New Orleans she publicly attacked the school board for its segregation policies. Her students were fired on while they were on their way to school and so was her classroom while in session.

Before going to Louisiana, Highgate persuaded the AMA to make her their collecting agent, allowing her to send half of her receipts to the school taught by her mother, in Mississippi, and the other half to the AMA general fund. In the 1860s it was still an unusual occupation for any woman to travel about New York, New England, and Lower Canada, addressing meetings and raising money. For a woman of color to do it successfully says much about the AMA and Edmonia Highgate. She died while she was still young. The cause of her death remains unknown.

Two men who were products of the Mendi Mission in Africa became in fact missionaries to the United States. Thomas De Saliere Tucker, grandson of an African chief, during his second year at Oberlin College, offered to be a teacher of the freedmen. He was sent to aid Charles P. Day, a white teacher at Fortress Monroe. Day and Tucker lived in what was, ironically, the former summer home of President Tyler, who had been unwilling or unable to persuade the U.S. Navy to provide homeward passage for the Amistad Africans. Tucker did a credible job of teaching until he fell in love with a freed slave, Lucinda Spivery, who assisted in the Fortress Monroe school. This African aristocrat wrote the AMA that he did not think he should marry a woman that was so ignorant. Lewis Tappan probably made it possible for Lucinda to receive an education as he did for so many black youth because some years later she was a regular teacher and her letters show her competence. Tucker finished his work at Oberlin and taught school in Kentucky and in Louisiana, where he edited several papers in New Orleans. He practiced law learned at Straight University and became the first president of Florida State Normal College, later Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, in Tallahassee.

Barnabas Root also was from the AMA Mendi Mission in Sierra Leone. Having graduated from Knox College in 1870 and from Chicago Theological Seminary in 1873, Root became a teacher and missionary among the freedmen. Unlike Tucker, Root's heart remained in Africa, and he returned in 1875. The Mendi missionaries died with such horrifying regularity that at one point Tappan called himself a murderer for sending women to that mission. The AMA always hoped that black Americans could withstand African diseases better than whites could. But Root, even though he was a child of Africa, did not survive long in Sierra Leone; he died in 1877. He spent his last days trying to finish a Mende language dictionary, which, along with his other books, formed the basis of a student library. In 1877 the AMA sent an all-black staff of missionaries to Mendi. All were graduates of AMA schools.

Another AMA gift to the world is the high regard in which the Negro spiritual is held today. The young black persons of the AMA colleges wanted to rid themselves of everything associated with slavery, including the old slave songs of their parents and grandparents. It took the appreciation of musicians like Adam K. Spence, principal of Fisk, and George L. White, who directed the world-famous Fisk Jubilee Singers, to give the spiritual its place in America's music.

Because of having to begin with teaching the alphabet, AMA "universities" originally contained everything from the first grade through provisions for graduate studies in law, medicine, and theology. But standards were not lowered. The first collegiate degrees awarded to black persons in the South were earned by two men and one woman at Fisk in 1875, almost ten years after Fisk was opened in a deserted army barracks hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. Not until twenty-six years after Talladega College was founded were its first A.B. degrees awarded, although many teaching certificates were given during those years.

In 1916 the U.S. Bureau of Education praised the AMA: "No denominational schools surpass those of this group in educational standards or administrative efficiency. It is probable that no church board has equaled this association in the thoroughness of its self-examination." [7]

Black churches

The AMA started more than schools, however. An integral part of the United Church of Christ are the churches the AMA established alongside the schools. If a church in the South is named First Congregational and was founded during Reconstruction, it is generally a predominantly black church started by the AMA. At first no thought was given to transporting Congregationalism to the freedmen. Although the AMA received most of its support from Congregationalists, it was nonsectarian. In fact, the Wesleyan Methodists and Freewill Baptists preceded the National Council of Congregational Churches in officially recognizing the AMA as their "special instrumentality for reaching the freedmen." The AMA commissioned teachers of most denominations, requiring only that the teachers be "evangelical" Christians (a term that then still belonged to mainline Protestantism) without racial prejudice.

From the beginnings of the AMA—long before the Civil War—its leaders had hoped for and yet feared the freedom they worked so hard to attain. Freeing four million slaves meant dispersing throughout the country four million persons whose experience at the hands of the slaveholders had inculcated insincerity, cunning, dependency, and self-hate. Education, said the AMA, was not enough. In fact, an educated moral person was more of a threat to society than an uneducated one. The Christian religion was as important a gift to the freedmen as education was. And having found the black churches of the slave states wanting in moral training and leadership, the AMA started churches as adjuncts to their schools. In this—as in all its work—the AMA was intent on preparing the former slaves to enter the mainstream of American life.

Clara Merritt DeBoer is a writer and teacher. This chapter is based on a doctoral dissertation she completed at Rutgers University, 1973, "The Role of Afro-Americans in the Origin and Work of the American Missionary Association: 1839-1877."

Notes

1. Richard Bryant Drake, "The American Missionary Association and the Southern Negro, 1861-1888" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1957), 198.
2. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Milwood, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1973); italics added.
3. For the story of the American Missionary Association with an emphasis on what black persons did in and through it, see Clara Merritt DeBoer, 'The Role of Afro-Americans in the Origin and Work of the American Missionary Association: 1839-1877' (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1973).
4. William A. Owens, *Black Mutiny: The Revolt of the Schooner Amistad* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1968).
5. For the best general picture of AMA work before the Civil War, see Clifton Herman Johnson, "The American Missionary Association, 1846-1861: A Study of Christian Abolitionism" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1959).
6. Clara Merritt DeBoer, "Lewis Tappan: Advocate of the Whole Gospel," *AD* magazine, November 1977.
7. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin 1916, No. 38.

The Deaconess Movement in 19th-century America: pioneer professional women

Written by Ruth W. Rasche

The story of the deaconess sisters is as old as the Christian church. It begins with the apostles yet endures to this day. The deaconesses are dedicated women who dared to be different in order to

give full-time Christian service to the ministry of mercy. Their life-style and work are part of the women's movement of modern times. They are the pioneer professional women of the church.

Deaconesses in the early church

Deaconess means messenger, servant, or helper. It comes from the Greek *diakonos* and was first used in the Bible by the apostle Paul, in Romans 16: 1-2, to describe Phoebe, a woman leader and worker in the early Christian community:

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.

Paul's letters indicate that women were prominent leaders and missionaries in the early Christian movement. Many in addition to Phoebe are named. Theological scholarship affirms that women were preachers, teachers, and leaders of the community as well as nurses serving the sick, the poor, and the persecuted. [1] When the time for definite ecclesiastical organization came, the work of deaconesses had become a necessity to the church and they received a place in its ordered ministry. They were highly respected and counted among the clergy. Evidence that they were ordained to some of the functions of the ministry is abundant in early church records. [2] On this biblical foundation the ministry of deaconesses in all succeeding generations rests.

Deaconess work in the Evangelical Synod

Deaconess work in the United Church of Christ began within the Evangelical Synod, one of the four roots of the UCC heritage. On March 18, 1889 the *Evangelischer Diakonissen-Verein* [Evangelical Deaconess Society] of St. Louis, Missouri, was organized, and soon thereafter the first Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital was opened. [3] Two deaconess sisters were consecrated to provide the professional leadership for this new venture. In the same year the Tabitha Institute of Lincoln, Nebraska, which was already established as an orphan asylum, added a Deaconess Home to its organization and also began its deaconess work with two consecrated sisters. After a few years, however, this effort was discontinued. [4]

Impetus for the organization of the Evangelical Deaconess Society resulted from events that had occurred a year earlier. An Evangelical pastor was summoned to give communion to a critically ill parishioner and found her being cared for in her home by a Roman Catholic nun because the woman was too poor to get help from anyone else. Much distressed at the situation and discovering that it was not an isolated incident, the pastor took the matter to the next monthly meeting of the St. Louis Evangelical Pastors' Association. "Why can't we train the young women of our church to care for the poor and the sick as do the deaconess sisters of Germany?" he asked. [5]

So much interest was aroused that a committee was appointed, more discussions were held, and the organizing meeting was finally convened at St. Peter's Evangelical Church. Seventy persons attended—sixty men, eight women, and two "young ladies." All signed their names as charter members of the new organization. Its purpose was twofold: (1) to nurse the sick and exercise care for the poor and aged and, (2) to found and support a deaconess home where deaconesses could be educated and trained. [6] A board of directors was elected, consisting of four pastors, four laymen, and four laywomen, as stipulated in the Articles of Association. [7]

The election of four women to the policy-making level of the Evangelical Deaconess Society was a breakthrough. In most German Evangelical congregations at that time the women sat on one side of the room and the men, on the other. A woman's church membership was held in her husband's name. He voted and spoke for her and the whole family.

Whether a stroke of genius or simply a matter of practical consideration, the decision to include women as one third of the board of directors of the Deaconess Society proved to be fortunate in many ways. Women of the Evangelical churches throughout St. Louis mobilized for action and rallied to the deaconess cause. A wealthy widow donated funds that made possible the rental and renovation of a large home in center city, at 2119 Eugenia Street, which became the first Deaconess

Hospital and Home. Women from all parts of the metropolitan area helped to prepare the home for occupancy and spread the word as to its purpose.

On Sunday, August 18, 1889, Katherine Haack, a minister's widow who was already a trained nurse, became the first deaconess of the Evangelical Synod when she was consecrated at a worship service held at St. Peter's Church. She immediately recruited her stepdaughter, Lydia Daries, also a trained nurse, to become the second deaconess. [8]

Meanwhile, members of Evangelical churches in cities across the United States were also being confronted with the unprecedented needs of the poor and the sick in their communities. In the 1880s 5.5 million immigrants had come into the United States—twice as many as in the preceding decade—and most of them came from Germany. In fact, census records show that four million persons of German heritage were living in the Middle West at that time. Many of the new immigrants were very poor. Coming, as they often did, with a language barrier and lack of skills, they found life harsh and bleak. Crowded city conditions and overburdened sanitation facilities led to illness and epidemics.

In order to alleviate some of this suffering, deaconess work was established in a variety of institutions in many cities across the land by members of the Evangelical Synod.

1889—Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri; 1889—Tabitha Institute, Lincoln, Nebraska; 1892—Protestant Deaconess Home and Hospital, Evansville, Indiana; 1902—Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital, Lincoln, Illinois; 1905—Evangelical Emmaus Homes, Marthasville and St. Charles, Missouri; 1908—Evangelical St. Lucas Deaconess Home and Hospital, Faribault, Minnesota; 1910—Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; 1910—Evangelical Hospital, Chicago, Illinois; 1911—Evangelical Deaconess Home, Louisville, Kentucky; 1912—Evangelical Deaconess Association, Baltimore, Maryland; 1913—Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, Marshalltown, Iowa; 1915—Evangelical Deaconess Home and Hospital, East St. Louis, Illinois; 1917—Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, Detroit, Michigan; 1919—Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio

At about the same time, members of the German Reformed Church, also one of the four roots of the UCC heritage, established deaconess work in two locations.

1892—Deaconess Home and Hospital of the German Reformed Church, Cleveland, Ohio, which later became Fairview Park Hospital; 1895—German Deaconess Home and Hospital, Buffalo, New York

In 1901 the American Congregational Deaconess Association was incorporated in Chicago, Illinois, at the recommendation of the Illinois State Association. A Deaconess Training Home was begun later that year with instructors from Chicago Theological Seminary. [10]

Worldwide deaconess work

Deaconess work had been well established in Europe long before 1889. Sixty-five deaconess sisterhoods with more than eight thousand deaconesses were serving at that time not only in Europe but also in Asia and Africa, including St. Petersburg, Russia; Edinburgh, Scotland; Cairo, Egypt; Jerusalem; and scores of other places in between. [11]

In the United States, the Lutheran, Episcopal, and Methodist denominations were engaged in various deaconess efforts by the late 1880s, and interdenominational groups were cooperating on some projects. [12] These efforts were all part of the nineteenth-century revival of deaconess work, which had declined after five centuries of prominence in Christendom. Deaconesses were mentioned occasionally in church records, but during the Middle Ages . . . the deaconess had become the nun. Many Roman Catholic sisterhoods established care for the sick in relation to their convents, but many such convents in northern Europe were closed after the Reformation.

Modern revival of deaconess work

A young Lutheran pastor, Theodore Fliedner, of Kaiserswerth, Germany, was responsible for the revival of deaconess work. He had traveled across Europe in the 1830s and was appalled by the suffering of the sick, the poor, the aged, and the outcasts of society that he saw in many places.

Inspired by a group of Mennonites who had organized the care of the sick in a village in Holland and by Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker who had cared for released prisoners in England, he returned to Kaiserswerth and with the help of his wife, Frederike, opened the first Deaconess Home and Hospital in Europe in 1836.

The Fliedners invited the young, unmarried women of their small congregation to join them in this venture of faith. A doctor's daughter, Gertrude Reichard, became the first recruited deaconess of modern times. [13] Despite strong opposition from the townsfolk, who did not want a "pest house" in their midst, and the skepticism of others who scoffed at the undertaking or disapproved of any career for women outside the home, the Kaiserswerth sisterhood grew and became a model for deaconess work all over the world. [14]

The Kaiserswerth model

The deep Christian commitment of the Fliedners, combined with their organizational ability, attracted not only those who wished to become deaconesses but also others who came simply to observe their methods. Florence Nightingale, who has often been called the patron saint of modern nursing, studied with the Fliedners on two occasions and stayed in Kaiserswerth for three months in 1851, before beginning her famous work later in England. She spoke of this experience with the Fliedners as the turning point in her life. [15] Of the deaconess sisters at Kaiserswerth she said, "Never have I met with a higher love, a purer devotion than there." [16]

Group living in a motherhouse, a primary concept for the Fliedners as they organized deaconess work, proved to be a significant element of their success and was an initial step in the modern-day women's movement. Single young women could, with parental approval, leave the family circle and find security living and working in the company of like-minded women who were dedicated to a career in the ministry of mercy.

Nineteenth-century society generally did not approve of single young women living outside the family circle. And only those of wealthy families could hope for more than an elementary education. The deaconess, however, could get a good education and pursue a meaningful career free from family responsibilities and the constant burden of childbearing, which accompanied most marriages. She was, in a relative sense, a liberated woman, a pioneer professional woman within the protective circle of the church. [17]

Because family ties in the nineteenth century were strong, the Fliedners wisely made parental consent one of the requirements of admission for deaconess work. [18] But unlike the Roman Catholic sister, who was "married to the church" for life, the deaconess was free to leave her work and return to her family at any time if the need arose for her to care for aged parents. Celibacy was a foregone conclusion, not because of church doctrine, but as a matter of practical necessity. No woman in the 1800s could have managed the time-consuming duties of caring for a large family and also give herself to the full-time, sixteen-hour-a-day work of a deaconess sister. [19]

If a deaconess did wish to marry, she was free to leave the sisterhood at any time to do so and many did. The General Conference of Deaconess Motherhouses, meeting in Kaiserswerth in 1891, reaffirmed this position:

As a deaconess is free to remain single, so she retains the freedom at all times to enter wedlock in a lawful manner. Neither before nor after consecration need she promise to remain single, but she honestly declares that after mature examination before God and her conscience it is her deliberate and firm determination to be a deaconess and to remain single so long as it may please God. [20]

Deaconess sisters who did not marry and remained in the profession were assured complete care in old age and in times of disability and illness. Such was possible only within the motherhouse setting, where the deaconess sisters served one another as well as others in need of help. Lifetime care was

a necessity, because the sisters received only a small stipend for personal use and no salary. They could not, therefore, accumulate personal savings. Such a support system was an early form of social security and provided wonderfully liberating opportunities for the women who chose to become deaconesses. No worries about old age! In a society where, until recently, most women depended on the men of the family for financial security, deaconess work provided an attractive alternative.

The motherhouse, as organized at Kaiserswerth by the Fliedners, had two other functions. It was also a training school and a local congregation.

Because a deaconess is first of all "a disciple of the Lord," the sisters who lived together in a motherhouse constituted a community of believers that functioned much like a local congregation. [21] Morning prayers in the chapel, which always adjoined the motherhouse, and evening prayers after the workday ended were standard.

The executive deaconess, or Sister Superior, managed the internal affairs of the sisterhood, assisted by committees that were usually chosen democratically. [22] A pastor served as the superintendent of the institution engaged in deaconess work. He conducted worship services, supervised the spiritual training of the probationers, and sometimes served as business manager and public relations director. [23]

Deaconess training

The most revolutionary contribution of the Fliedners in their Kaiserswerth model for deaconess work was in the area of training. They required that the training be threefold: spiritual, intellectual, and technical. This concept changed the entire image of nurses, who were not held in high regard in the early nineteenth century. Most so-called hospitals were miserable places where people went only as a last resort to die.

The first half of the nineteenth century stands as a grim period in hospital history.... Hospital wards were filled with discharging wounds which made the atmosphere so offensive that perfume was required. The nurses of that period are said to have adopted the use of snuff to make conditions tolerable. Surgeons wore their operating coats for months without having them washed, and the same bed linen served several patients. Pain, hemorrhage, infection and gangrene were rife in the wards. Mortality from surgical operations was as high as ninety and even one hundred percent....

Nursing was, if possible, on an even lower plane than medicine and surgery... The nurses were often of the criminal class, had no religious spirit of self-sacrifice, and exploited and abused the patients. [24]

Theodore Fliedner had visited many such hospitals and was deeply moved and distressed by what he had seen:

I had not infrequently found the gates adorned with marble, when the nursing within was bad. The medical staff complained bitterly of the hiring attendants, of their carelessness by day and by night, of their drunkenness and other immoralities. And what should I say of the spiritual attendance. Little thought was given to that. [25]

With the motherhouse as a training school the deaconess sisters soon became superior in all three aspects of their work—spiritual, intellectual, and technical. The training was systematic and thorough. [26] As a result, doctors could write orders and know that consistent, careful, loving care would be given in their absence by deaconess nurses. These methods were studied by many visitors who came to Kaiserswerth. Florence Nightingale wrote:

The Sisters are, however, bound, of course, punctually to obey the directions of the medical man, and they are too well trained not to do so, with far more correctness than is found in other hospitals.

The superintending Sister of every ward is always present during the daily visits of the medical man. The apothecary is a Sister, and she goes the round of the patients with him, noting down all his prescriptions and directions which she afterwards transcribes into a book. [27]

This was the beginning of structured nursing care.

Other visitors to Kaiserswerth, such as Jane Bancroft, a prominent Methodist educator from the United States, called attention to the spiritual assistance that the deaconess sisters were able to give the patients:

[The deaconess] must follow strictly the doctor's orders in all matters pertaining to diet, medicine and ventilation, and must inform him daily of the patient's state. She also assists the clergyman, if desired, in ministering to spiritual needs. [28]

The image of the nurse had changed completely. The deaconess sisters, who were spiritually, intellectually, and technically trained, brought dignity to the work of serving the sick. As in the days of the early Christian church, they transformed service to ministry. Modern theologian Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, describing the women of the New Testament, says: "In [the Gospel of] Mark, to serve is not a humiliating activity but a mutual giving and taking, a self-surrender and mutual acceptance, and exchange of love, tenderness, help and comfort." [29] This description could apply to the deaconess nurse of modern times as well.

Three types of deaconess service

Prominent though it was, nursing was not the only type of service for which deaconess sisters were trained. Teaching and parish work were of equal importance, and missionary work combined all three. [30] Every deaconess sister was, however, trained first as a nurse regardless of her subsequent responsibilities, "because in no other way can her physical and mental powers be so thoroughly disciplined as by nursing." [31]

Teaching became an area of increasingly specialized service as hospitals grew more complex and deaconesses on training school faculties found it necessary to prepare themselves with highly skilled professional qualifications and advanced academic degrees. Some became very able scholars. [32]

The parish deaconess combined teaching and nursing with her spiritual training and was, in reality, an assistant pastor. Fliedner designated parish deaconess work as "the crown of the female diaconate, that is, the highest development or most perfect form of it." [33] The parish deaconess was responsible for Christian education, social work, and home visitation all part of the ministry that the pastor of a large parish could not do alone. [34]

Deaconess garb

The uniform type of dress, or garb, that the deaconess sisters wore identified them immediately wherever they went. At first, Fliedner had suggested only simplicity of dress, but circumstances soon compelled him to prescribe a special garb, because "it is well known that feminine nature is easily beguiled on this subject, for which reason a precise and minute rule is necessary. " [35]

The garb had a number of advantages. It wiped out all differences in birth and position and symbolized the spiritual relationship of the sisters to one another. Equally important was the fact that

the deaconess garb is a constant reminder of the dignity of the calling; it is also a protection, for a deaconess may go at any time of the day or night, in pursuit of her calling, and may appear anywhere, without molestation. Her dress is, so to say, her ticket of admission, her letter of recommendation. [36]

Although some deaconess sisters did not like wearing garb that made them all look the same, most welcomed it. [37] The simple, long, black dress, usually worn with a white collar for street wear and

with a white apron for work, and a small cap tied on with a bow was much easier to care for than the many petticoats, tucks, and ruffles worn by most women during the nineteenth century. The garb liberated the deaconess from much of the drudgery of the flatiron and from the tyranny of trying to keep up with the Gibson girl image that was held up as the ideal for women at the turn of the century. [38] "The garb cuts off at once all luxury in attire and saves much money, time and thought which women think they must spend in order to keep their clothing in current fashion." [39]

From time to time the garb was updated in most of the sisterhoods in the United States until it was finally replaced with the standard white nurse's uniform in the 1920s for the deaconess nurse on duty and with the neatly designed, classic, dark blue shirtwaist dress for other occasions.

As the garb changed the deaconess pin became the primary means of identification for a deaconess sister. The Fliedners had discouraged the wearing of gold crosses or any other ornamentation as smacking of Romanism, [40] but Lutheran deaconesses in the United States usually wore a large silver cross. [41] Some deaconess sisters wore a pin similar to that of the Red Cross, but the Evangelical deaconess sisters adopted the distinctive, widely accepted deaconess pin based on the symbol of the Kaiserswerth Motherhouse.

The symbol of Kaiserswerth is a white dove, carrying an olive branch, resting against a blue ground. The blue flag floats from the old windmill tower on the river bank, attracting the attention of the traveler as he floats up the Rhine. [42]

Printed papers from Kaiserswerth were marked with a woodcut of the symbol of the dove and the olive branch. [43]

The deaconess pin has a white dove, denoting purity, on a blue background, representing courage and faithfulness, with a gold cross, signifying commitment to Christ and his work, all surrounded with a gold olive wreath, representing God's eternal and encompassing love. The pin was presented to the deaconess sister at the time of her consecration. Although simple in design, like the garb, it was not easy to obtain. Three to four years of intensive training, many long hours of practical experience, plus evidence of deep Christian commitment preceded consecration.

Consecration

The Order for the Consecration of Deaconesses was prescribed in The Evangelical Book of Worship [44] and was similar to the liturgical procedure used in the ordination of a pastor. The order included the laying on of hands and an ordination prayer dating back to the fourth century. [45] In Kaiserswerth the consecration of a deaconess concluded with the sacrament of communion.

As part of her consecration a deaconess promised obedience to God and the rules of the motherhouse, willingness to do any work required, and faithfulness in all things. [47] This promise was not considered a vow for life, such as in the Roman Catholic Church, but a pledge in regard to a certain vocation. It was believed that the one vow of a Christian is the baptismal vow and that no special vow was justified. [48]

After consecration a deaconess was addressed as Sister, a title of respect that was not only biblically based but also descriptive of her life-style:

The name Sister, by which Christian custom addresses the deaconesses, beautifully expresses the communion of faith, in which they stand.... A simpler and more suitable name for the deaconess cannot be imagined. Together with the prescribed dress, this name wipes out all differences of birth and position. [49]

The practice of calling deaconesses by their baptismal names instead of their family names was another affirmation of the family character of the motherhouse in which they lived. So it was that the first two deaconess sisters of the Evangelical Synod were addressed as Sister Katherine and Sister Lydia.

The deaconess outreach

As soon as Deaconess Hospital in St. Louis was opened, in 1889, it was filled with patients, which prompted an urgent call for more deaconesses. Members of the first Board of Directors of the Evangelical Deaconess Society wrote articles in the widely circulated official church paper, *Der Friedensbote*, describing the wonderful opportunities that deaconess work offered to young women in the church. [50]

A few years later the Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis began publishing its own monthly periodical, *Der Evangelische Diakonissenfreund*, in order to publicize deaconess work and to reach a wider audience for recruitment purposes. This publication and its successors were edited by the Rev. Frederick P. Jens. Throughout his forty-one years as Superintendent of the Deaconess Home and Hospital in St. Louis, Jens was a strong advocate of deaconess work and gave leadership to the Protestant Deaconess Conference, organized in 1894, and to the Evangelical Deaconess Association, organized in 1908. He translated from the German the widely used *Principles of Deaconess Work*, which was published by the Association in 1918. [51] The Rev. Gustav Niebuhr was likewise a leader in the Protestant Deaconess Conference and a founding member of the Evangelical Deaconess Association. He edited *Der Diakonissen-Herold*, which was published for recruitment and informational purposes by the Deaconess Home and Hospital in Lincoln, Illinois. [52]

Slowly at first but then in growing numbers the young women of the church responded to the opportunities to become deaconesses. Because the seminaries were closed to them, deaconess work was the only way women could hope to have a full-time professional career in the church, and many were interested.

The St. Louis Motherhouse, patterned in most respects after the Kaiserswerth model, became the primary training center for deaconess sisters in the Evangelical Synod. In its nearly one hundred years it trained more than five hundred deaconess sisters [53] and sent many of them out to ministries of the church, including service in the following benevolent institutions:

Bensenville, Home Society, Bensenville, Illinois; Caroline Mission, St. Louis, Missouri; Evangelical Children's Home, St. Louis, Missouri; Evangelical Home for the Aged, Rochester, New York; Good Samaritan Home for the Aged, St. Louis, Missouri; St. Paul's Evangelical Old Folk's Home, Belleville, Illinois.

The deaconess sisters became leaders in almost every professional specialty related to modern health care and also served as teachers, parish assistants, and as missionaries in Ecuador, Honduras, and India. When the Conference of Deaconesses of the Evangelical and Reformed Church was organized in 1952, some of the deaconess sisters gave outstanding leadership. They also held prominent positions when the first Interdenominational Deaconess Conference in the United States was convened in St. Louis in 1956. [54]

As in many human endeavors, there were abuses. Deaconess sisters were often overworked, and some were sent without warning on overnight assignments that lasted for years. But there were also satisfactions and joys, and these predominated. The oral histories of the deaconesses of the St. Louis Motherhouse attest to this. Many sisters declare in retrospect, "I would do it all over again." [55]

Five capable deaconesses in St. Louis have served as Sister Superior, or Executive Deaconess: Sister Katherine Haack (1889-97), Sister Magdalene Gerhold (1897-1930), Sister Alvina Scheid (1930-42), Sister Olivia Drusch (1942-54), and Sister Frieda Ziegler (1954-). Each brought her own unique ability to this leadership role, and together they contributed a continuity of purpose and direction to the sisterhood.

The deaconess legacy

All the deaconess sisters of the United Church of Christ are now retired. Two live in Marshalltown, Iowa; one in Faribault, Minnesota; and twenty-five in the Sisters' Home in St. Louis, located in the middle of the large Deaconess Hospital and Deaconess College of Nursing complex to which they

contributed so much time and talent. Recruitment for deaconesses was discontinued in the 1950s. Once again times had changed. As many new opportunities for full-time Christian service in the church became available to women, all the seminaries of the United Church of Christ began accepting women in preparation for ordination. The deaconess calling became that of the pastor.

In retirement the deaconess sisters applaud this new day, which comes full circle to apostolic times, when women and men working together in leadership roles carried the church to the frontiers of new ministries in a world of great need.

As pioneer professional women of the church, the deaconess sisters have been the "forerunners of the ordination of women in Protestant denominations." "One can truly say that "the whole church is richer through the gifts and grace of these dedicated women." [57]

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Notes

1. Elizabeth Schössler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities" in Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, eds., *Women of Spirit, Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p.36.
2. Jane M. Bancroft, *Deaconesses in Europe and Their Lessons for America* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1890), p. 23, and Henry Wheeler, *Deaconesses Ancient and Modern* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1889), p. 87.
3. *Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, Eleventh Annual Report, 1899* (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House), pp. 9-10.
4. C. Colder, *History of the Deaconess Movement in the Christian Church* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, 1903), p. 299.
5. *Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, Fifteenth Annual Report, 1904* (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House), p. 11.
6. *Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, Articles of Association, Article II, 1891* (State of Missouri).
7. *Ibid.*, Article IV.
8. *Evangelical Deaconess Society, Eleventh Annual Report, op. cit.*, p. 10.
9. "Immigration to the United States," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1958, 15:467. John M. McGuire, "They Settled in Missouri's Rhineland," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 29, 1983, p. 1F, describes the hardships of settlers in Missouri. A typhoid epidemic in Lincoln, Illinois, gave impetus to the establishment of deaconess work there, as reported in *St. John Church, Lincoln, Illinois 1860-1960* (Lincoln, Illinois, N.D.), p. 19.
10. *Historical Sketches of The Congregational Christian Churches and The Evangelical and Reformed Church*, published jointly by the Executive Committee of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the General Council of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, June 1955, pp. 29-30. Also see Golder, *op. cit.*, pp. 284, 291-95, 466-67.
11. Golder, *op. cit.*, pp. 69, 604-5.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 273, and Carl J. Scherzer, *The Church and Healing* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), pp. 121-28.
13. Golder, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
14. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 179, and Sister Julie Mergner, *The Deaconess and Her Work*, trans. Mrs. Adolph Spaeth (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1911), p. 46.
15. Sir Edward Cook, *A Short Life of Florence Nightingale*, abr. Rosalind Nash (New York: Macmillan, 1925), p. 47.
16. Anne L. Austin, *History of Nursing Source Book* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1957), p. 196. This quotation is from Florence Nightingale in a letter to the British Museum in 1897.
17. Rosemary Ruether, "Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age" in Ruether and McLaughlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.
18. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 183. The other requirements for admission at that time were earnest Christian character; good health; basic ability in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and being between eighteen and forty years of age.
19. Christian Golder, *The Deaconess Motherhouse in Its Relation to the Deaconess Work* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Printing Company, 1907), pp. 54-55.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 49. The Deaconess Chapel United Church of Christ was officially organized in St. Louis in 1950. Its membership is limited to deaconess sisters.
22. Austin, *op. cit.*, p. 195. Information is from a booklet written by Florence Nightingale in 1851, after her first visit to Kaiserswerth, entitled, "The Institution of Kaiserswerth on the Rhine, for the Practical Training of Deaconesses."
23. Golder, *Deaconess Motherhouse*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
24. Malcolm T. MacEachern, *Hospital Organization and Management*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Physicians Record Co., 1947), p. 16.
25. Austin, *op. cit.*, p. 189. Quotation is from a pamphlet, *Kurzer Abriss seines Lebens*, by Theodore Fliedner.
26. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 287, and Golder, *Deaconess Motherhouse*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.
27. Austin, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
28. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
29. Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, *The Women Around Jesus*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982). p. 111.
30. Emil Wacker, *The Deaconess Calling*, trans. B. A. Endlich, 1893 (Guetersloh: Bertelman, 1888), p. 106.
31. Golder, *Deaconess Motherhouse*, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

32. Sister Elizabeth Schaefer of the Deaconess Motherhouse in St. Louis became an able Greek scholar and read her daily devotions from the Bible in the original Greek until she was past ninety. (Information from The Deaconess Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.)
33. Mergner, op. cit., p. 192, and Principles of Deaconess Work, published by the authority of the Federation of Evangelical Deaconess Associations in the Evangelical Synod of North America (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1918), pp. 82-86.
34. Adele E. Hosto, "Principles and Experiences in Parish Deaconess Work," Der Evangelische Diakonissen-Herold 10, no. 2 (February 1916):4. Sister Adele Hosto was the only deaconess sister in the United Church of Christ who devoted her entire career exclusively to parish work. Many others did so for given periods of time.
35. Golder, Deaconess Motherhouse, op. cit., p. 109.
36. Principles of Deaconess Work, op. cit., p. 38.
37. Oral history tapes of individual deaconess sisters in The Deaconess Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.
38. Pamela Neal Warford, "The Social Origins of Female Iconography: Selected Images of Women in American Popular Culture, 1890-1945" (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1979), 2, 28.
39. Principles of Deaconess Work, op. cit., p. 37.
40. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 289.
41. Ibid.
42. Bancroft, op. cit., p. 91.
43. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 281.
44. Published by the German Evangelical Synod of North America (St. Louis and Chicago: Eden Publishing House, 1916), pp. 228-31.
45. Prayer used in Order of Consecration of Deaconesses: "Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and woman, who didst fill with Thy Spirit Miriam and Deborah and Hannah and Huldah, who didst in the tabernacle of the testimony and in the temple ordain women to be keepers of Thy holy gates, who also didst not disdain that Thine only begotten Son should be born of a woman; do Thou also look down upon these Thy servants who now have been set apart to the ministry of Deaconesses; grant them the gift of Thy Holy Spirit, and cleanse them from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, that they may worthily discharge the work committed unto them to Thine honor, and to the praise of Jesus Christ, to whom with Thee, and the Holy Spirit be glory and adoration for ever and ever. Amen."
46. Bancroft, op. cit., p. 85.
47. Principles of Deaconess Work, op. cit., pp. 28-33.
48. Wacker, op. cit., p. 95.
49. Ibid., p. 85.
50. C. Fritsch, "Diakonissenbriefe," Der Friedensbote 40, no. 21:166 (November 1, 1889), and J.P. Irion, "Em Wart an unsre Christlichen Jungfrauen und wen er sonst angeht," Der Friedensbote 40, no. 7 (September 1889):134.

51. Evangelical Deaconess Society of St. Louis, Missouri, Fiftieth Annual Report, 1939, (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House), p. 23.

52. William G. Chrystal, *A Father's Mantle: The Legacy of Gustav Niebuhr* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), pp. 77-94, gives an excellent account of Pastor Niebuhr's work in the deaconess movement.

53. Evangelical Deaconess Society, Forty-Ninth Annual Report, 1938, p. 8, reports that 454 deaconess sisters had been in training up to that time. Succeeding reports add more.

54. Mary Lou Barnwell, "Joining Hands in Christian Service," *The Methodist Woman*, July-August 1956, p. 8, speaks of Sister Pauline Becker's leadership as Field Secretary. 55. Oral history tapes, op. cit.

56. Ruether and McLaughlin, Introduction, op. cit., p. 24.

57. Minutes, Twelfth General Synod, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 22-26, 1979, United Church of Christ, p. 72.

The Schwenckfelders

Written by Martha B. Kriebel

As a result of many mergers, covenants, mission projects, affiliations, and neighborly activities, the United Church of Christ has incorporated many diverse groups into its history and structure. Not every group, however, that considered affiliation with the United Church of Christ (or its antecedent denominations) actually took formal action. One such group was the Schwenckfelders.

Who are the Schwenckfelders?

The Schwenckfelders are descendants of the followers of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489-1561), a German Reformer. They came to southeastern Pennsylvania in the 1730s. Church historians have generally ignored Schwenckfeld; his contemporary, Martin Luther, gave them good reason. Luther, in one of his letters (December 6, 1543), spoke of Schwenckfeld as "the poor simpleton" who was "possessed of the devil." [1] Schwenckfeld refused to retaliate and concealed Luther's stinging correspondence among private papers, commended the burly Saxon's virtues, and named him in prayer to his dying day.

Schwenckfeld's gracious conduct was partly a reflection of his home life. He was of Silesian nobility, raised in a devout Roman Catholic home, and educated for diplomatic service, which ended at age twenty-nine, when he lost his hearing. (Court secrets were not shouted.) At the same time Schwenckfeld began to read the writings coming from Wittenberg and Luther and experienced a spiritual awakening. His full attention was given to mastering Hebrew and Greek, studying the scriptures and early church writing, and for eight years, affirming many of Luther's views.

Separation came when the Silesian nobleman discussed the meaning of the Lord's Supper with Dr. Luther and tried to reconcile conflicting interpretations. Agreement was impossible. In despair Schwenckfeld declared that he could not approach the Lord's Supper as long as Christians were divided and announced he would abstain from communing until the differences were resolved. This decision, called the *Stillstand*, was initiated in 1526. Schwenckfeld also questioned the practice of infant baptism but shunned the Anabaptists' insistence of rebaptizing adults, as well as their literal use of the scriptures. To him, the Bible was not a "paper pope" but mere words that required God's Spirit to bring them to life.

At first, Schwenckfeld's company was solicited by the well-to-do and intellectuals, but pressure from both Roman Catholics and Protestants prompted King Ferdinand of Silesia to banish Schwenckfeld from his estate. Living in exile, he depended on friends, who circulated his writings and provided him refuge until his death on December 10, 1561. Because Schwenckfeld remained a bachelor, his

followers were all "spiritual heirs" who were attracted to his reforming spirit of "The Middle Way," between literal biblicism and blind sacramentalism. During his life and after his death those who adhered to his expression of the Christian faith existed without any formal organization. Some attended the recognized churches (Roman Catholic and Lutheran), others refused; some communed, others abstained. They met in private homes for worship and study and visited churches where pastors were willing to honor Schwenckfeld's writings until the 1540s, when the ruling prince ordered strict adherence to the Augsburg Confession. Schwenckfelders who did not comply were tried, exiled, imprisoned, sent to Vienna as galley slaves, or pressed into service as soldiers against the Turks. A common preference of the 1580s was Vienna, where the Roman Catholics were judged to be less severe than the Lutherans in Silesia! Hence the Schwenckfelders' strong dislike for Lutherans!

Waves of persecution threatened the Schwenckfelders with extinction throughout the 1600s, until 1719, when a Jesuit mission initiated another approach. Representatives of the Schwenckfelders were requested to travel to Vienna to defend their Schwenckfeldian views in writing. [2] The defenses were futile, and by 1726 only one alternative remained: leave everything and escape. Those who did sought refuge in Saxony with Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, leader of the Moravians, but that stay was only temporary. On July 29, 1734, forty families began the journey to Pennsylvania and a new chapter in their history. [3]

Settlement in America

The "Saint Andrew" landed at Philadelphia on September 22, 1734. On the twenty-fourth a daylong thanksgiving service was held, beginning a practice called *Gedaechtnisz Tag*, which is the oldest ongoing thanksgiving observance in America. Because no land grant was large enough to provide the Schwenckfelders with a site similar to the Moravian tract at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, each family started its homestead, ranging from Chestnut Hill, near Philadelphia, into what are now Berks and Lehigh counties. The first thirty years were a time to establish farms and mills; after that, attention was given to organizing their unstructured house fellowships into a Society of Schwenckfelders, in 1782.

Families grouped into an Upper District and a Middle District. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, worship in the home began changing to meetinghouse services, with three in the Upper District (Washington, Hosensack, Kraussdale) - today's Palm Church - and three in the Middle District (Salford, Towamencin, Worcester) - today's Central Church. In the beginning, services were held at each location on one Sunday in three, so that it was one congregation rotating to three locations.

In 1763 a catechism was prepared by Christopher Schultz. He prepared the Schwenckfelders to adapt to the totally different life in America, where those who had been their persecutors in Europe were now their neighbors and friends. In a new climate the Schwenckfelders began a new era.

Relationships with German Reformed

In southeastern Pennsylvania the Schwenckfelders naturally formed some relationships with other German colonists. By the early nineteenth century close ties had developed between Schwenckfelder pastors in the Upper District and members of the New Goshenhoppen Reformed Church (now United Church of Christ, in East Greenville, Pennsylvania). The Rev. C.Z. Weiser described this kinship in the *Mercersburg Review*. He wrote about similarities between Christopher Schultz's catechism, based on Schwenckfeld's works, and the Heidelberg Catechism of the Reformed Church in the United States; each corresponded to the other "in reference to the classification of the Ten Commandments, and embodied the essentials of the Reformed Confession, if we except (meaning: exclude) the doctrine of Infant Baptism." (4) However, an incident occurred that proved differences were greater than similarities. Weiser's article related the sad discovery as he told about the Schwenckfelder pastor, Christopher Schultz Jr., who was invited to supply a vacant Reformed church in the early 1830s. The unbaptized, unordained pastor created a controversy among the parishioners that also disturbed his conscience. The Schwenckfelder catechism did not forbid the outward practice of baptism, confirmation, communion, and ordination; at the same time his position was to follow a church life in which these rites were excluded.

He consulted with neighboring Pastors ... who advised him to bring Ordination and the Sacraments across the waters, at the hands of their forerunners in Silesia or Saxony. "So mote it be!" — said Pastor Schultz. But alas! — the few who remained back were precisely in the same dilemma. now commenced Pastor Schultz's inward conflict. There was no way open to bring an Apostolic succession over to the Schwenkfelder Society. . . A midnight melancholy possessed his soul. he became an inmate of the Lunatic Asylum, and died under the cloud in 1841.[5]

Weiser identified the crisis as the absence of an ordained ministry among the Schwenkfelders, for their pastors were chosen by lot from the congregation. In 1895 the crisis was addressed, as Schwenkfelders in both districts decided to practice adult baptism by sprinkling and the Lord's Supper (at first served with a common cup and later changed to communion in the pews). [6] The study papers and committee reports that preceded this decision are an agonizing account of working out a response for neighbors who unrelentingly asked the Schwenkfelders, "If you are Christians, why do you not baptize and commune?" To this day some Schwenkfelders claim that the decision was accommodation; others claim that it was an overdue resolution. Regardless of any evaluation of the decision, it was a dramatic example of how the New World created a climate that gave new direction to Schwenkfeldian beliefs and practices. After 1895 and the end of the Stillstand, and 1909, when the Society of Schwenkfelders was incorporated into the Schwenkfelder Church, a loose house fellowship from sixteenth-century Silesia became a Protestant denomination. It was the smallest denomination in the world, numbering five churches—all in southeastern Pennsylvania—with a total membership of 3,000.

Relationships with the Congregationalists

In the late nineteenth century the Schwenkfelders developed an important relationship to Congregationalism around the long-standing desire to collect all the writings of their society: the *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*. It began as a search through Europe for extant works of Schwenckfeld and concluded with the publication of nineteen volumes. In the monumental task two names familiar to Congregationalists emerged: Chester David Hartranft and Hartford Theological Seminary.

Hartranft's contact with the Schwenkfelders is like a maze, beginning with Augustus C. Thompson, an 1838 graduate of Hartford's predecessor school, the Theological Institute of Connecticut. Thompson continued his studies at the University of Berlin, where his roommate was August F.H. Schneider. Schneider became interested in the Schwenkfelders through church historian Gottfried Arnold. To help Schneider in his studies, Thompson had his brother in the United States contact the Schwenkfelders in Pennsylvania. That contact helped to initiate a thirty-five-year project in which Schneider assembled copious notes about Schwenckfeld and the Schwenkfelders.

Forty years after those student days in Germany the Schneider collection was placed on the market. Through the generosity of Newton Case, the volumes were purchased for Hartford Seminary's library. Thompson, then a trustee of the seminary, happened to recognize the handwriting of his former roommate and enthusiastically introduced the material to Prof. Chester D. Hartranft—a providential preparation. [7]

Hartranft's biographical sketch included such details as the following: born in Pennsylvania's Montgomery County on October 15, 1839; graduated from Philadelphia's Central High School; studied at Rambo's School in Trappe, the Hill School in Pottstown, the University of Pennsylvania; served briefly in the military; graduated from the Reformed Theological Seminary at New Brunswick; served as a (Dutch) Reformed pastor for twelve years and then accepted a professorship at Hartford Theological Seminary. The missing detail was his genealogy; he was a descendant of the 1734 Schwenkfelder immigrant, Tobias Hartranft, and a distant cousin of Pennsylvania governor Maj. Gen. John Frederick Hartranft. The Schwenkfelders were also unaware of the relationship; the professor's name was missing from the 1879 Genealogical Record. The omission was quickly corrected when a committee began looking for a prominent speaker for the one hundred fiftieth anniversary (1884) of the landing of the Schwenkfelders and realized that the Hartford college and met his future wife. But Kriebel was attracted to another part of Hartranft's life, his denomination: the Congregational Churches.

Kriebel was interested in introducing the Schwenkfelders to wider associations with other churches and denominations. Beginning in August 1922 the young people of the Congregational Christian Churches of the Middle Atlantic District (Pennsylvania; New Jersey; Maryland; Washington, DC; and Virginia) met each summer for ten days at Perkiomen School. The group worshiped in Palm Church during their two-Sunday stay, and one of their clergy preached at both services. The September 1927 issue of the Schwenkfelders' bimonthly magazine, *The Schwenkfeldian*, printed a full report by the Rev. Harry Myers, pastor of Philadelphia's Pilgrim Congregational Church. His assessment of the conference was that "the friendly relationship between the Schwenkfelders and the Congregationalists in the foreign field is now being carried forward in the home land in a very happy way.

Kriebel must have shared that impression and acted to turn it into a more tangible relationship. At the annual meeting of Palm Church in April 1929 he addressed the congregation on the subject of merger with the Congregational Churches. The minutes contain no details, but members who recall being there report that a motion was defeated by a hand or standing vote, with no count being noted. The reasons for the motion's defeat are a mix of interesting explanations. One reason given by a member who cast a negative vote was that the Congregational preacher at the previous summer conference insisted, while preaching, that a Schwenkfelder mother carry out her crying baby. Some "no" votes were a protest to his request. Another explanation attributes the motion's defeat to one of Kriebel's relatives, Howard W. Kriebel, who agitated for negative votes to get back at "Dr. O. S." for some unknown reason, because "they were always at each other, and this was one of those times." [9]

Congregationalists and Schwenkfelders can trace other, pleasant associations of the twentieth century. Some of these associations came through the pastors, such as Johnson and Kriebel, who ended the Schwenkfelder practice of being chosen by lot. From their time on the ministers were college and seminary trained, and the institutions attended included Hartford, Oberlin, and Union Seminary in New York. In the early twentieth century, when the Schwenkfelder churches changed from German to English in their worship services, the resources that were used were not translated but new ones were written. In 1928 the Schwenkfelders published a *Book of Worship for Church and Home*, borrowing from Congregational, Reformed, and Presbyterian material "in the spirit of Denominational Fellowship which is becoming more and more marked in these days" (the committee's comment in the preface). For their hymnal they chose the 1935 edition of the *Pilgrim Hymnal*, which Palm Church later updated to the 1958 edition. And in 1909, when the churches were incorporated, the polity adopted was congregational.

Mission work

The question of involvement in missions was raised at the 1844 fall meeting of the Schwenkfelders. An offering of \$273 was received and sent to Benjamin Schneider, a German Reformed missionary who was serving under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Brusa, Asia Minor. Why was Schneider selected to receive the offering? He had been a neighbor from Long Swamp Reformed Church; the Schwenkfelders of the Upper District knew him personally. Again, in 1865, the German Reformed Missionary Society was used as a channel for directing Schwenkfelder Harvest Home offerings to the Pennsylvania Bible Society. [10]

By the 1894 Fall Conference, interest in missions resulted in a committee to investigate a venture in home missions in Philadelphia. On December 24, 1895, a charter was granted, establishing the Schwenkfelder earlier.

The action of the Palm congregation was followed by the Central, Lansdale, and Norristown churches when they called UCC ministers to become their pastors. [13] In 1964 Jack R. Rothenberger, whose family is listed in the *Genealogical Record* and who was ordained a Schwenkfelder minister in 1955 after graduating from Hartford Seminary, was granted standing in the United Church of Christ, where he was already active in association and conference committees.

The early 1960s were filled with ministerial conversations about the similarities between the two denominations. With historical references as an incentive, the pastors made a bold proposal: "Why not affiliate with the United Church of Christ?" At the May 20, 1961, General Conference a motion activated "the appointment of a study committee to determine the thinking of the people on the

question of the future of the Schwenkfelder Churches. And to make specific recommendations to General Conference at Spring 1962 Meeting." [14] The General Conference Moderator appointed a "Special Committee to Consider the Future of the Schwenkfelder Church," with each church being represented by the pastor and at least one layperson. The Committee met over the next three years and worked out a schedule: Articles appeared in The Schwenkfeldian; a traveling panel visited each church school; Rothenberger, whose 1962 master's thesis was "Caspar Schwenckfeld Von Ossig and the Ecumenical Ideal," delivered a sermon in each church; and special programs were planned for the annual thanksgiving day and General Conferences. The Committee also evaluated resources describing the Mennonite, Church of the Brethren, American Baptist, and UCC denominations, noting differences and similarities to the Schwenkfelder Churches. The overall impression was that the United Church of Christ was

very unusual; not one denomination but several joined together.... Its name implies its members are ecumenically minded. Its background is one in which Schwenkfelders have participated on a number of occasions. Its organization is not overbearing or complex,.. its constitution guarantees that others who work with it will not be absorbed or indoctrinated or restricted. [15]

A motion from the Committee urged delegates at the 1963 Spring General Conference to engage in study, with each church coming to its own decision. By February 24, 1964, the Committee had its responses:

Central—There appears to be a growing concern about the future of our churches. A small vociferous group seems to be against what our committee has done and is doing all in their power to discredit the committee. Seems to be a confusion on the meaning of words, such as: merger-affiliation. Apparent fear on the part of some that the committee has made final decision for all the people.

Norristown—A "Future of the Schwenkfelders" committee has been appointed.... Appears to be growing concern about the problem.

Philadelphia—The congregation is still open to ideas and has not yet made up its congregational mind about the matter.

Lansdale—There is little apparent strong opinion being voiced in either direction. Frustration was expressed over the fact that many people have made up their minds before having read The Schwenkfeldion. (This "frustration" seems to be present in each of the churches.)

Palm—No strong opinions have been heard. Affiliated for five years and many people are not aware of it. We have benefited, without paying for the benefits. Majority of people seem indifferent. A few negative voices have been raised. [16]

The Committee's next step was to give each church a study packet, to "allow the Holy Spirit to direct us toward the future," and to ask the May 16, 1964, Spring General Conference to vote to disband the committee. The motion was affirmed, and "t In 1870 the Rev. C. Z. Weiser, the Reformed pastor neighbor to Schwenkfelders in the Upper District, now Palm Church, remarked, "As a Society, they will not merge with any other denomination." The special committee of the early 1960s was not thinking merger but affiliation, and that thought was resisted. Perhaps the resistance was owing to the committee's failure to recognize another New World pursuit of the Schwenkfelders: an interest in self-identity. After 1734 a Schwenkfelder was not so much a spiritual heir of Reformer Caspar Schwenckfeld as a bloodline descendant of the Schwenkfelders who came to colonial Pennsylvania on the Saint Andrew. Genealogy became a primary concern, an interest that was threatened by the committee of 1961-64. Often a positive response to affiliation is the result of stressing a group's strengths, not its weaknesses, needs, and deficiencies. The committee could not communicate to the Schwenkfelder Churches that there was a compelling reason for affiliation—to share the spiritual gifts received from Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig.

When UCC members visit a Schwenkfelder church today they discover a quiet blending of the four denominations represented in the merger of 1957—a secret hidden in the history and life of Pennsylvania's Schwenkfelders.

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Notes

1. For literature on the life and teachings of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig and information about the Schwenckfelders, contact the Schwenckfelder Library, One Seminary Avenue, Pennsburg, PA 18073.
2. The value of the defense was that a clear statement of Schwenckfeldian beliefs was put into print in the 1720s, and later published in English as Elmer Schultz Gerhard, ed., *A Vindication of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig* (Norristown, PA: Board of Publication of the Schwenckfelder Church, 1942).
3. Other ships brought Schwenckfelder families to Philadelphia during the 1730s, but this was the largest number of immigrants.
4. C. Z. Weiser, "Caspar Schwenckfeld and the Schwenckfelders," *Mercersburg Review*, July 1870:362.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 363.
6. For a detailed account of this decision, see Martha B. Kriebel, *Schwenckfelders and the Sacraments* (Pennsburg, PA: Board of Publication of the Schwenckfelder Church, 1968).
7. This incident is reported by W. Kyrel Meschter in the draft of a book to be published by The Board of Publication of the Schwenckfelder Church in 1984, p. 32.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
9. Quoted from a conversation that Elva S. Schultz had during the 1960s with the pastor of Palm Schwenckfelder Church, the Rev. Martha B. Kriebel.
10. Selina G. Schultz, "Schwenckfelder Interest in Missions," *The Schwenckfeldian* 1, no. 6[September 1947]: 7-9.
11. Samuel K. Brecht, "Supplementary History—The First Schwenckfelder Church of Philadelphia," *The Genealogical Record of the Schwenckfelder Families* (Pennsburg, PA: Board of Publication of the Schwenckfelder Church, 1923).
12. Selina Schultz, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
13. The UCC pastors who were called were as follows: Central: William B. Bradshaw, Eric T. Braund; Norristown: Ronald Lockhart, David R. Crowle, Herbert H. Dewees; Lansdale: William E. Cameron, Larry O. Bechol, Andrew H. Johanson, Arlan M. Bond.
14. At the May 19, 1962, General Conference the Committee reported meeting twice, but "we are not prepared at this time to make specific recommendations to General Conference."
15. Quoted from "Which Way?" a pamphlet prepared by Martha B. Kriebel for the special committee.
16. Minutes, Special Committee, February 24, 1964.
17. Weiser, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

The Calvin Synod: 500 years of tradition lead to the UCC

Written by The Rt. Rev. John Butosi

A Conference in the United Church of Christ is determined by its geographical boundaries—almost. The exception is the acting conference that is not even named a conference: the Calvin Synod. It is made up of Hungarian churches from Connecticut to Illinois, with most concentrated in Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan and Illinois. These churches were originally part of the Hungarian Reformed Church. Later they joined the Reformed Church in the United States, and when the merged Evangelical and Reformed Church united with the Congregational Christian Churches to form the United Church of Christ, these Hungarian churches became part of the Calvin Synod. The history of these churches in American life is unique.

Hungarian emigration patterns

The Reformed Church in Hungary had a glorious past. The Protestant Reformation swept the country rapidly and early. By the end of the sixteenth century, Hungary was 90 percent Protestant, mainly Calvinist in theology and forms of worship. The Counter-Reformation, led by Jesuits and enforced by the Habsburg monarchy and the Hungarian nobility, recovered control for the Roman Catholic Church. More than four hundred Protestant pastors and teachers were imprisoned and tortured until they recanted. Only forty-one refused. These were marched to the Adriatic Sea and sold as galley slaves. From this life of horror they were finally ransomed through the intervention of Holland and Switzerland and given political asylum in those countries. The heroic witness of these pastors and teachers is commemorated in the "Hymn of the Hungarian Galley Slaves," found in all four hymnals currently in use in UCC congregations under the title "Lift Thy Head, O Zion, Weeping." [1]

Political and religious repression continued for almost two hundred years more, until World War I, when Hungary was finally separated from the Hapsburg monarchy. Out of this historic struggle for religious freedom in Hungary the Hungarian Reformed faith came to the United States. Political, social, and religious struggles continued into the twentieth century.

There were five waves of Hungarian emigration to America:

1. The first wave started after the collapse of the Hungarian Revolution, in 1849. In terms of numbers, this emigration was insignificant. [2]
2. The second wave was different. Immediately after the abolition of serfdom, before the depression of the 1870s, the rural-agrarian, landless proletariat found easy employment in Hungary. However, after 1870 the number of emigrants rose quickly. From 1850 to 1920 it is estimated that between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 people left Hungary. Many came to the United States. [3]
3. After World War I, Hungary tightened its emigration policy. As the state was consolidated, without minorities of significant size, the goal was to increase the population, and therefore the number of taxpayers, and to augment the state's military force. From this viewpoint, emigration was a loss, and every emigrant was regarded as a traitor to the fatherland.

Also of significance is the fact that after World War I the United States shut the open door before the immigrants. A quota of only 473 was allotted to Hungary in the first quota law, and 865 on the basis of national origin. As a result of these rigid laws, both in Hungary and in the United States, the upper class and the Jews were represented above their proportion after World War I among the Hungarian immigrants to the United States. Imre de Josika-Herczeg calls this third wave of emigration "one of artists and professional people." [4]

4. During and after World War II (1941-50) more than one million people were forced, in one way or another, to leave Hungary. [5] Not counting those who perished in concentration or forced labor camps, or who returned to Hungary, or who renounced their Hungarian ethnic affiliation, the total of Hungarian Displaced Persons could not be estimated as more than 120,000 persons. The United States received a fair share of those who constituted a new type of Hungarian immigrant. These

people, in contrast to other immigrants, did not leave the old country of their own free will; they had not intended to emigrate. They were "forced emigrants," "refugees in spite of themselves," who were put on the move mostly by political forces. As a group, they were less homogeneous than the previous waves. They came from all walks of life, and many nationalities, creeds, political confessions, and social classes were represented among them.

5. After the revolt of 1956 the most recent wave of Hungarian emigration left the country and was dispersed all over the world. Their number is estimated at 193,973 persons, of whom 35,705 arrived in the United States before September 30, 1957. [6]

Thus the five waves of Hungarian emigration, which reached U.S. shores after the abolition of serfdom in Hungary (1848), were (a) the so-called Kossuth emigration, which was politically motivated (1850-75); (b) the emigration of peasants for economic and social reasons (1876-1920); (c) the emigration of Jews and professionals between the two wars (1921-41); (d) the immigration of the so-called Displaced Persons during and after World War II (1941-50); and (e) the refugees of the 1956 revolt.

Reformed church life in America

About one fourth of the population of Hungary and about one fourth of the Hungarian immigrants to the United States were adherents of the Reformed faith. Early attempts to organize Reformed churches, however, were unsuccessful.

The first Hungarian Reformed Church service in the United States was conducted on April 13, 1852, by Gedeon Acs, chaplain to Louis Kossuth, hero of Hungary's War of Independence against Austria in 1848. When Kossuth was brought to the United States on a U.S. warship and addressed both Houses of Congress, he was welcomed as a great freedom fighter. Enthusiastic women, organized by Mary Day of New York City, provided enough money to pay for this early "international" ministry, but with Kossuth's departure Acs was forced to discontinue his work, and in 1860 he himself returned to Hungary. [7]

In 1881 Francis Kecskemethy, with the aid of the New York Presbytery (Presbyterian Church in the United States of America), started Hungarian Reformed services in New York City, but his work gradually diminished to such an extent that he too returned to Hungary. Nevertheless, Kecskemethy's undertaking showed that the Presbyterian Church in the USA was the first denomination in the New World to aid church work among Hungarian Reformed people. [8]

After such sporadic and futile beginnings, church life started among Hungarians only when the agrarian proletariat and small landholders reached U.S. shores in great numbers. At first, these immigrants met for worship in each others' homes, but when baptisms, weddings, or funeral services were needed, they had to turn to various American clergy, because there were no Hungarian pastors among them. Consequently, certain American ministers began to take special interest in these people, especially those ministers who spoke German. Many Hungarians also spoke German and thus communications could be established. Historians emphasize the fact that "the earliest organization of Hungarian immigrants were the fraternal societies formed for mutual help, protection in case of death, injury or unemployment." [9] To organize such a society was an exciting undertaking for these people: It bound them together by voluntary decisions, provided them "decent Christian burial," and even met some of their religious needs, such as hymn singing and prayer. But one thing the society could not give—the sacrament of Holy Communion. For these Hungarians, taking communion at the six established occasions of the year was crucial. They had to go to the "sanctuary" or, if they had none, to the ones they considered "Reformed."

German Reformed relationships

On several occasions a group of Hungarian Reformed people visited a German Reformed church to take communion. In February 1890, at the Seventh (German) Reformed Church of Cleveland, Ohio, where the Rev. J.H.C. Röntgen was the pastor, a group of Hungarian immigrants arrived, saying, "*Wir sind Ungarn und wollen zum Abendmahl geh'n. Wir, reformiert.*" [10] ("We are Hungarians, and we want Holy Communion. We are Reformed.") About the same time in historic Grace Reformed

Church, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where Dr. John H. Prough was the pastor, the same thing happened. These pastors reported their experiences to their classes. [The "classis" is a regional jurisdiction in some U.S. Reformed churches. The plural is "classes."]

Because the Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States was also aware of the problem, when the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States met in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, in the late spring of 1890, three separate recommendations of the Westmoreland Classis, the Pittsburgh Synod, and the Board of Home Missions asked the General Synod "to take action toward supplying the Hungarians and Germans ... with the Gospel." [11]

Correspondence with Hungarian church authorities started immediately, and in the same year the Rev. Gustav Juranyi was secured as the first missionary to the Hungarian immigrants in the United States. On January 1, 1891, he was commissioned by the Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States to organize the first Hungarian Reformed congregation in America. Soon a second missionary was secured in the person of the Rev. John Kovacs, who was commissioned on July 1, 1891, for Pittsburgh, where the first church building was erected, dedicating it on October 23, 1892.

In two years Kovacs organized seventeen congregations, with a total of 1,500 members, and a third missionary had to be called to be his assistant.. [12] Thus in 1896 there were six centers of missionary activities: Cleveland, with the Rev. Alexander Harsanyi; Pittsburgh, with the Rev. F. Ferenczy; South Norwalk, Connecticut, with the Rev. Gabriel Dokus; Trenton, New Jersey, with the Rev. Gustav Juranyi; New York City, with the Rev. B. Demeter; and Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania, with the Rev. Alexander Kalassay. [13]

The Hungarian immigrants were glad to organize churches not only because they needed spiritual nourishment, but also because the church provided for them a "little Hungary," where they experienced a sense of security. Some of these churches in fact were organized explicitly on a social basis as church societies, including Jews and Roman Catholics as well as Calvinists and Lutherans. At Trenton, for example, the Sick Benefit Society pledged one half of its income to the support of the church, and in New York a Jew was elected to the first consistory. [14]

At first, these congregations had no legal status as a church group affiliated with either the Reformed Church in Hungary or the Reformed Church in the United States. But in 1896 initial steps were made to organize a Hungarian classis. The group did not want to break relations with either church. The church in Hungary was still their home church and the Reformed Church in the United States was their generous supporter. Caught between two loyalties, more than a decade of negotiations was necessary until a Hungarian classis was officially approved by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States(1905). [15]

Presbyterian rivalry

Meanwhile, a new struggle flared up because of Presbyterian work among the Hungarian Reformed people. Until June 1899 work among the Hungarians was under the sole jurisdiction of the Reformed Church in the United States. But around this time the Rev. Julius Hamborsky, who served a Slav church under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, organized a Hungarian Reformed Church at Kingston, Pennsylvania, also under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterians. [16] Thus the unity of the Hungarian work was broken, and when Dr. Geza Kaczian, as the traveling missionary of the Presbyterian Church among the Hungarians, established Hungarian Presbyterian churches at Youngstown, Ohio (1902), and New Brunswick, New Jersey (1903), open hostility began between the two groups. [17]

Pressures from home

During the first fifteen years of emigration from Hungary, church and government paid little attention. The consensus on this subject was that the departure of non-Hungarian-speaking minorities from Austria-Hungary only strengthened the position of the ethnic Hungarians in historic Hungary; they did not mind the emigration as long as it was the emigration of only non-Magyars. [18] But by 1903 it became clear that the government's liberal emigration policy had backfired;

many Hungarian-speaking Magyars had also left the country. After this discovery the Hungarian government's new policy was to halt emigration, and the Reformed Church in Hungary joined the government in this effort. Pastors were encouraged to use the pulpit and, if necessary, the local and state authorities to block the exodus of these "selfish, unpatriotic, reckless, and irresponsible people." Appeals to Hungarian patriotism were used to stop emigration and to encourage repatriation. Also, at this time the Hungarian pastors of the Reformed Church in the United States sent their memorandum to the home church in Hungary, asking for help to end the "Presbyterian schism." This matter was considered of such great importance that the second-highest-ranking lay dignitary of the church, Count Jozsef Degenfeld—brother-in-law of the most influential Hungarian politician, Count Istvan Tisza—was sent to the United States in response. Undoubtedly, Count Degenfeld came to the United States not only to heal the wounds and end the schism but also to implement the new appeal to Hungarian patriotism among Hungarian Reformed people in the United States.

Degenfeld traveled to every Hungarian Reformed church with an invitation and proposal that an "American Classis" tied to the home church be organized as a way to solve the problems among U.S. Hungarian Reformed churches. The General Conventus of the Reformed Church in Hungary would pay the pastors' salaries. Lucrative offers were made to the pastors as well as to the congregations: teachers; free education of the pastors' children in Hungary; new positions in America; and better churches in Hungary, to which the people could return. [19]

Instead of a solution, however, the American Classis of the Reformed Church of Hungary, organized on October 7, 1904, simply created a third group in the Hungarian Reformed community—those who supported the Classis.

The expressed hope was that the original six congregations of this classis would sooner or later be joined by all the other churches. But this hope was never realized, although the new classis grew rapidly. By 1910 there were twenty-three congregations organized in two sections, namely the Eastern Classis and the Western Classis.

Reformed Church reactions

Of course, the first reaction to the establishment of an American Hungarian classis was a shock in the Reformed Church in the United States. Dr. Charles Schaeffer called it a "gross wrong done," "a foreign church on American soil," and declared:

Many Hungarians do not want a Hungarian church in this country, but they want to be part of the Reformed Church in the U.S. ... All honor to the ministers and congregations whom the glitter of gold cannot bribe and who ... did not ... dishonor their vows and obligations to the church into which they have been incorporated. [20]

He just could not understand.

Many Hungarian people had good reasons for joining the new classis. The German churches seemed unable to respond to their needs. One man in Trenton put it this way:

The Mission Board was unable to give us a really qualified minister, but it did recommend two individuals., who have never completed theological studies.... Our church received all communications and official letters from the Classis in German, a language none of us understands. At the meetings of the Classis only German is used and it has no sense for us to participate. [21]

In 1905 the Reformed Church in the United States finally and too late organized the "Hungarian Classis," and David A. Souders became the Superintendent of the Board of Home Missions, "devoting almost all his time to the development of the Hungarian work." [23] Through the new Hungarian Classis new attempts were made to mend the breach. In the fall of 1908 Dr. James Good and Dean Joseph Tomcsanyi were authorized by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States to present new plans to the Foreign Affairs Board of the General Conventus of the Reformed Church in Hungary. The plan was completed. It suggested that the Reformed Church in the United States and the Reformed Church in Hungary should do the American work together. The

presidium of the General Conventus rejected the plan, stating that "leadership in the work of the American Hungarian Reformed people belongs solely to the home church," [24] Although the war between the opposing parties raged in the courts, through the newspapers, and from the pulpit, the Reformed Church in the United States exercised restraint, sobriety, and hopefulness. [25] It kept the doors open.

The Tiffin Agreement

World War I created crisis and ushered a new period into the life of the Hungarian Reformed churches in America. Loyalty to the old country was still evident in the sacrificial purchase of Hungarian war bonds and in the generous support of funds gathered for the aid of Hungarian war widows and orphans. [26] Because both immigration and repatriation had stopped, Hungarians in the United States were forced to decide to stay permanently. Salary supplements for the pastors still arrived from Hungary through the Swedish Embassy in Washington, DC for 1917 and 1918, but at the same time Hungarian Reformed clergy were accused of being political agents and spies of the central powers. [27] These and other factors were used by many to urge separation from the home church in Hungary. Some favored an autonomous and self-supporting U.S. church, whereas others suggested affiliation with some U.S. denomination.

Thus negotiations were opened with the Reformed Church in the United States to assimilate the American classes of the Reformed Church of Hungary. On October 7, 1921, the Conventus of the Reformed Church in Hungary reached an agreement with the representatives of the Reformed Church in the United States at Tiffin, Ohio. Through this contract—the Tiffin Agreement—the Eastern Classis and the Western Classis of the Hungarian Reformed Church in America were received into organic legal and ecclesiastical relation with the Eastern Synod and the Pittsburgh Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, as Classes. Both Classes were assured of the rights, privileges, and sanctions of the Reformed Church in the United States, whose protective powers were offered to safeguard and foster their growth and future development. All property, whether real or personal, remained in the possession of the congregations. The Reformed Church in the United States assumed responsibility for the payment of \$52,000 to the Classes as salaries in arrears. The congregations, which became part and parcel of the Reformed Church in the United States, declared to be no more a part of another national church. Therefore, it was expected that nothing would hinder or prevent them from assimilating through historical process with the Reformed Church in the United States. The use of the Magyar language was permitted in public worship, Sunday schools, and vacation Bible schools. A recommendation was made that pastors and elders of the Hungarian Reformed congregations meet in annual conferences to consider the needs of their congregations and to make suggestions to the Board of Home Missions and to their respective Synods. [28] Through this "excellent transaction" twenty-eight Hungarian Reformed congregations with more than a million dollars' worth of church property joined the Reformed Church in the United States. [29]

Free Magyar Reformed Church in America

The Tiffin Agreement was by no means a magnet to draw all Hungarian Reformed churches in the United States together. Even if one understands the Americanization pressure of the postwar era, many American Hungarian persons could not swallow it. Laypeople especially, in opposition to their pastors, found that their dignity and right for self-determination was greatly distorted by the Tiffin Agreement.

Objections were made from three viewpoints: (a) On a religious basis, many people argued that Hungarian Reformed congregations could grow into a self-supporting, independent, explicitly Hungarian Reformed church body. (b) Others pointed to the deep nationalistic desire to preserve Magyar culture. (c) Still others noted how economic interests led toward an independent church.

As a result of these concerns a "free movement" gained momentum under the leadership of the Rev. Endre Sebestyan, pastor of the church in Duquesne, Pennsylvania, who was instrumental in organizing the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America on August 13, 1923, in Trenton. The new Hungarian Reformed denomination had its first Constitutional assembly on December 9, 1924 in Duquesne, with six churches answering the roll. [30]

Four more churches soon joined this group (Leechburg, Pennsylvania; New York, New York; Cliff Side, New York; and Youngstown, Ohio), so that in 1928 they organized themselves into a diocese with two classes, the Eastern Classis and the Western Classis. In doctrine and government the new church claimed to follow the Reformed Church in Hungary. Accordingly, the Classes were supervised by deans and the Diocese by an arch-dean, who was the Duquesne pastor. In 1958 the word free, or independent, was omitted from the name of the denomination and the name Arch-Dean was changed to Bishop. [31] The aim of this group too was "to unite all the Reformed Hungarians who were able to support themselves into one separate denomination." [32] In reality the movement was dividing rather than uniting the existing congregations, because it capitalized on the nationalistic feeling of the first-generation Hungarian immigrants. Recently, the denomination was admitted into the membership of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches as the Hungarian Reformed Church in America.

Implementing the Tiffin Agreement

The implementation of the Tiffin Agreement started with honesty and sincerity on both sides. Even before the respective synods legally ratified the agreement in 1923, three classes were formed for effective administration and growth. By accepting the terms of the Tiffin Agreement, the Hungarian Reformed people in these classes felt that they were the obedient children of the home church, whereas those who failed to join the Reformed Church in the United States were like spoiled children of the biblical parable. [33]

At first those who did not accept the Agreement resented the differences between the Reformed Church in Hungary and the Reformed Church in the United States, but soon they conscientiously confessed "from Hungarian and religious viewpoints, the new relation brought no harmful change in our churches; rather it improved the situation by adapting the life of our congregations to the post-war American conditions." In addition, they admitted that the Reformed Church in the United States provided a more democratic system of church government to its Hungarian churches without demanding any sacrifice from a Hungarian or a religious viewpoint. The classes were even granted rights which are exercised only by the synods in Hungary, such as examining and ordaining theological students. [34]

As the years went by, however, the Board of Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States became increasingly dissatisfied. In 1929 the Board reported:

There are just about one-hundred Protestant Churches among them, seventy of which belong to the Reformed Church. All of these, with the exception of six, are enrolled as Missions under the Board and every one of the six so-called self-supporting churches, with the exception of the First Church, Cleveland, Ohio, likewise receive aid from the Board for pastor's assistants, teachers or Deaconesses.... The Hungarian congregations have not yet become fully acquainted with our methods of securing benevolent moneys and consequently they contribute comparatively small amounts on the apportionments, which serves to pull down the average giving in the Classes and makes them recipients of a proportionately large share of our Home Mission appropriations. [35]

The Board was beginning to admit the failure of the Tiffin Agreement. It failed because it did not pay. It cost too much, and the Hungarians were progressing at the expense of Americanization expectations.

The economic depression of the country only aggravated the situation. Subsidy to special Hungarian projects had to be curtailed. In the 1920s the Board employed one Hungarian pastor as a full-time editor of the *Reformatusok Lapja*, the magazine for the Hungarian constituency. His salary and the printing and administration of this weekly were paid by the Board as one of the "benefits and advantages of the union with a large and influential American denomination." [36] "Under the depression we had to stop this subsidy as well as the financial assistance of other projects among our Hungarian brethren." The Board had to reduce its subsidy to Hungarian Mission churches too, and thus many of these churches became self-supporting whether they wanted to or not.

As a consequence of these developments, by 1935 a new tendency could be detected among the Hungarian churches of the Reformed Church in the United States. The president of Lakeside Classis

was quoted as saying, "The Hungarian Reformed tradition should become the backbone of the spiritual life of our churches. More attention should be paid to this genuine Hungarian Reformed heritage in the life of our Classes." [37] The *Reformatusok Lapja* openly argued in 1936 that the summer schools and Sunday schools should emphasize the "Hungarian Reformed confessional heritage." [38] "We need desperately more courage to apply our Hungarian Reformed principles in our American congregations." [39] By 1938 opinions were expressed by groups in the various classes that the existential problems in their churches were identical.

We do not have Hungarian language tracts, no adequate Hungarian Reformed material for our Christian Education program. No good Hungarian Reformed Catechism books are available. There is no uniform Hungarian Reformed hymnal. . . We are too weak to face these problems as two separate groups. We need unity. [40]

This was the time of transition from Hungarian into bilingual church life. Although distinction could be made in the formal process between the Free, Presbyterian, and Reformed Church in the United States churches, [41] the fact remained that the language transition came about the same time for all three major groups, and they wanted to face this "natural process of Americanization" together. Differences existed between the Presbyterian and the Reformed groups.

In the Hungarian Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. the goal was set at a complete assimilation within one generation.... In the Reformed Church in the U.S., the Hungarian Classes had certain autonomy to preserve Hungarian traditions.... The Tiffin Agreement guaranteed their rights as Hungarian speaking churches.... The Hungarian congregations in the Reformed Church in the U.S. were encouraged to preserve their own unique Hungarian Reformed tradition by no-one else as Dr. Charles Schaeffer who was such an ardent supporter of the Americanization by evangelization in the past. In 1937, Dr. Schaeffer urged the conforming pastors to preserve their Hungarian Reformed denominational heritage in their second generation as well as in the first.... He expressed the hope that it was for the sake of American Protestantism that he asked Hungarian Reformed pastors to keep their unique traditions. [42]

This was the background and reason why the Hungarian classes of the Reformed Church in the United States requested a nongeographical synod when the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America merged in 1934. At the General Synod of Fort Wayne, Indiana, held in June 1936, President George W. Richards declared that the Tiffin Agreement continued to be in force, and thus the General Synod in Columbus, Ohio, June 20-29, 1938, granted the request of the Hungarian classes to establish a nongeographical synod for the Hungarian congregations with the rights of the Tiffin Agreement. Thus on March 14, 1939, the Magyar Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church was organized in Cleveland, in the same church that witnessed the organization of the First Hungarian Reformed congregation fifty years earlier. [43]

Questions of reunion and union

The years from 1939 to 1957, with the formation of the United Church of Christ, were filled with change. The use of the English language made great strides in this period. In 1940 thirteen churches conducted services in English and in 1950 almost all did. The youth work was changed from "learning Hungarian in summer school" to meeting the needs of the youth in the language they understood. [44] Great plans were made to change catechetical teaching from "learning the questions" to an all-inclusive and meaningful Christian education for all, [45] but these plans never materialized. Hungarian departments were established at Elmhurst College, in Elmhurst, Illinois (1942-46); Franklin and Marshall, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, had had a Hungarian professor in the person of Dr. William Toth since 1946; even Lancaster Theological Seminary considered resuming Hungarian instruction. Church discipline was exercised in several cases, but disciplined church life could not be established. All the ministers were enrolled in the Pension Fund Plan, with one exception.

The yearning for a unified Hungarian Reformed community continued to influence the Magyar Synod. In 1941 Hungarian representatives from Europe again tried to bring the three major factions into one church body. The outbreak of World War II ended that attempt. As the Evangelical and Reformed Church engaged in negotiations with the Congregational Christian Churches in the early 1940s, however, plans were formulated to unite the Free Magyar Reformed Church and the Magyar

Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church in the proposed United Church of Christ. The proposal was fully endorsed by the Magyar Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, but it never came to a vote in the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America. At the same time the Magyar Synod registered its resistance to some of the sacrifices that seemed to be called for in the proposed United Church of Christ.

Ten years later, as the reality of the new denomination loomed on the horizon, efforts were made to guarantee the future of a Hungarian conference in the new church. When no promises could be made the Magyar Synod voted against the proposed Constitution of the United Church of Christ and began talking seriously with the Presbyterians and others inspired by the so-called Blake-Pike proposal on church union. Here was yet another plan to unite all Hungarian Reformed factions into a United Hungarian Reformed Church in America.

The United Church of Christ Constitution was ratified without the guarantees sought by the Magyar Synod. The larger union of Hungarian churches did not materialize and life went on. Under the name of the Calvin Synod, as an acting conference, the Hungarian churches continued as an exception to the geographically defined conferences in the rest of the United Church of Christ. They argued then, and continue to argue, that the Basis of Union gave them the right to "unite in the United Church of Christ without break in their respective historic continuities and traditions." [46]

We honestly endeavor to be a color in the rainbow in the United Church of Christ within the framework of Magyar Synod rather than an unwilling material in an ecclesiastical melting pot without Magyar Synod. This is our ecumenical vision. [47]

Out of this ecumenical vision the Calvin Synod continues to live.

The Rt. Rev. John Butosi was Bishop of the Calvin Synod—Acting Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Notes

1. The four hymnals are The Hymnal, The Pilgrim Hymnal, The Hymnal of the United Church of Christ and The New Century Hymnal.
2. Imre de Josika-Herczeg, *Hungary After a Thousand Years* (New York: American Hungarian Daily, Inc., 1934), p. 293. Cf. Denes A. Janossy, *The Kossuth Emigration in America* [Budapest, 1940].
3. John Kosa, "A Century of Hungarian Emigration, 1859-1950?" in *The American Slavic and East European Review*, vol. 16 (1957), p. 505. Kosa admits, however, that it is almost impossible to reach the exact figure statistically for the following three reasons: (a) These figures do not include the returnees whose number is estimated between 15 and 33 percent of the gross emigration; (b) in these figures all those nationalities are included that inhabited the polyethnic state of Hungary: Jewish, German, Slovak, and Croat (actually the rate of Magyars in the emigrant mass was less than their rate in the total population; as late as the 1900s the Magyars made up only 33 to 40 percent of the emigrants); (c) illegal emigration is not included. Although illegal emigration was criminally prosecuted after 1881, it was a wide and common practice with the help of the secret agents. American business concerns gave up the labor contract practice only in 1910.
4. Josika-Herczeg, *op. cit.*, pp. 297-298.
5. Kosa, *op. cit.*, p. 512.
6. Alexander Daroczy, ed., *Bethlen Almanac* (Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, 1958), pp. 252-253.
7. A.M. Leffler, "Louis Kossuth and the American Churches," *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (November 1954): 27-28.

8. Louis A. Kalassay, "The Educational and Religious History of the Hungarian Reformed Church in the United States" (Ph.D. diss. University of Pittsburgh, 1939), 19.
9. Aladar Komjathy, "The Hungarian Reformed Church in America; An Effort to Preserve a Denominational Heritage" (Th.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1962), 5.
10. Ibid., 10.
11. Kalassay, op. cit., p. 22.
12. Charles E. Schaeffer, *Glimpses into Hungarian Life* (Philadelphia: Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1923), p. 16.
13. Kalassay, op. cit., pp. 28ff.
14. Ibid., p. 46.
15. Ibid., p. 63.
16. The Rev. F. von Krug, pastor of the Kingston Presbyterian Church, claimed that as far back as 1897 he gathered Hungarians into his church. (A. George, "Magyar Congregations in the Presbyterian Church," *Reformatusok Lapja*, 59, no. 13 (July 1, 1959): 14.
17. Kalassay, op. cit., pp. 65-68.
18. Julianna Puskas, *From Hungary to the United States (1880-1914)* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1982), pp. 193-95.
19. Komjathy, op. cit., p. 75.
20. *Acts and Proceedings, General Synod, Reformed Church in the United States, 1905*, pp. 73, 56-57.
21. Komjathy, op. cit., p. 99.
22. Barna Dienes, *50 Ev* (Pittsburgh, PA: Expert Printing Company, 1940), p. 11.
23. Ibid.
24. Geza Takaro et. al. *Emlékny az Amerikai Magyar Reformatus Egyhazmegye 25 éves evfordulojara* (New York, 1929), p. 23.
25. Ibid., p. 26.
26. Ibid., p. 30.
27. *Reformatusok Lapja* 9 (March 23, 1918): 6-7.
28. The complete text of the Tiffin Agreement is included in Kalassay, op. cit.
29. According to Schaeffer, op. cit., pp. 19-20, in 1923 the Reformed Church in the United States had fifty-two Hungarian churches with 30,000 members, the largest single body of Hungarian Reformed people in America.

30. Komjathy, op. cit., pp. 190ff.
31. Alexander Daroczy, Bethlen Almanac (Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, 1959), p. 235.
32. Kalassay, op. cit., p. 79.
33. Takaro, op. cit., pp. 33-34; Matt. 11:17.
34. Ibid., p. 34.
35. Acts and Proceedings, General Synod, Reformed Church in the United States, 1929.
36. Quotation from Tiffin Agreement.
37. Koinjathy, op. cit., p. 288.
38. Reformatusok Lapja, July 10, 1936, p. 4.
39. Ibid., December 14, 1935, p. 2.
40. Ibid., April 15, 1938, p. 7
41. Komiathy, op. cit., pp. 290-91, notes that the Free churches decided to introduce English-language services, while in the Presbyterian churches, denominational executives stressed the same, and congregations in the Reformed Church in the United States were encouraged to use English as well as Hungarian.
42. Ibid., pp. 191-92.
43. Credit is due the Rev. Barna Dienes, Dr. George W. Richards, and Dr. Charles E. Shaeffer in disarming opposition that recommended the tabling of the issue at Columbus, Ohio, General Synod.
44. Minutes, Magyar Synod, 1949, p. 47.
45. Minutes, Magyar Synod, 1941, pp. 62-70.
46. Minutes, Magyar Synod, 1961, p. 65.
47. Minutes, Magyar Synod, 1960, p. 52.

Women's work and women's boards

Written by Barbara Brown Zikmund and Sally A. Dries

Feminist historians have noted that the ways in which events and trends are grouped in popular history relies on male experience and often fails to reflect the impact that the same events have on women's development. Hence in American history, materials are grouped into the pre-Revolutionary War period, and antebellum period (before the Civil War), and the post-World War II period. History becomes a series of periods between wars. And wars are nothing but disruptive and destructive interludes between those periods.

Recent research, however, is pointing out the importance of war in the history of women. It now appears that wars are periods of significant advances for women. During wars the regular patterns

of family and social life are disrupted. Men go off to battle and women are left to take on many new responsibilities. Instead of being periods of decline and interruption, for women, wartime provides advancement and opportunity. It is no accident, therefore, that the organizational foundations for many of the women's boards and societies in American church life were laid during the years surrounding the Civil War.

One woman noted that the Civil War "had much to do with breaking up the crust of public opinion" against independent organizations for women.

In the country's hour of desperate need it had welcomed women into the camp hospital. They had gone to the front in some cases with their husbands, and lived intently, serving the wounded, or later been with their husbands at the front during the reconstruction period. They had prepared bandages at home and stepped out from the routine of homemaking to wider interests and experiences. So now, when the war was over they were ready to go on to new and vaster fields of opportunity. [1]

But it was not easy. Patterns of female subordination and auxiliary organizations pervaded the first half of the nineteenth century. Such women as Catherine Beecher[2] had argued eloquently that heaven appointed women to a "subordinate station." Woman's mode of gaining influence in the world was not any less important, but her "exercising of power should be altogether different and peculiar. . . . Woman is to win every thing by peace and love; by making herself so much respected and loved, that to yield to her opinions and to gratify her wishes, will be the free-will offering of the heart." And it was all to be accomplished in the domestic and social circle.

This attitude had been deeply internalized by many churchwomen. So much so that historians can document a "feminization" of the churches during the first half of the nineteenth century. Women, who made up the bulk of the laity in the churches, cultivated an interpretation of Christ that emphasized meekness, love, humility, and forgiveness. The prestige of the clergy declined, and popular religion focused on activities that were a natural extension of the role of wife and mother [3]

Women who wanted to organize independent clubs, boards, or societies, especially in the churches, were not encouraged. Many years later an active churchwoman remembered:

It is difficult in these days to realize how much opposition existed toward any such independent organization of women. Probably it would have been impossible because of this general attitude of mind to have undertaken any common effort earlier than this [1868]. It was not supposed that women were capable of doing such work outside the home. The idea of their conducting a business, keeping books, or carrying on the work of a large organization was unheard of. [4]

Many mid-nineteenth-century Christians found it difficult to overcome their conviction that it was improper for a woman to offer prayer in public or to stand on a platform and preside over a meeting where men were present. After the Civil War, however, these attitudes began to change.

By the end of the century, women in most of the denominations that eventually came together to form the United Church of Christ had organized significant independent women's boards and societies which were totally managed and supported by women. How did this come about?

Early Missionary Organizations

In 1800 Mary Webb became personally concerned about the mission outreach of American Christians. She gathered together some Congregational and Baptist women to found the Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes. Soon thereafter women in many places formed what were known as "female cent societies" to raise money for mission. The idea was that any woman could save one cent a week if she denied herself some little thing. Building on the parable of the widow's mite, churchwomen believed that their small contributions could make a big difference. And from this beginning a pattern of "auxiliary mission societies" was established.[5]

When four young college students responded to the rising global consciousness of American churches to found the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), in 1810, the women cooperated. The American Board, as it came to be called, was the major ecumenical missionary society of mainline Protestantism until the mid-nineteenth century. It channeled the monies of the "female societies" and received sizable bequests and legacies from committed Christian women. By 1839 the Board's annual report showed that approximately 680 local "ladies' associations" were at work collecting funds for foreign missions. [6]

In the early days the American Board thought that single women should not be sent out as missionaries. Only if a woman was married could she be commissioned as a full-fledged missionary. In time this pattern changed. Letters from the missionaries' wives raised the awareness of the Board about "the degradation and deprivations of native women and girls in non-Christian cultures." Public opinion came to realize that only single women, free from the obligations of home and family, could respond to the need. The entire mission enterprise was at stake, because women were a "great hindrance to the conversion of men." [7]

An ABCFM missionary from China, the Rev. David Abeel, was eventually convinced that the slow progress of mission work in China was largely owing to the lack of work among women. Abeel argued that "more than half of the women of the world were held in Oriental seclusion. They were unwelcomed at birth, married in childhood to men they had never seen, and shut away from all possible teaching except that of their husbands or of other women." He obtained permission to come home. After stopping in London, where his appeal helped to organize the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, he made his plea for women's work among American women. The results were limited, but the record shows that the First Congregational Church of Rockford, Illinois, founded a local women's missionary society in 1838. Almost thirty years later, in 1861, females of six denominations organized the Women's Union Missionary Society in New York. [8]

Not until after the Civil War did the argument for women's work and the organizational climate for independent women's societies and boards in many denominations lead to the formation of separate mission boards for women. From that time on women's work in American churches had new vitality and life.

Independent Congregational Woman's Boards

In 1868 a Mrs. Bowker, of Charlestown, Massachusetts, developed a plan to encourage women in the missionary endeavor. She called a meeting of women to hear statements by returned missionaries regarding the "degradation and wretchedness of heathen women." Under her guidance two committees were formed to write a constitution and to consult with representatives of the American Board. The Board believed that a woman's society could "co-operate with theirs, availing itself of their long experience, and avoiding at the same time the perplexing details incident to an independent organization." [9] On the surface it sounded like another auxiliary, but the result came to involve women quite differently in the mission enterprise.

Early reports of the Woman's Board of Missions (WBM) emphasized the indirect power of Christian women.

Under Paganism, woman is a cipher. Hence the labor of Christian women, both in schools and visitations, assumes in the minds of heathen men a humble character. It neither stirs pride nor gives occasion for alarm; and the benevolence that prompts it disarms opposition. Our work is among the women; to teach them that they are of importance and interest to Jesus, if not recognized by their own households - that they have souls, and that there is a Saviour and a heaven for them. This wonderful news, once received and believed, spreads with lightning-like rapidity from one to another, arousing an eager desire for knowledge. Christ, accepted, brings a gentle refinement that unconsciously ennoble the recipient; and the men, too, are blest, before they have thought to recognize the cause. [10]

Within a year of the founding of the WBM in Boston a similar organization took root in the Middle West. Late in 1868 the secretary of the ABCFM spoke to a group of Chicago women and shared his

enthusiasm for woman's boards. "The question may be asked," he said, "Why not act directly through the American Board?" The reply was that women could be brought into more immediate, closer personal relations to the work by taking on themselves a part and by entering into correspondence with the missionary women in the field. "Ladies will write to each other as they will not write to me, do the best I can to win their confidence. . . . The vivacity, the touching incidents, the free, hearty expression of their thoughts and feelings, joys and sorrows, they reserve for their own sex." The women were convinced and the Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior (WBMI), with headquarters in Chicago, came into being. [11]

Congregational connections to the growing frontier settlements of the West and of the Pacific Islands led to the founding of two more women's boards within five years. In 1871 the Woman's Board of Missions for the Pacific Islands (WBMPI) was organized in Hawaii by a female missionary on furlough from Micronesia.[12] In 1873 a small group of Congregational women met in Santa Cruz, California, to mobilize women's resources throughout the western states and territories in a Woman's Board of Missions for the Pacific (WBMP). Although the boards back east objected to these organizations, because they were "so far from the centers of civilization," the California women argued that this was exactly the reason they needed to be an independent board. Furthermore, they were "the natural gateway to Japan, China, the myriad islands of the seas and the infant missions of Mexico." [13]

Early on all the woman's boards adopted some important principles that shaped their work: First, they existed primarily to serve the needs of women. They supported women missionaries in the field who were single and encouraged the employment of competent, native "Bible women." Second, they sought funds in such a way so as not to diminish contributions to the American Board. They made it a policy, however, to raise money one year and spend it the next year. This way they always knew the limits of their resources. Third, their support was personal. Branches were encouraged to "adopt" specific missionaries and to "pledge" to specific projects. Fourth, they did everything in their power to keep administrative overhead low, relying on "unpaid, freely given labor." [14]

In the fifty to sixty years of their independent work three of these women's boards (WUM, WBMI, and WBMP) contributed over 20 percent of the total receipts of the American Board. In 1927 these three woman's boards were reunited with the American Board and have continued as part of the United Church Board for World Ministries since the formation of the United Church of Christ. The WBMPI continues its independent existence in close relationship with the Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ.[15] The Christian denomination had its origins in the American zeal to overcome past divisions and organizations and get back to the basics. Christians were in New England, North Carolina, and Virginia and on the Appalachian frontier well before 1800, but they were reluctant to organize. One historian wrote:

Remember that many years passed before the Christians pretended to organize like other denominations, and then ensued a period when energy was largely absorbed with church building and controversy over sectarian, theological, and metaphysical subjects. Combatting error was deemed almost paramount to declaring the truth. [16]

The Christians did eventually organize and embark on enterprises to share the truth.

Regional mission societies for "home" work were operating by the 1820s to help organize new churches, but not until 1854 was a national Board of Home and Foreign Missions elected and not until after the Civil War did the denomination have a national missionary department with a full-time secretary. [17]

This delay in organizing did not prevent women from becoming involved in the leadership of Christian churches. Women preachers and evangelists were an important chapter in the early history of the Christian denomination.[18] Also, records of local women's organizations for mission in New York and Michigan during the 1850s have been found. Perhaps the lack of a national denominational organization actually helped the cause of women, because there were few structures through which to formalize masculine control.

Before long, however, men and women alike were advocating a "woman's board." And in 1886, at the quadrennial session of the American Christian Convention, held at New Bedford, Massachusetts, the Woman's Board for Foreign Missions was elected. Four years later, in 1890, at Marion, Indiana, the women of the Convention organized a Woman's Board for Home Missions. [19]

What these Boards, together with the Conference Boards and local societies with their constituents, have done for the missionary interests of our denomination would fill a volume.... Suffice it to say that they have not worked to "be seen of men," but "He who seeth in secret" will reward them openly. [20]

When the Congregational Churches and the Christian Churches came together in 1931 to form the Congregational Christian Churches, the women's boards of the Christian Churches became part of the world and home mission boards of the new denomination. Together with their Congregational sisters, Christian women were guaranteed one-third female representation on the governing boards of these significant structures for mission and outreach.

Woman's Missionary Society of the General Synod (Reformed)

The first missionary society in the Reformed Church in the United States was created in 1826 by the Synod of Frederick, Maryland. An auxiliary Female Missionary Society apparently came into being at the same time, but its activities were strictly local. In 1838, when the Synod organized a foreign board it decided to carry out its work through the same interdenominational American Board that served the Congregationalists. The arrangement was a happy one. German Reformed money and missionaries worked through the American Board for twenty-five years.[21]

After the Civil War, however, in 1866, the Reformed Church in the United States decided to seek its own mission field and establish an independent mission board. In 1873 a Board of Foreign Missions was organized, with special commitments to sponsor mission work in Japan. [22]

The involvement of women in these developments was minimal. Women in the German Reformed churches were "at that time completely unorganized, and we might say completely uninterested." The records show, however, that in 1869 a Rev. S.B. Yockey made an appeal to the Ohio Synod that the church should organize women for missions. This appeal was the beginning, although the suggestion did not "take root in the extremely conservative soil of our Reformed denomination." [23]

Women's work in the Reformed Church eventually took shape. Much of its strength resulted from the tireless work of Samuel Yockey's wife, Elvira Beilhartz Yockey. Elvira Yockey was raised a Methodist, but on her marriage she embraced the Reformed tradition. She became convinced that women had a special responsibility for mission and could not understand how the church could revolve around Christ and yet have so little zeal in carrying out Christ's final command to share the faith.[24]

Reformed women had served the churches through "aid societies," whose chief aim was to raise money to help their own congregations. Contributions to mission were "incidental." Looking back many years later Elvira Yockey wrote: "Women's Missionary Societies as they now exist whose exclusive aim was to work for missions, not only in raising money, but in creating sentiment, in educating and training the women and children along the lines of missionary activity, were unknown." She wanted her church to follow the example of women in other denominations and organize for mission. She wanted to release the energies of women for the gospel. [25]

The women were expected to "keep silence in the churches." Their voices were never heard even in public prayer, and to this day in most of the prayer meetings of the church the number of audible prayers is limited to the number of men present. How much the church owes to the number of silent prayers that ascend heavenward from feminine hearts, can never be known. [26]

But the idea of a woman's society had little favor among the older members of the congregation. Elvira Yockey continued to promote the idea in her husband's church. Frequent mention from the pulpit and in "social intercourse" of the benefits that other denominations were deriving from

woman's work in missionary societies brought about a gradual change in sentiment. Finally, in 1877, the Woman's Missionary Society of the First Reformed Church of Xenia, Ohio, came into being. It was the beginning. [27]

Elvira Yockey wrote many letters and encouraged other churches to found societies. "There were no precedents to follow, no model constitutions, no prepared programs or books of study.... The presidents were compelled to do almost all the work, not because our women were unwilling, but because they were timid and untrained,"(28) In 1883 the first public recognition of women's work was made by the Pittsburgh Synod, and in 1887 the Woman's Missionary Society of the General Synod was organized at Akron, Ohio. [29] By the second triennial meeting of the Society,

many who had opposed or failed to encourage the movement became convinced that the work was for and from God. The unwomanly aggressiveness which some feared was entirely absent. There was no spirit of self seeking, no effort to adopt masculine methods, or usurp masculine prerogative, but only an intensely earnest desire to have some part in the evangelization of the world. This earnestness, as is usually the case in the best type of womanhood, went hand in hand with a persistence that admitted no denial. [30]

From these beginnings the national society came to publish *The Woman's Journal* and by 1914 to establish a national Philadelphia office. In 1923 the Woman's Missionary Society of the General Synod supported three full-time staff members. [31] As the Society approached its fiftieth anniversary, in 1937, conversations commenced with the women of the Evangelical Synod of North America. Soon thereafter, in 1939, the Woman's Missionary Society of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Women's Union of the Evangelical Synod of North America formed the Women's Guild of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. [32]

Evangelical Women's Union

During the years when Congregational, Christian, and Reformed women were creating national organizations for women, women in German Evangelical churches were preoccupied with the local needs of their congregations. This preoccupation is understandable, considering the fact that Evangelical churches were the last of the four denominations that merged to form the United Church of Christ to organize nationally. In the late nineteenth century many German immigrants were still tied to their European roots and slow to develop an American ecclesiastical loyalty. The Evangelical Synod of North America did not come into being until 1877. Therefore, that a national organization for Evangelical women was not created until 1921 was not surprising.

Once again, wartime experience—this time World War I—prompted women to seek more independence and gave them confidence in their abilities. One woman wrote:

"Every cloud has a silver lining," says the optimist and our "silver lining" lay hidden in the black cloud of the world war. In those days organized effort was a necessity. Community, fraternal and church organizations found a common cause and vied in ardor and zeal. Our constituency [Evangelical women] did its part. Red Cross reports showed Evangelical women in the front ranks. That was therefore the psychological moment.... [Women] saw the opportunity and seized it by sending a plea to the General Conference, convening in the city of Pittsburgh, September, 1917, asking them to federate the Evangelical womanhood. Statistics of the Red Cross Society showed that the organized women of our church could be made a power. [33]

A convention was called at Cincinnati, Ohio, June 29-30, 1921, and the National Union of Evangelical Women was born. The Union did not limit its membership or the types of activities it supported. It "chose to include ALL *women's societies within the Church* and to incorporate ALL branches of the denomination in its program." [34] Yet the organization of a national union was a radical step in the eyes of some.

In the Evangelical Year-Book for 1923 a seven-page article appeared entitled "The Call of the Church to Her Women," which defended the legitimacy of women's work in the church. The author admitted that the new organization was an innovation, but the church does not need to fear innovation when it "can be shown to square with reason and conscience and the Word of God." The

call of the church to these women had in "back of it the whole age-old force of religious tradition from the very beginnings of the human race." After spelling out the power of these traditions the article closed with conviction.

It is not only lawful for her [the church] to call upon her army of devoted and earnest women to render what service they are able to perform, it is her sacred duty to do so, and to organize them so that they may be able to do the work to which they are best suited in the most effective manner. [35]

Evangelical women had always been loyal in assuming responsibilities and meeting the needs of the local church. Now they were invited to move beyond home and congregation to support programs for the Synod and for the "Kingdom-at-large." In so doing they would become acquainted with one another and better understand the program of their denomination. [36]

The organization was a success. In 1923 the name was changed to the Evangelical Women's Union. Soon thereafter the Board of Directors began issuing a "Monthly Program," with topics and suggested activities for women's groups. As the years went by the programs of the Union affected the lives of women in many ways. By 1936 its work was carried out through six departments: education, devotional life, missionary education, stewardship (including the thank offering), social welfare, and citizenship. It was an impressive record. [37]

Once the Evangelical and Reformed Church had been consummated the Evangelical women moved with confidence toward merger with their Reformed sisters. They believed that the Evangelical Women's Union had "proven herself a faithful and fruitful 'Handmaid' of the Church, locally and inter-denominationally." In the coming merger they prayed that it would continue to be a blessing. [38]

The Success of Women's Work for Women

The development of these independent women's mission boards did three things for women and the churches: (1) It transformed the mission consciousness of the churches, (2) it improved the situation of the women involved, and (3) it created a climate that supported the advancement of women and the ecumenical movement. The personal involvement of women in the mission movement was its great strength. The women demonstrated repeatedly "the power of small offerings frequently collected from large numbers of contributors." Whereas the general mission boards asked for large contributions, "the women asked for two cents per week—asked it from door to door; devised mite boxes, formed small local circles, held frequent meetings, looked after children, old women, poor people, hand-picked their own fruit, and astonished the world with their success." [39]

Furthermore, the women developed a new style of missionary literature. Historically, missionary literature had consisted of annual reports, anniversary sermons, and missionary biographies. In contrast, the women prepared low-cost materials that appealed to women and children. They overwhelmed the missionary ignorance of the churches with leaflets, stories, poems, and summaries that could be bought for a few cents or even given away. "These light troops could penetrate where the more ponderous forces never would be moved, and so began the great popularization of missions." [40]

The active and personal involvement of women in this work not only assisted the mission cause but also enriched the women themselves, "These women could never have learned so much had they merely turned their money over to others to administer." Rather they took on heavy responsibilities and the necessity for decision and initiative. They were "in touch with great things, they saw and knew the women missionaries going out to the field, they became their personal friends, they were aware of international problems and movements." Their organizations became training schools for thousands of women throughout the land. [41]

An argument can be made that the women's mission boards were an important step in the secular movement to expand woman's role in American society and to push American Protestants into the ecumenical movement. Women's organizations for missions were the first women's clubs specifically

to send out help to other women. This experience built networks of support and raised consciousness about women's problems. As the years went by simple mission piety changed to feminist consciousness, Words like foreign and heathen disappeared from the annual reports. The word ladies was changed to women. Women placed increasing emphasis on cooperation, internationalism, interdenominationalism, and unification.

In 1888 women from the United States and Canada joined with British women to create the first international ecumenical missionary agency intended to be universal in scope-the World's Missionary Committee of Christian Women. Despite strong denominational pressures to organize separately the women "kept their sense of solidarity and conversed, discussed, corresponded, and acted together." Working through ecumenical councils, federations, and committees they invited all Christians to pray together and share responsibility for the work of the church. They were extremely successful. The Sunday School Union, the World Day of Prayer, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Cooperating Committee for Women's Christian Colleges in Foreign Fields, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Committee on Christian Literature for Women and Children in Mission Fields, and Church Women United are only a few of the ecumenical ventures that grew out of these independent missionary organizations for women. [42]

Women's work and woman's boards are a unique chapter in the history of women and the United Church of Christ.

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Sho-Chiku-Bai: Japanese-American Congregationalists

Written by Clifford Alika and Miya Okawara

The first Japanese immigrants who entered the United States legally were government officials from Japan. They arrived in San Francisco on the *Kanrin Maru* at the time feudalism in Japan was being replaced by a new democratic government under Emperor Meiji. Even with this milestone event the Japanese government was still reluctant to let its people go abroad. Therefore, the daring and adventurous ones stowed away on American vessels traveling to the United States.

Later many others came as laborers. These were the *Issei* (first generation).

Joseph Hardy Neesima

Japanese American Congregationalism begins with a Japanese youth named Neesima Jo. Born in Tokyo on January 14, 1843, he was ten years old when Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry first entered the Bay of Yedo in Japan. When Neesima was about sixteen years old he came across an atlas of the United States. The atlas contained particulars about the United States, including references on such subjects as the President, free schools, hospitals, prisons, and factories. "I read it many times," he wrote in a letter to a friend. "I wondered so much as my brain would melt out of my head because I liked it so much."

Neesima later found a small Chinese Bible in a friend's library. He was enthralled and impressed as he read about the God who was responsible for the creation of humanity and of the whole world. Thus he yearned to learn about Christianity and to learn more about the United States. In 1864, risking his life, Neesima boarded an American schooner and smuggled himself out of Japan. During the trip Neesima was befriended by Alpheus Hardy, a Christian merchant who was deeply interested in mission. Hardy employed the young Neesima as a servant but quickly realized that he was not about to be a houseboy. Neesima took on the name Joseph Hardy Neesima.

On arrival in Boston, Hardy immediately enrolled Neesima in the Phillips Academy at Andover, Massachusetts, and in due time Neesima was ready for college. He did well, entering Amherst College and graduating in 1870. Later he went to Andover Theological Seminary, graduating in the summer of 1874.

Joseph Hardy Neesima was ordained as the first Japanese Evangelical minister. He was appointed as a corresponding member of the Japan Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

In December of 1874 Neesima began preparations to return to Japan. Just before he was to leave, Neesima spoke before the annual meeting of the American Board. He pleaded for the establishment of a Christian school in Japan. With a broken voice and strong emotions he said, "I cannot go back to Japan without money to found a Christian college, and I am going to stand here until I get it."

Overwhelmed and moved, the Board immediately pledged \$5,000. The gift became the nucleus of what is now Doshisha University, a Christian university built in the center of Buddhism and Shintoism in Kyoto, Japan.[1]

Mission work among the west coast Japanese

By the 1870s more and more Japanese were coming to America, especially to study. In 1872 four Japanese students began meeting at the Third Congregational Church on Howard Street in San Francisco. Although initially strangers to one another, the students quickly became friends and decided to meet every Sunday at the church. A Mrs. Wilson, an active member of the church's Women's Mission Society, offered to hold a Bible study class and an English-language class for them.[2] But the church had no room for "orientals."

They eventually found space in the basement of the Chinese Methodist Mission, on Washington Street. The rental fee was three dollars a month. Mrs. Wilson went to the Women's Mission Society, and it agreed to contribute \$2.50 toward the rent. The balance of fifty cents was paid by the four students.[3]

The Japanese did not speak the Chinese language. Nonetheless, because they were "orientals," they were sent to an "oriental" church. In the months and years that followed a sign on the basement door announcing the English-language class attracted more Japanese students.

In 1876 ten students were baptized by a Methodist missionary. The following year, thirty-five students, led by Kanichi Miyama, organized the Japanese Gospel Society. Thus with the support of the Congregational Women's Mission Society the genesis of the first Japanese Christian church in the United States was formed by students meeting in the basement of the Chinese Methodist Mission.[4]

It was not until the turn of the century, in 1899, that the Congregational Home Missionary Society began their mission specifically to Japanese residing in the United States? The move was clearly made in response to the increase in the Japanese population.

Often the work began with a handful of *Issei*, like the students who began meeting at the Chinese Methodist Mission. All were strangers in a strange land and often they were strangers to one another. Each was seeking to learn the English language and each found a source of strength and encouragement in having fellowship with other Japanese.

As the number of Japanese increased, separate missions were established under the supervision of the Rev. William C. Pond, of the Home Missionary Society. Many were affiliated with First Congregational churches in their respective areas. Between 1885 and 1926 fifteen Japanese American churches came into being:

San Francisco Congregational Church—1885

Salt Lake City Mission—1901

Ogden Mission—1903

Oakland Independent Congregational Church—1904

Los Angeles Congregational Church—1905

Los Angeles Bethlehem—1905

Seattle Congregational Church—1907

San Diego Congregational Church—1907

Fresno Independent Congregational Church—1908

Pasadena Mission—1909

Santa Barbara Congregational Church—1913

Montebello Congregational Church—1913

Riverside Mission—1913

Hollywood Independent Congregational Church—1922

Santa Maria Congregational Church—1926 [6]

Independent churches

Many of the Japanese congregations continued to receive mission support throughout the first part of the twentieth century. In 1904, however, the Rev. Shinjiro Okubo, a graduate of Doshisha University, indicated to the people of the Oakland church that he had a dream to establish a strong independent church for Japanese in America, a church that would serve Christ through its own initiatives. He felt that the "mission church did not foster the kind of spirit and sacrificial service that can lead to an abiding faith." [7]

Okubo believed that "living under the charge of the missionary is the easy way. . . . In an independent church, members must assume responsibilities of carrying the church in their own hands. . . . An independent people with minds and spiritual lives of their own should become self-supporting and selfgoverning." [8] His goal, to "establish an independent church, financed and governed by the Japanese people themselves," was realized two years later, on January 7, 1906. In March of the following year the church was officially and legally recognized as the Oakland Independent Congregational Church.

In the ensuing years more missions and churches declared their independence from their Congregational mission ties. Ministers were called from Hawaii and Japan, and dedicated laypeople took on the heavy responsibilities of the churches' financial and other ongoing needs. Sunday schools were conducted in Japanese by the pioneer members of the church. Great sacrificial efforts went into raising funds for church buildings. A documented history of Sycamore Congregational Church (formerly the Oakland Independent Congregational Church) notes that "families put cardboard soles in their shoes and some women gave up wearing stockings so they might give a little more to the building fund. The Rev. Okubo went without his salary, while his wife went to work as a cleaning woman in a Caucasian home." [9]

Coping with racism

Hard work and great sacrifice were not enough. Anti-Japanese sentiments increased and churches tried to help. In November 1909 the Japanese Congregationalists gathered in Fresno for a conference. Dr. Pond was elected Superintendent of the Japanese Congregational churches.[10] Efforts were made to lift the morale of the Japanese community. Disheartened by the severe anti-Japanese movement that was fostered by surrounding communities, the Japanese Congregational churches joined other denominational Japanese churches to organize the Northern/Southern California Japanese Church Federation.

The Federation's objectives were to combat hostilities brought on by racism by encouraging the churches to help acquaint the *Issei* with American ways of behaving, speaking, and understanding; to stand firm against gambling, prostitution, and liquor; and to preach the sacredness of home life and social justice.

For example, the Japanese Congregational Church in Fresno struggled with matters involving gambling and prostitution. These problems affected hundreds of Japanese laborers who were working during the grape harvest.[11]

The churches sponsored athletic leagues and social activities for children who could not participate in sports and social events at school.[12] Concerted efforts were made to draw more women into the life of the churches.[13]

Youth groups were organized. In 1930 the Christian Endeavor was set up to serve the social needs of the *Nisei* (second generation). Young Peoples' Christian conferences were held, providing opportunities for *Nisei* leadership to develop.

Many Japanese farmers achieved a relative amount of economic success by pioneering new developments in the production of fruit, vegetables, garlic, and other produce. However, fear and racism ultimately triumphed. Laws were passed limiting the rights of the Japanese to own or lease land and to become citizens. But this did not deter the tenacious *Issei* pioneers from working on farmland and producing some of the top-grade fruits and vegetables in the country.[14]

In 1920 a second anti-Japanese Alien Land Law was enacted by the state of California. Before the enactment of this referendum the Rev. Joseph K. Fukushima, of the Fresno Independent Congregational Church, sent an urgent appeal to his "American minister friends. The letter read, in part:

At the polls on November 2nd, you are going to vote on the Initiative Bill No. 1 entitled Alien Land Law. The passage of this Bill is a great persecutor to the Japanese in California, who were legally admitted to this country, rather than solving the problems.

The measure now before you intends to:

1. Prohibit land ownership by Japanese
2. Prohibit the acquisition of real property by American born Japanese minors, who are American citizens under the guardianship of their parents
3. Prohibit leasing of farm land by Japanese
4. Deprive the Japanese parents of their natural right to be the guardian of their minor sons and daughters owning real property
5. Escheat real property to the state upon certain prima facie presumptions
6. Prohibit the Japanese from owning the shares of stock of corporations which deal with farm land

The measure is so harsh and severe that nothing will be left for the Japanese to live on. This is quite contrary to your high ideal which has been the inspiration for us during the past half century. While this measure persecutes the Japanese in California, it does not check immigration from Japan.

Since the time the first Alien Land Law was enacted in 1913, our Japanese churches of Christ have also suffered. It hindered us even to acquire a piece of land for the place of worship. Do you think it is wise to solve the matter in this way? Can you not give them, who are already here, the opportunity to become American citizens, and do justice for them? We only desire fair treatment equal to others."

Despite Fukushima's eloquent appeal no records could be found as to how the ministers responded. The bill was eventually passed, and the oppression of the Japanese throughout the state of California continued.

Although segregated and isolated, the seven Japanese Congregational churches which were scattered up and down the western region became the gathering place for many *Issei* and *Nisei*. The churches provided strength and assurance to a people caught in the middle of a racism that was prevalent in society in general.

Wartime incarceration

On December 7, 1941, the United States responded to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor with a declaration of war. Within three months President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the evacuation and incarceration of more than 70,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry and more than 40,000 Japanese nationals, most of whom were permanent U.S. residents.

Executive Order 9066 broadly authorized any military commander to exclude any person from any area. Although the Presidential order did not mention any specific group or provide detention, there was an understanding among high officials that the authorization was to be used for the purpose of removing and incarcerating all persons of Japanese ancestry living in the West Coast states. Ten sites were built by the U.S. government for the mass incarceration of more than 120,000 persons.

The hopes and aspirations of the *Issei* and *Nisei* were shattered. The Japanese in these camps eventually became wards of the government, guarded by armed soldiers. Fathers were no longer family breadwinners, parents lost control of their children, and families rarely ate meals together. Many were terrified because of the unpredictable future and the hopelessness of the situation and did not expect to come out alive.[16]

Within the Japanese American church community the response of some was a deep sense of bewilderment. In his book, *Christian Seed in Western Soil*, Harlan Hogue recalls the response of a seminary student:

On the night of Pearl Harbor, we trickled into Benton Hall one by one, the last man getting in from a far distant parish about 11:00 p.m. We all gathered in the tiny chapel in the corner of Benton Hall and prayed together in the candlelight, with closing prayers by our Japanese students.

I think it was the most moving emotional experience of our lives... . A Japanese boy from Fresno, who had played football at Fresno State and was as "Americanized" as any *Nisei* ... was so deeply wrought up ... that he retired to his room for twenty-four hours and did not come out to eat or attend class. He later became a distinguished chaplain for the famous 442nd Battalion."

That seminary student became the Rev. George Aki. Like other Japanese Congregational ministers, Aki served in ministry in the concentration camps. He first served as a minister at the Tanforan Assembly Center and later at the concentration camp at Topaz, Utah. Many clergy in the Japanese American community for example, the Rev. Joseph K. Fukushima, Rohwer, Arkansas; the Rev. Seizo Abe, Manzanar, California; and the Rev. Kenji Kikuchi, at Poston, Arizona as well as those who

represented the Christian and Buddhist traditions and a host of lay leaders, carried their ministry to the camps. Faced with the immediacy of life within the camps,

the clergy, as a rule, were not involved in the affairs of the administration. Those few who took active part in actually serving as interpreters or as members of an important committee were looked upon with suspicion, so by and large the clergy did not extend their hand to matters that dealt directly with the administration. They worked quietly in the local block meetings and allowed the block leaders to express grievances or correct injustices... . There was no noticeable or recorded conference on "suffering" or "injustice" ... from a religious standpoint. Political grievances were expressed through the block manager's council.[18]

The work of the faith community was focused primarily on pastoral matters. In looking back, one might question the lack of a prophetic voice among the Japanese-American clergy.

The white response

Within the white church community questions were raised about the legality and necessity of the evacuation. It quickly became apparent that the evacuation was instead an incarceration. On June 18, 1942, the General Council of the Congregational and Christian Churches of the United States adopted a resolution at its sixth regular meeting in Durham, New Hampshire:

Christian conscience and the long range interests of our nation alike require the facing of the deeper implications of the emergency mass evacuation from our West Coast of some 70,000 American citizens, along with 40,000 resident Japanese. Every time a majority deprives a minority of its civil rights it undermines its own liberties, and the unity and world-wide influence of the nation.

Be it, therefore, resolved:

That while national security justified the evacuation of Japanese residing in vital military areas on the West Coast, we deplore the fact that all persons with any Japanese blood, citizens as well as aliens, were as a group subjected to evacuation without hearings or other means of determining loyalty.[19]

In retrospect, the resolution is remarkable in that it did recognize some of the deeper implications of the action. Unfortunately, its strength was weakened by its reluctance to question the notion that the evacuation/incarceration was necessary because of national security.

In Berkeley, California, others sought to raise a prophetic voice. The Rev. Galen Fischer and Ruth Kingman, both members of the First Congregational Church, were active in the work of the Fair Play Committee. As a former missionary to Japan, Fischer argued that "Americans should differentiate between the actions of the Japanese government and those of Japanese ancestry in this country who were incarcerated on the West Coast." The Fair Play Committee asserted that what was at issue was "the civil rights of U.S. citizens and a need to humanize the situation until it could be invalidated and rescinded." [20]

The Rev. Vere V. Loper, minister of First Congregational Church in Berkeley, along with Kingman, played a key role in one of the church's major responses to the evacuation. Through a series of conversations with government and church leaders, the Army was informed that the Church Council had voted to make the church facilities available for the registration and evacuation of Japanese Americans from the area and that a number of Protestant churches would be assisting in the work each day. "The initiative came from the church. The formalities were observed, though, so the Army requested." Although the church was clearly seeking to respond to the evacuation with pastoral concern, some serious questions are raised about the church's complicity in undermining the civil rights of Japanese American citizens and residents of Japanese ancestry.

The Church Council's motion that its facilities be offered to the Army passed with one dissenting vote. The dissenter thought the church should not "cooperate with the dirty business." At the same

time the Council voted without dissent that they wanted to "see that some courtesies are extended to the evacuees."

Eleanor Breed, church secretary at First Congregational Church, noted in her diary during the church's involvement in registration and evacuation procedures: "It came over me suddenly, and with shock, that the soldiers who have been on guard have been here not to protect us from the Japanese so much as to protect the Japanese against us." [21]

Ambivalence was evident among those who expressed appreciation for the church's hospitality and yet noted, as did Monroe Deutsch, University of California at Berkeley, that "these people who are being evacuated have had no charges against them individually; they are not guilty of misconduct. They are being removed because of fear. Personally, I feel that our country will some day feel ashamed of its conduct in this entire matter." [22]

Others were more adamant in their assessment of the evacuation. Among such people were Enoch and Margaret Dumas. Along with their six-year-old son, the Dumases lived for three years with Japanese Americans in the concentration camp at Amache, Colorado. With Dr. Dumas in charge of the elementary education program, Mrs. Dumas recalls, "We did not approve of the relocation. We thought it was un-American, unconstitutional, unnecessary, and immoral but it was happening and my husband felt that he would like to see that the youngsters got the best possible education while they were there," [23]

Although other churches, such as the Congregational Church of San Mateo, California, took part in serving as centers for registration and evacuation, the efforts of the First Congregational Church of Berkeley were, ironically, the most comforting and the most disturbing. In a joint publication with the Berkeley Fellowship of Churches, Dr. Loper served as the primary writer of "A Statement to Japanese Friends and Fellow Americans." [24]

"We hope," the statement noted, "we can offer something of value to you in Christian hospitality." Many of the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated remembered with genuine appreciation the hospitality of the church. The statement also noted that "the service you now render to America is the loss, for the duration, of your homes. We rejoice to know that many of you are facing it in the same spirit in which others are facing the possible loss of their sons, for much longer than the duration." [25] One may argue that the inclusion of the remark reflects the historical context of that period. It is, nevertheless, an unfortunate remark. At best, it may have been of comfort to white Americans and at worst it was a callous disregard for the sufferings of an innocent people.

In retrospect it is clear that the white church community made little prophetic effort to resist the evacuation/incarceration. Like the Japanese Americans themselves, they were resigned to accepting the reality of the exile and sought to concentrate on providing pastoral care.

Beyond the camps

By the fall of 1942 indefinite-leave permits were issued to anyone passing the strict government security test. Travel to California, Oregon, and Washington was prohibited. Internees, usually sponsored by host church groups and sympathetic organizations, gradually began their exodus to the world outside the camps.

In January 1943 the U.S. War Department announced that Japanese American volunteers would be accepted for combat duty in Europe. Most of the volunteers came from Hawaii, but there were also thousands who volunteered from within the concentration camps scattered throughout the country. The volunteers were assigned to a segregated Japanese American unit the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The 442nd became the most decorated American unit, for its size and length of service, to fight in World War II.

In January 1944 the Selective Service System started drafting Japanese American men, even though they were still incarcerated in the camps. More than 33,000 Japanese Americans eventually served in the U.S. armed forces, and many families lost their sons "for much longer than the duration."

By January 1945 the U.S. Supreme Court had declared that the confinement of the Japanese Americans in the camps was a violation of constitutional rights. The dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought the war to a close in August 1945, but the last concentration camp was not closed until October 1946 and the last special internment camp, until 1952. Released and free, many Japanese Americans were determined to compensate for their "guilt" of being Japanese in a society of "Americans." Most left and resettled in the Rocky Mountain, Middle Western, and Eastern states. These areas provided opportunities and challenges that were unavailable on the West Coast.

Restrictions prohibiting Japanese Americans from returning to the West Coast states were lifted in July 1945, but the nagging shame of being a "Jap" continued. Assimilation into the larger society nearly became an obsession in the early postwar days. Japanese Americans faced continued discrimination and prejudice.

Despite their quest to be accepted and become part of the larger American society the need for separate ethnic Japanese churches continued. Denominational leaders insisted that segregated Japanese ethnic churches would be unnecessary after the war, because the *Issei* would be declining in number, and the *Nisei* and *Sansei* (third generation) would be assimilating. The existence of ethnic Japanese churches persisted, however.

Japanese American congregationalism

In the weeks and months after the closing of the camps the West Coast Japanese Congregational churches and parsonages were converted into hostels for the homeless returnees and their families. As the *Issei* and *Nisei* struggled to find homes and jobs amid hostilities, Japanese Congregational churches struggled to reactivate their ministries. Denominational leaders encouraged integration with the larger existing white churches or the establishment of interdenominational Japanese churches. Many felt that weak, small, and separate denominational churches were not feasible.

At first, the Bay Area Japanese Christian churches in California came together for Sunday worship services. Children were sent to neighboring churches for Sunday schools. By June 1946, however, after realizing that many Japanese Congregational children and adults were not attending Sunday schools and Sunday services, Sycamore Congregational Church broke away from the interdenominational group. The church reestablished itself as an independent Congregational church.[26]

In Fresno the two Japanese churches remained divided. The Methodist Judicatory felt that the Japanese churches should come together under the care of the Methodist church, whereas the Congregational Conference felt the union should be under the Congregational church. An agreement was never reached.

Many Japanese pastors felt that integration into white churches was impossible. Even if it were possible for some *Nisei* to integrate, the action was unnecessary. "In Fresno, for years and years, the Germans and Armenians had their own churches and prospered." [27] The Japanese could do the same.

In southern California the Montebello Plymouth, Hollywood Independent, San Diego Ocean View, and Los Angeles Union churches reported similar postwar struggles. The Santa Barbara Congregational Church, used during the war by the United Women's group as a hostel for the elderly, resumed its services with a handful of returnees in 1948.[28]

In 1946 the first and only Middle West/East postwar Japanese Congregational church was begun. A church was organized in Chicago, an area where the largest settlement of Japanese Americans was located. At first, the church comprised an all-*Issei* membership, beginning in the North Side apartment of Otokichi Kushino.

Although Chicago *Nisei* were visiting predominantly white churches in the area, most were unchurched. Clearly, the *Nisei* were not ready to conform totally to an all-white church, nor were such churches ready to take in people of another race.

In 1947 the concern for these unchurched *Nisei* came to the attention of the Chicago Congregational Union, and with the support of the Chicago Missionary Society the *Issei-Nisei* Congregational Church was established in 1948. The name of the church was later changed to Chicago Christ Church United Church of Christ.

Financial support for all Japanese Congregational churches was provided by the Board for Home Mission's special funds.

The work was subsidized by the Committee for War Victims and Reconstruction for use in the reestablishment of Japanese churches.

With the exception of the Santa Barbara Congregational Church, which was dissolved in 1968, church membership grew. Once again, churches became the focal point for the *Issei* and *Nisei*. The *Issei* had carried the full burden of the churches for many years. During this period they began to relinquish their leadership roles to the *Nisei*. More *Sansei* were born, and Sunday schools began to flourish. Junior high and senior high Pilgrim Fellowship groups were organized.

In their pursuit to become "Americanized" during the postwar era, many Japanese joined Christian churches. It was believed that "Christianity not only will develop the Japanese American's character, but also will Americanize it," creating, "a one-world attitude," It was felt that with "Christianization will come integration in its good time." [29]

The United Church of Christ

In 1957 the Congregational Christian Churches united with the Evangelical and Reformed Church to form the United Church of Christ. That was also the year when the housing ordinance that limited people of color including Japanese Americans from moving into the suburbs was lifted. As a result, many Japanese Americans, seeking better living conditions and better education for their children, moved to the suburbs. They continued to return every Sunday, however, to their home churches for worship. Within the United Church of Christ the word Japanese was dropped from the name of almost all the churches, The exception was the Fresno Japanese Congregational United Church of Christ.

Advocacy to integrate with predominantly white churches continued. Denominational leaders pushed integration and neglected the historical legacy of racial discrimination against Japanese Americans. But most of the Japanese Congregational churches remained ethnic Japanese congregations within the United Church of Christ.

In the 1960s the civil rights movement and the development of ethnic studies programs throughout the country gave birth to the emergence of a new generation of Japanese leaders the *Sansei*. In the following decade the *Sansei* wrestled with issues of their identity as Japanese Americans. The 1970s were wrought with the drive to uncover a buried past.

Within the life of the United Church of Christ new questions were raised. By 1973 two laywomen from Sycamore United Church of Christ, Julia Estrella and Mary Tomita, had begun the groundwork for gathering and organizing leaders of other Pacific Island and Asian American UCC churches. The women encouraged dialogue with denominational leaders. The Pacific and Asian American Ministries of the United Church of Christ (PAAM) was formed in 1974, and in the years since then the three generations of Japanese Americans women and men, youth and adults, clergy and laity have been elected to serve on conference and national committees. By 1983 two Japanese Americans were conference ministers and two, staff members of UCC instrumentalities.

Japanese American UCC churches played an important role in raising the consciousness of contemporary Americans about the injustice done to Japanese American citizens during World War II. After President Jimmy Carter signed Public Law 96 317, creating a Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act, the Board of Missions of Sycamore United Church of Christ, El Cerrito, California, identified redress/reparations as one of its major emphases for 1980. Motivated by theological and biblical reflections on justice, wrongdoing, and repentance, the Board sought to educate clergy and laity within the United Church of Christ on the work of the

Commission. Its mandate was to hear from those affected by Executive Order 9066. the 1942 Presidential proclamation that authorized the incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans. The Commission was charged with determining whether wartime imprisonment of civilians was just and, if not, what Congress should do to compensate those who were incarcerated.

On January 6, 1981, a resolution was adopted by the Church Council of Sycamore Church. The resolution included support for monetary compensation as well as the concern for the education of the community and church persons with regard to redress/reparations. By May 16, 1981, the resolution was presented to and adopted by the Northern California Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Two months later the resolution was presented to delegates at the Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, in Rochester, New York. After some discussion the resolution strengthened by action taken in a working committee was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

As a result of the General Synod action the United Church of Christ began to move forward in its efforts to provide testimony at scheduled public hearings of the Commission. In subsequent hearings Miya Okawara, Chairperson of the Board of Missions at Sycamore Congregational Church, testified in San Francisco; Yvonne Delk, Executive Director of the Office for Church in Society, and Garry Oniki, Associate Executive Director of the Community Renewal Society of Chicago, testified in Chicago; and Howard Spragg, Executive Vice President of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, testified in New York.

In its report, *Personal Justice Denied*, released in June 1983, the Commission recognized the evacuation/incarceration as a "grave injustice" and conceded that there was "no military justification for the exclusion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast." Throughout the duration of the Commission's work the United Church of Christ, through its various agencies and instrumentalities, was clear in its support for redress! reparations.

Sho-Chiku-Bai

Sho-Chiku-Bai is a phrase often used by children and adults in the Japanese community. *Sho* is the Japanese word for pine; *chiku*, the word for bamboo; and *bai*, the word for plum blossom.

The *Issei*, like the pine, demonstrated their remarkable strength during the early years of migration and settlement. Prevented from becoming American citizens and unable legally to own land, the *issei* survived a history steeped in rejection, antagonism, and racism.

The *Nisei*, like the bamboo, showed their amazing durability. Uprooted and with their lives disrupted, the *nisei* survived the tragic years of incarceration during World War II in ten concentration camps scattered throughout the United States.

The *Sansei*, like the plum blossom, signal the beginning of something new. Heirs to the struggle of the *Issei* and *Nisei*, the *Sansei* have brought new strength and vitality to the life of the community.

The pine symbolizes strength; the bamboo, durability; and the plum blossom, newness. In one sense to speak of *sho-chiku-bai* is to speak of the three generations that make up the Japanese American presence within the United Church of Christ.

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Notes

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29. Koga, *op. cit.*, p. 299.