

Chapter 9

THE CALVIN SYNOD: HUNGARIANS IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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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 Hapsburg 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 three 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 abolishment 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 abolishment 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 wolle 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. 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 view points, 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.

Notes:

1. The three hymnals are *The Hymnal*, *The Pilgrim Hymnal*, and *The Hymnal of the United Church of Christ*.
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—98.
5. Kosa, op. cit., p. 512.
6. Alexander Daroczy, ed., *Bethlen Almanac* (Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, 1958), pp. 252—53.
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. *Emlekkönyv 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.

- States, 1929.
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.