

97-GS-41 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod receives the report of the action taken at the 1997 meeting of the Calvin Synod Conference.

REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN AT THE 1997 MEETING OF THE CALVIN SYNOD CONFERENCE

WE MEMBERS AND OFFICERS OF CALVIN SYNOD, both laity and ministers, would join with our kindred of the United Church of Christ in these days of trial and rejection, disorientation and aimlessness, in the search for contemporary ways of witnessing faithfully to our constituent congregations and the world around us;

WHEREAS, our immigrant Hungarian Reformed ancestors turned to the former German Reformed Church and its congregations for pastoral services, in 1891, and were graciously received as brothers and sisters in the Reformed faith, who also accepted the Holy Bible and the Heidelberg Catechism as their own confession;

WHEREAS, the German Reformed Church conscientiously searched for Hungarian Reformed pastors to take care of this growing flock, and helped them to organize Hungarian Reformed congregations with their spiritual and financial assistance;

WHEREAS, the concerned denomination gave encouragement to the organization of a Hungarian Reformed Classis, effectuated in 1896;

WHEREAS, the German Reformed Church changed its name to The Reformed Church in the United States, enabling it to embrace members coming to it from the different backgrounds;

WHEREAS, The Reformed Church in the United States established chairs in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, at Franklin and Marshall College and The Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church, to raise pastors for the Hungarian constituency;

WHEREAS, the denomination undertook the publication of the Reformatusok Lapja, our Hungarian church paper established in 1900;

WHEREAS, the denomination negotiated the Tiffin Agreement with our Mother Reformed Church in Hungary, in 1921, to receive the Hungarian Reformed churches into its own fold;

WHEREAS, The Reformed Church in the United States formed a new denomination by union with The Evangelical Synod of North America, and retained the Heidelberg Catechism as a doctrinal standard alongside the Augsburg Confession;

WHEREAS, The Evangelical and Reformed Church authorized the organization of four Classes comprising the Magyar Synod out of the Hungarian Reformed congregations;

WHEREAS, forty years ago, in 1957, The Evangelical and Reformed Church merged with The Congregational Christian Churches in Cleveland, Ohio, according to a Basis of Union which declared that the new Constitution would assure that Synods are to retain their present status until they are united by their own action and when mutually agreeable, and without abridgment of the rights of churches which participate;

WHEREAS, The Magyar Synod, now known as Calvin Synod, was the only one of the Synods that voted against the merger, but loyally conformed to the good order of the previous denomination and entered the new one in good faith;

WHEREAS, The United Church of Christ in its Constitution has declared its dependence upon the word of God in the Scriptures, and that it professes the same historic faith of Christendom expressed in the ancient creeds and the confessions of the Reformation; and Calvin Synod has defined in its Constitution our reaffirmation of the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession as the standards of our faith;

WHEREAS, we have remained a fully constituted Synod, in historic continuity for over a century, prior to the mergers which brought into being The Evangelical and Reformed Church and The United Church of Christ, with which we are now affiliated as a self-governing community;

WHEREAS, as constituent members and a duly constituted Synod in the United Church of Christ, it is our right, privilege and Christian duty to witness first of all to our coworkers in this fellowship; and

WHEREAS, in previous General Synod Meetings and at other times we have pointed out the progressive deviation and distancing of our denomination from biblical standards and these confessions so cherished and defended by our pious predecessors;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that in defense of the faith of the apostolic Church and the Reformers, of Ulrich Zwingli and Martin Luther, of John Calvin and the Hungarian Reformed Galley Slaves, of those Kings, Princes and National Protectors, of our immigrant ancestors and our faithful members, we raise our voices anew; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we members and officers of Calvin Synod do hereby call upon the faithful Christians in The United Church of Christ to adhere to the authority of the Holy Bible and the basic creeds and confessions of our faith, that we are witnesses to our holy churches, our beloved nation and to our Lord's entire creation, as true disciples of the Son of God; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Calvin Synod invites and urges all other members, churches, associations and conferences, delegates and officers, to join in this petition and resolution to the General Synod of The United Church of Christ.