

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE ROAD TO UNION

Four denominations entered a series of mergers in the Twentieth Century that in 1957 became the United Church of Christ.

- The National Council of Congregational Churches and the General Convention of Christian Churches united in 1931 to form the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches.
- The Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America united in 1934 to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church.
- The General Council of Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church in 1957 became the United Church of Christ.

\ None of these unions were accomplished in a day – or even in a year. Each union was preceded by lengthy discussions, negotiations, and years following the union were spent writing constitutions and consolidating agencies. The process of union began for Congregational Christians in 1923, in 1928 for the Evangelical and Reformed, and continued until the last geographic conference of the United Church of Christ was organized in 1966.

A study of American denominations published in 1934, ranked the Reformed Church, Congregational Christian Churches, and Evangelical Synod, one, two, and four, respectively, in attitudes favorable to church union. Church leaders of all denominations attributed the intensified interest in Christian unity to World War I. Certainly they believed in unity and worked for unity before the war; after the war they sensed the urgency of unity. After daily encounters with matters of life and death in the trenches, issues dividing Christians appeared so trivial as to be offensive. Chaplains ministered to the needs of soldiers without thought of denomination – or religion. Church leaders viewed the divisions of the church as a cause of the church's impotence in preventing war.

Organic union was only one strategy of the ecumenical movement, which intensified in the Twentieth Century on every level from the rural neighborhood to

the global community. In 1947, 239 Union Churches (Lutheran and Reformed)¹ remained. By 1946 Congregational Christians counted at least 239 Federated Churches,² 113 congregations in “yoked fields,”³ and 82 congregations in Larger Parishes.⁴

The denominations that became the United Church of Christ all participated in the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910 (See *LTH* 6:12,52), and were inspired by their participation in the three faces of developing global catholicity: “Life and Work” meetings in Stockholm (1925) and Oxford (1937), “Faith and Order” meetings at Lausanne, Switzerland (1927)⁵ and Edinburgh (1937), and International Missionary Council meetings at Jerusalem (1928) and Madras (1938) (See *LTH* 6:15,35,58,59,86). When “Faith and Order” and “Life and Work” came together as the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948, the Evangelical and Reformed and Congregational Christian churches were again both present (*LTH* 6:87,88).

PART A:
CONGREGATIONALISTS,
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS, AND CHRISTIANS

Evangelical Protestants⁶

The UCC’s road to union began with events within the Evangelical Protestant Church of North America. This liberal German-speaking denomination founded in 1912 (See *LTH* 6:16), consisted of twenty-three congregations clustered around Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, with one congregation in Saint Louis. Too small to provide its congregations any significant services, the Evangelical

¹For earlier information on Union Churches see Chapter 13, Part B, Lutheran-Reformed.

²This is the number of congregations that bore the name “Federated” in the 1946 *Yearbook*. Some of the congregations named “Union” and “Community” could also have been federated. For earlier information on Federated Churches see Chapter 13, Part B, Local Cooperation and Federation.

³ A pastoral charge in which congregations of two or more denominations shared a pastor.

⁴ In a Larger Parish several congregations, often of different denominations, shared ministerial staff with a common Parish Council and Treasury.

⁵The Evangelical Synod was not represented at Lausanne. Otherwise, all groups going into the UCC participated in these conferences.

⁶For earlier information on Evangelical Protestants see Chapter 9, Part C, Evangelical Protestants.

Protestant Church began to search for a larger denomination with which to affiliate. On 25 October 1925, the Evangelical Protestant Church joined the National Council of Congregational Churches.

Not a union of equals, the Evangelical Protestants joined the larger Congregational Church. The smaller group continued as a separate non-geographic conference for several years, with perfect freedom to follow its own customs. The Congregational Council remained unchanged.

Christians and Congregationalists

On 15 December 1923 the Congregational Commission on Inter-Church Relations received word from Christian leaders that the Christians were ready to discuss “federation if not merger.” The following March, Frank Coffin, President of the Christian Convention, wrote to the Moderator of the Congregational Council, formally requesting discussion of church union.

A courtship – as pastors and members of both denominations became better acquainted – paralleled the formal negotiations. The joint Congregational and Christian committee in April, 1928, urged their two denominations to vote to proceed on the preparation of a Plan of Union, then presented a Plan of Union (*LTH* 6:39) to the denominations on 22 April 1929. The two denominations endorsed the Plan at their national meetings in 1929. On 27 June 1931 at Seattle, Washington, each unanimously approved a Constitution for the new General Council of Congregational and Christian Churches (CC). They met together as a united church on the same day, adopted the Constitution, then spontaneously joined in singing “Blest be the tie that binds.”

The Congregational Christian union did not require local congregations to change their names, organization or doctrine – neither did they vote on the union. The Plan encouraged the regional bodies to unite, but did not require it, and granted the existing Conferences and Conventions of both denominations representation in the new General Council. The autonomous Congregational mission boards absorbed the work of the much smaller Christian non-autonomous mission boards. The greatest controversy centered around ministers’ pensions (Congregationalists had them, Christians didn’t). Clergy of the two denominations did not reach parity in pensions until seven years after the union.

Congregationalists and Christians united because they believed in Christian unity. The command of Christ was more compelling than any differences in tradition or culture. Both denominations practiced congregational

polity; neither used creeds as tests of faith (See *LTH* 6:19,37,38). The principal opposition came from Christians who feared being “swallowed up” and Congregationalists who declared the denominations were “not homogeneous.”

The two groups were not homogeneous. Congregationalists had over four times as many churches and almost nine times as many members as Christians. On average, Congregationalists were more affluent, urban, better educated, and less emotionally expressive in worship than Christians. Most Christian pastors were part-time, not seminary-educated, and did not fit well into the Congregational system. The “not homogeneous” complaint did not go away. As late as 1933 the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM defended the union, writing, “Have we not taught opposition to race discrimination, while at the same time this attitude toward the merger smacks of class discrimination?”

Fifty years after the Congregational Christian union, only 36% of the Christian Churches remained in the United Church of Christ.⁷ Many small rural congregations experienced a natural death, while others withdrew, feeling not fully accepted by the dominant group.

PART B: THE EVANGELICAL & REFORMED CHURCH

A decade after the “Great War,” the Evangelical Synod and the Reformed Church both searched for partners in establishing a larger denomination and a fuller expression of Christian unity. Helmut Richard Niebuhr chaired the Evangelical Synod’s Commission on Closer Relations with Other Church Bodies (See *LTH* 6:61-64); George W. Richards chaired the Reformed Church’s Commission on Closer Relations and Church Union.

The Reformed Church began union negotiations in 1926 with the Evangelical Church⁸ and the United Brethren in Christ. The Evangelical Church soon withdrew. The Evangelical Synod, having concluded that union with other Lutheran groups could not be attained (*LTH* 6:65,66), joined discussions in 1928. The joint commission prepared a Plan of Union and presented it to the denominations in 1929 (*LTH* 6:67). All three denominations gave initial approval

⁷Richard H. Taylor, “The Congregational Christian Union at Fifty Years: An Assessment” *Bulletin of the Congregational Library* 32:3 (Spr/Sum 1981):4-13.

⁸An ethnically German Church with Methodist piety and polity, the Evangelical Church later joined with the United Brethren in Christ to form the Evangelical United Brethren.

and referred it to their regional bodies. The Evangelical Synod enthusiastically supported the Plan. Opposition within the United Brethren caused them to withdraw. Within the Reformed Church some classes urged one more effort to unite with the Presbyterians. As a result, when the Reformed and Evangelical commissions met in Pittsburgh in December 1930, the Reformed Church discontinued negotiations. By June 1931, Reformed discussions with the Presbyterian Church had collapsed.

On 12 February 1932, the Reformed and Evangelical commissions met again in Pittsburgh. They took the Plan of Union developed with the United Brethren, and simplified it by removing passages that had been included to address United Brethren concerns. The Reformed General Synod approved this brief Plan of Union (*LTH* 6:68) of thirteen articles in June 1932 and referred it to the classes. The Evangelical Synod districts also approved it and then the General Conference in October, 1933.

On 26 June 1934, the General Synod and General Conference met in Cleveland separately to ratify the Plan of Union (*LTH* 6:53). At 7:00 P. M. they marched two by two, Evangelical and Reformed, into Zion Evangelical Church. After the declaration that the union was in effect, delegates joined in singing “Now Thank We All Our God,” in the Lord’s Prayer, a doxology, and a benediction. At 8:00 P. M. the new Evangelical and Reformed Church (E&R) began its existence with the celebration of communion (*LTH* 6:69).

Church leaders often repeated the mantra, “A church may make a constitution, but a constitution does not make a church.” The church entered union with only a brief Plan of Union and no constitution as an intentional act of faith. In this way they declared spiritual union in Christ took precedence over the merger of organizations. However, a church still does need a constitution. The General Synod of the new church in 1936 approved a Constitution and Bylaws, referred them to the classes and districts, received a favorable response in 1938, and the constitution went into effect in 1940. Other committees prepared a *Hymnal* and *Book of Worship*, approved by General Synod in 1938 and 1942 respectively.

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical and Reformed Church included the following:

- *Heidelberg Catechism*, *Luther’s Catechism*, and *Augsburg Confession* declared the doctrinal standards of the church.
- local church to be governed by a Consistory or Church Council

composed of Elders and Deacons who may be ordained or consecrated.

- Pastors to be elected by congregation from candidates approved by the Synod Placement Committee.
- Property of churches withdrawing from the denomination to revert to the denomination.
- a full constellation of boards, commissions and auxiliary organizations.
- election of seminary faculty to be confirmed by General Synod.

The Evangelical and Reformed union received widespread support throughout both denominations. Strongest opposition came from Reformed people of German-Russian origin, who believed that by accepting doctrinal standards other than the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the E&R Church had ceased to be a Reformed church. The Eureka Classis, in South and North Dakota, in 1938 declared itself to be the true Reformed Church in the United States, from which the rest of the denomination had withdrawn. They disturbed the new E&R Church with law suits until a judgment in 1947 brought their claims to an end.

This “first round” of church unions, creating the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church set precedents that would shape expectations as the two groups approached the formation of the United Church of Christ. Despite numerous similarities, differences led to misunderstanding and controversy. Similarities in the CC and E&R unions included:

- Advocates of both unions presented both spiritual and pragmatic arguments for union.
- Both identified their union as part of the global ecumenical movement.
- Both promised local congregations they would not have to change.
- Both considered a time of “courtship” – getting to know each other – as essential.

Differences included:

- The CC union was a union of the national representative bodies only – the National Council and General Convention – while the E&R union was a union of the whole church.
- The CC union was celebrated when a constitution was adopted; the E&R union was celebrated when a Plan of Union was adopted without a constitution.

PART C:
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Rocky Road to Cleveland

On 26 January 1937, Truman B. Douglass, pastor of Pilgrim Congregational Church in Saint Louis, invited Samuel Press, President of Eden Seminary, to join a group of ministers studying their faith (*LTH* 6:70). Douglass described himself as one of those “who have been wandering in a vague liberalism and have discovered the sterility of that approach.” For about eight months this group of Congregational ministers, on a journey from “vague liberalism” to neo-orthodoxy, encountered Evangelical theologians, on a journey from an ethnic ghetto to the American mainstream. Sensing a strong unity of mind and heart, they were confident their recently merged denominations could unite with each other.

Press, a member of the E&R Commission on Closer Relations with Other Churches, met informally with Douglas Horton, minister and secretary of the CC General Council. Horton sent an official overture to George Richards, President of the E&R Church. Appropriate commissions of the two denominations entered discussions. In 1942 General Synod (E&R) and General Council (CC) officially endorsed union negotiations. A joint committee prepared a *Basis of Union*, received feedback from congregations and church agencies, and made revisions. Meanwhile, “getting acquainted” and mutual edification activities took place (*LTH* 6:72,73,75,76,78).

The joint committee agreed to the eighth – and they hoped last – edition of the *Basis of Union* (*LTH* 6:77) on 22 January 1947, and submitted it to the denominations. The committee asked the E&R General Synod to vote on it in 1947. If approved by two-thirds vote it would be sent to the district synods. If approved by two-thirds of them it would be declared adopted. This was E&R constitutional procedure. The CC churches did not have a definite procedure. The Congregational Christian union was a union of the national representative bodies of the two denominations, enacted by vote of those national bodies. This *Basis of Union* proposed a union of the whole church. The committee recommended the CC General Council vote approval of the *Basis of Union* if 75% of the conferences, associations, churches voting and members voting approved. They anticipated a uniting General Synod in 1948.

Opponents of union on the Congregational side soon derailed these plans. They were obsessed with a fear that the local congregations would lose their

autonomy. Pro-union Congregational leaders tried to appease critics, risking alienation of the E&R community. Opposition was vigorous, vocal and vindictive. Douglas Horton, minister and secretary of the CC churches, ardent advocate of union, trying to avoid schism in Congregationalism, appeared to promise too much to too many different people. He personally became the lightning rod for criticism.

Malcolm K. Burton, pastor of Second Congregational Church in New London, Connecticut, led the opposition, publishing over 350 anti-union tracts (See *LTH* 6:80-83). In addition to consistently misrepresenting the *Basis of Union* as a threat to local church autonomy, Burton criticized the union on these grounds:

- Appeals for church union on the basis of Jesus' prayer for unity were a mere "sentimental plea."
- The union would bring together advocates of neo-orthodoxy, which was "to go back to the child's play of 'other-worldliness.'"
- The union would bring together those who wanted the church to speak more authoritatively on social issues.
- The new church would impose more consistent ministerial standards, eliminating ordination by vicinage council, such as Burton received.

Reinhold Niebuhr *had* moved the American church to the right theologically and to the left politically. Uncomfortable with both of these trends, Burton found in the merger process the opportunity to resist.

In July 1947 the E&R General Synod adopted the *Basis of Union* by a vote of 281-23 and referred it to the synods.

In November 1947, 190 CC clergy and lay people opposed to the union met at Evanston, Illinois. They called for a Constitution before churches voted, urged the churches to postpone action or vote "no," advocated a federation instead of organic union, and organized to oppose union (*LTH* 6:79). The Executive Council of the CC churches issued a brief statement of "Interpretations" (*LTH* 6:84) of the *Basis of Union*. According to the *Interpretations*, the *Basis of Union*, "will define and regulate as regards the General Synod but describe the free and voluntary relationships which the churches, associations, and conferences shall sustain with the General Synod and with each other."⁹ This satisfied many Congregational critics, but it had not been discussed with E&R leaders.

⁹*LTH* 6: p. 661.

When the General Council of the CC Churches met in June, 1948, the *Basis of Union* had been approved by 94% of the Conferences, 80% of the Associations, 65.5% of the churches voting, and 63.3% of the members voting. The General Council decided to resubmit the *Basis of Union with Interpretations* to the churches voting “no” or not voting, in hopes of getting up to 75%. However they did not consider the 75% mark binding, voting,

In the event of the failure to secure the recommended 75 per cent before January 1, 1949, the General Council, at a special meeting, shall determine whether the percentage secured is sufficient to warrant the consummation of the union.¹⁰

These actions created a problem. If the E&R Synods approved the *Basis of Union*, and the CC churches approved the *Basis of Union with Interpretations*, they would be entering the union on the basis of two different documents. This couldn't work. The E&R Church would have to re-vote, on the enlarged document.

The General Council of the CC church convened in Cleveland on 4 February 1949 and received a report that 72.8% of the churches voting approved of the union. The General Council voted 757-172 to accept this as satisfactory support and to proceed with union. The E&R General Synod met in special session in Cleveland 20-21 April, and approved the *Basis of Union with Interpretations*, 249-41. That Spring 33 of the 34 synods gave their approval of the expanded document.

With consummation of the union only 14 months away, opponents turned to the courts. On 19 April 1949 Cadman Memorial Congregational Church in Brooklyn filed suit in the state of New York against Helen Kenyon, in her capacity as moderator of the General Council of CC churches. At issue was Congregational polity. Plaintiffs complained that the General Council had no authority to make a decision for union on behalf of local churches. On 26 January, 1950, the lower court judge, in *Cadman v. Kenyon*, ruled in favor of Cadman and placed a permanent injunction against any collaboration or joint activity between the two denominations. The General Council appealed.

Abruptly, the train was stopped just before it arrived at the station. For how long? What would be the final outcome? No one knew. The task facing Congregational proponents and opponents of union was to define Congregational

¹⁰*Minutes of the General Conference*, 1948:51.

polity – on this would rest the final decision of the court.

Douglas Horton conducted historical research and delivered lectures to the Congregational assembly in England, published as *Congregationalism: A Study in Church Polity*.¹¹ Horton argued that each meeting of an association, conference or general council was a temporary congregation, responsible to follow Christ to the best of its ability at that time. Therefore each regional and national body and agency was autonomous and free to act.

On 5 May 1952 the appellate division of the superior court of New York reversed the decision of the lower court. The injunction against cooperation remained in effect while that decision was appealed. On 3 December 1953 New York's highest court ruled in favor of the General Council and terminated the injunction (*LTH* 6:91).

After four years of estrangement, could the CC and E&R churches pick up where they left off? Had Horton's definition of Congregationalism, and continued agitation on the CC side for a constitution before union, moved the churches further apart? The Executive Committees of the two denominations met together in October 1954. Through honest conversation and prayer participants sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit inspiring them to complete the union on the foundation of the *Basis of Union with Interpretations*. Each denomination at its 1956 national meeting voted to proceed to union on the basis of actions taken before the injunction. On 25-27 June 1957 the two denominations met in Cleveland and formally became one (*LTH* 6:92-94).

Defining the New Denomination

Now that the two had become one, the work of writing a constitution began. Two other documents, adopted before the constitution, more significantly shaped the identity of the new denomination: a statement of faith and a statement of social policy.

Many participants looked to 8 July 1959 as the formative moment of the United Church of Christ. At that time the UCC General Synod unanimously adopted a Statement of Faith, and rose spontaneously to sing a doxology and to recite the new Statement. All members of the Commission to Prepare a Statement of Faith contributed to discussions, but Roger Shinn, successor to Reinhold Niebuhr on the faculty of Union Seminary in New York, was the principal

¹¹Douglas Horton, *Congregationalism: A Study in Church Polity* (London: Independent Press, Ltd., 1952).

author. Designed for use in worship as a testimony to faith, the new Statement expressed the neo-orthodox emphasis on God's initiative, and German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer's commitment to discipleship.

That same day, 8 July 1959, before acting on the Statement of Faith, General Synod adopted a *Call to Christian Action in Society*. The social action departments of the two denominations, united immediately after the Cleveland synod meeting, prepared this document. The *Call* encouraged the rule of law in international relations, justice for labor and farmers, and an end to segregation, among other issues. Both denominations had endorsed more detailed and more controversial social creeds in the past. The *Call* was significant because it placed the church on the side of social justice from its inception.

The 1959 General Synod challenged the Commission to Prepare a Constitution to speed up its process: to prepare the draft of a constitution for study by the churches by 1 December 1959, to receive comments, make revisions, and present the constitution to a special session of General Synod¹² in the summer of 1960. Next the constitution would be sent to the CC congregations and E&R synods for action, in order to be declared in force by General Synod in 1961. The content of the constitution proved less controversial than the earlier decision to not write it until after the union. Combining the mission agencies and defining their accountability to the churches were the most difficult tasks of the committee writing the constitution. The special session of Synod in 1960 endorsed the constitution unanimously. All parties interpreted the vote on the constitution in CC churches as a vote on joining the UCC. When General Synod met in 1961, it received a report that CC congregations voted for the constitution 3547-342 (91.2%) and E&R synods voted "yes" 32-1.

Creating a United Church

Step by step the many pieces of the two denominations needed to be brought together. *United Church Herald*, began publication 9 October 1958. Christian educators announced a new United Church Curriculum in October 1959. The women's organizations and men's organizations each came together on a national level in 1959. The constitution brought together the mission boards in 1961. Youth Fellowship and Pilgrim Fellowship united in 1962.

General Synod in 1959 adopted a plan to integrate financial structures of

¹²General Synod, the national meeting of the UCC, met every two years on odd-numbered years.

the church called “Our Christian World Mission” (OCWM).¹³ Under this plan, each congregation sent its mission giving to the Conference, which retained a percentage for its work, and sent the remainder to the national church. Funds received by the national church were distributed to the various boards and agencies on a percentage basis according to a budget adopted by General Synod.

Two small formerly German-speaking seminaries united in 1960. A special commission recommended that Mission House (E&R) of Wisconsin and Yankton (CC) of South Dakota unite and locate in the Pacific Northwest – an area of the country without a major seminary. However the schools chose to locate closer to their historic constituencies and opened United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in September 1962.

A Committee on Realignment, better known as the “Committee of Nine,” began in 1958 the process of uniting synods and conferences. The committee proposed guidelines for the formation of new conferences:

1. State borders were logical for realignment of conference borders.
2. Conferences should be large enough to support adequate staff (at least 150 congregations or 30,000 members).
3. Boundaries should be drawn to make conferences inclusive of racial, ethnic and national groups.
4. Wherever possible there should be minimum of discontinuity to existing structures, programs and services.

The committee encountered resistance to some of these norms. Many churches had strong emotional ties to church sponsored institutions, and did not want to be separated from them. For example, Christians in Eastern Virginia wanted to keep their strong ties to Elon Home in North Carolina. Smaller states, like Rhode Island, did not want to be absorbed into larger entities to meet minimum size requirements. Southern whites asked for more time to work out racial integration. The principle of a “minimum of discontinuity” often led to smaller groups in each area being absorbed into the dominant group’s organization – not exactly a union of equals. Sometimes powerful personalities got in the way.

Consolidation of regional bodies began in 1962; most UCC Conferences were organized in 1963, and on 1 January 1966, with the formation of Southern Conference, the process was completed.

¹³later called Our Church’s Wider Mission.

Calvin Synod¹⁴

Believing in “integration,” the new united church called for abolition of all racial and ethnic regional bodies. As a result, Magyar Synod in 1961 voted against the UCC Constitution, and began negotiating with the Presbyterians. The Americanization of Magyar churches had been postponed by the arrival of two new waves of immigrants from Hungary – displaced persons after World War II, and refugees after the failed Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Magyar Synod continued to work for union with other Magyar Reformed groups in America, and sustained ties with the church in Hungary, and refugee groups in Latin America and Australia. Magyar Synod leaders appealed to the denomination to honor the Tiffin Agreement. In 1963 General Synod reversed denominational policy, allowing Magyar churches to continue as a non-geographic synod. Magyar Synod reorganized as Calvin Synod in 1964, and began calling its executive officer “bishop” in 1971.

Dissident Groups

The main group of opponents to formation of the United Church of Christ organized the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) in 1955. By 2000 this non-creedal association of independent churches counted 426 congregations with about 70,000 members.

Congregationalists with more conservative convictions, believing in a regenerate membership, in 1948 organized the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC). H. K. Ockenga’s Park Street Church in Boston, and Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena, California, took the lead in organizing this group. It also attracted congregations from other traditions and a few E&R background churches. By 2000 it counted about 250 congregations and 41,000 members.

The Reformed Church in the United States (Eureka Classis), which rejected union with the Evangelical Synod, became less ethnic and more conservative over the years. In 2000 it counted 40 congregations and over 3,000 members.

Other Interested Groups

Because of the commitment to Christian unity of the United Church of Christ, a few Community churches and Baptist churches joined at this time.

¹⁴For earlier material on Magyar Reformed Churches see Chapter 2, Part A, Reformation in Hungary, and Chapter 15, Part D.

Schwenkfelders¹⁵ also came into a closer relationship with the United Church of Christ. The Schwenkfelders immigrated to America in 1734, settling in southeastern Pennsylvania. In 1895 they voted to resume the practice of baptism (of adults by sprinkling) and Communion. In 1909 they incorporated as a denomination of five congregations. Early in the Twentieth Century they began to call educated pastors instead of selecting them by lot. Schwenkfelders interested in the ministry attended Congregational colleges and seminaries, Schwenkfelders supported missions through Congregational and Reformed agencies, and occasionally used the services of a neighboring Reformed pastor. Beginning in 1959, three of the five Schwenkfelder congregations affiliated with the United Church of Christ, while maintaining their fellowship in the Schwenkfelder Church.

What Union Meant to the Churches

The formation of the UCC was for some congregations a time of joy and celebration, for others a distant event hardly noticed, and for still others an unpleasant conflict. Many congregations, mostly from the E&R side, affirmed a new creation by changing their names, while others remained unchanged, affirming continuity with the past. E&R congregations wrote bylaws to replace what had previously been stipulated in the denomination's constitution. Many clergy took the opportunity to serve churches from the "other side." The impact of the union came gradually to most congregations, through United Church Curriculum, United Church worship resources, a new "apportionment" system, a new placement system, and new clergy who identified with the new denomination.

¹⁵For earlier information on the Schwenkfelders see Chapter 2, Part A, The Radical Reformation and Schwenkfeld.