

The Rev. Joseph H. Stein, Chairman, presented a Progress Report of the Committee on Realignment of Associations, Conferences and Synods (See Appendix 10) and moved that the report be received and referred to the Executive Council. The Rev. Ben M. Herbster presented a substitute motion whereupon Mr. Stein withdrew the original motion.

59-GS-15 VOTED: To adopt the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the General Synod receive with appreciation and record in the minutes of this meeting the Progress Report of the Committee on Realignment of Associations, Conferences and Synods, and refer the same for information to synods, associations and conferences together with their members as an indication of the spirit and approach of this committee to its responsibility.

The Chair recognized Co-President Hoskins, who announced that the Rev. Everett C. Parker, Director of the Office of Communication, was unable to attend the General Synod because of illness. Mr. Hoskins called on Co-President Wagner, who suggested that the General Synod instruct its Co-Secretaries to communicate to Mr. Parker the sense of very real loss in the fact of his absence and its deep appreciation of his competence and devotion in the service of both this General Synod and the United Church of Christ.

59-GS-16 VOTED: To adopt the proposal that the Co-Secretaries communicate the Synod's good wishes to Mr. Parker.

Co-Moderator Kapitzky called for the Report of the Committee on Methods of Solicitation, Collection and Disbursement of Missionary, Benevolent and Administrative Funds. The Rev. William F. Frazier, Chairman, presented the report. (See Appendix 9)

59-GS-17 VOTED: To receive the report.

Mr. Frazier then proceeded to submit a series of recommendations to implement the adoption of the report.

59-GS-18 VOTED: To adopt the following recommendations:

That the General Synod constitute a Long Range Planning Committee in accordance with the provisions of the report of the Committee on Methods of Solicitation as contained in Section 1-C and that the Nominating Committee be requested to present nominations for members thereof as provided in Section 1-C-3.

That at such time and in such manner as the Executive Council deems advisable, the Executive Council shall create a Central Treasury and appoint a Treasurer to receive and disburse benevolence funds in accordance with the provisions of Section II-A.

That the General Synod adopt the calendar year as its fiscal year, and request the chief executive officer(s) of the United Church to convey to the Conferences and instrumentalities of the United Church the recom-

“REPORT OF PROGRESS” OF THE COMMITTEE OF NINE

To the General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

The charter for the existence and assignment of the Committee of Nine to Study Realignment is found in a resolution adopted on October 11, 1957, by the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ. The resolution in part reads as follows:

“BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Council authorize and establish appointment of a Committee of Nine to Study Realignment, this committee to include two Synod Presidents, two Conference Superintendents, two pastors, and three lay members, with the proviso that one from each of the two latter categories shall be chosen from the membership of the Commission to Draft a Constitution; and the committee be encouraged to have consultants as need and interest indicate, reporting its progress from time to time to the Executive Council.”

Members of the Committee of Nine

- Rev. Everett A. Babcock
- Mrs. Edgar A. Bark
- Mrs. E. Roy Corman (alternate for Mrs. Guy A. Benchoff who has given up her duties on the Committee temporarily because of illness)
- Prof. Herman H. Long
- Rev. Ned Burr McKenney
- Rev. William L. Rest
- Rev. Charles D. Rodenberger, acting secretary
- Rev. Paul J. Schlueter
- Rev. Joseph H. Stein, chairman

Ex Officio

- Rev. Fred Hoskins
- Rev. James E. Wagner

There have been four meetings of the Committee:

June 13, 1958	Cleveland, Ohio
Oct. 10-11, 1958	Cleveland, Ohio
Dec. 18-19, 1958	Cleveland, Ohio
April 6, 1959	Cleveland, Ohio

Among the consultants who have met with the Committee in an advisory capacity are the following:

- Rev. Shirley E. Greene, Executive Secretary, Town and Country Commission (E & R)
- Rev. Yoshio Fukuyama, Executive Secretary for Field Research, Division of Church Extension and Evangelism (CC)
- Rev. John H. Shope, Executive Secretary for City Church and Urban Strategy (E & R)

First Meeting—June 13, 1958

The Committee heard a statement by Dr. Wagner concerning the history, tradition, and present status of the Magyar Synod of the E & R Church. Dr. Hoskins gave pertinent information concerning the German Conference of the Congregational Christian Churches and concerning the Convention of the South (CC). In the comprehensive discussion which ensued, the following observations and suggestions were made:

1. That the Committee study be confined presently to Conferences and Synods.
2. That the present boundaries of Conferences and Synods be studied; that attention be given to number of churches and communicant members in each.
3. That the philosophy behind Conferences and Synods regarding administration and programs be studied.
4. That qualifying factors—cultural, ecclesiastical, and topographical—be taken into consideration.
5. That maps be prepared with facts about existing Conferences and Synods, to include the number of associations, churches, and church members.

Second Meeting—October 10-11, 1958

Following the second meeting, the development of Committee thinking was reflected in a letter sent to all Synod Presidents and Conference Superintendents, the substance of which is set forth in the following paragraphs:

First, the Committee of Nine is undertaking its responsibilities bearing in mind that the Basis of Union with the Interpretations provides:

“The General Synod shall promote the reorganization of Conferences, Associations, and Synods into Conferences and Associations which shall be constituted on a territorial basis and enjoy a status similar to that of the former Conferences, Associations, and Synods. This reorganization shall be effected by the Conferences, Associations, and Synods concerned, with the counsel and confirmation of the General Synod.” (Article IV, Section E.)

“It is expected that the Conferences and Synods will take the first steps necessary to this reorganization as soon as practicable after the consummation of the union, forming non-competitive units without overlapping boundaries capable of continuing all the work carried on by the present Conferences and Synods, together with such other work as may prove to be desirable. The formation of Associations, as deemed advisable, would follow.” (Footnote 5.)

Second, the Committee of Nine is an instrument by which the General Synod is preparing to discharge its responsibilities in implementing the above quoted Article IV, Section E.

Third, the Committee of Nine understands that it is expected that Conferences and Synods will take the first steps necessary to reorganization and realignment as anticipated in Article IV, Section E (including Footnote 5) and that it is now timely for Synod Presidents and Conference Superintendents to consult, in a preliminary way, upon the factors which

will be involved in reorganization and realignment in particular situations.

Fourth, inasmuch as the Basis of Union with the Interpretations provides that, "This reorganization shall be effected by the Conferences, Associations, and Synods concerned with the counsel and confirmation of the General Synod," it is taken for granted that Conferences and Synods presently will keep their proposals tentative and fluid, and that they will wish to consult with the Committee of Nine in order to take advantage of such insights as it may be able to achieve.

Fifth, the Committee of Nine does not propose to recommend a master plan of reorganization and realignment; rather it is making a careful study of theological, historical, sociological, ecclesiastical, and missionary considerations which should be held in mind at any point where reorganization and realignment are being contemplated.

Sixth, the Committee of Nine anticipates numerous consultations with groups and persons who have special interest and knowledge relevant to the matters of reorganization and realignment. The Committee has definite plans in mind for joint consultations with Synod and Conference leaders, and precise proposals will be made shortly to this end. In the meantime, it specifically invites the Synod Presidents and Conference Superintendents who have consulted or subsequently shall consult on realignment and reorganization to send to the Committee of Nine memoranda of their findings even though all recognize the tentative nature of such findings.

Third Meeting—December 18-19, 1958

The pattern of regional groupings or grouping into provinces, either for administrative, educational, tactical, or fellowship purposes, or for all these, merited the attention of the Committee and resulted in the following motion:

"The Committee of Nine on Realignment has reached the point where it appears that ultimate proposals on reorganization of associations, synods, and conferences may be conditioned in part by whether or not the pattern of regional meetings or the provinces now operative in Congregational Christian life is to be perpetuated, perhaps with several more of either, in the United Church. The Committee of Nine, therefore, asks the Executive Council for advice as to whether the Committee should include the regional meeting or the province pattern as a pertinent part of the Committee's deliberations and its eventual recommendations."

In response to this request for advice on the part of the Committee, the Executive Council took the following action:

"VOTED: To recommend that the Committee on Realignment place on its agenda at an early meeting the study of continuing regional meetings, and invite persons of differing views to express themselves."

Fourth Meeting—April 6, 1959

Presidents and Superintendents from the South were invited to this meeting in order to share with the Committee their insights and counsel. Those present included Rev. John G. Mueller, President of the Texas Synod; Rev. Frederick D. Eyster, President of the Potomac Synod; Rev. Harvey A. Fesperman, President of the Southern Synod; Rev. William T. Scott, Superintendent of the Southern Convention; Rev. James H. Lightbourne, Jr., Superintendent of the Southeast Convention; and Rev. Royal J. Gibson, Superintendent of the Central South Conference. The Rev. J. Taylor Stanley, Superintendent of the Convention of the South, was unable to attend. He has been invited to put into writing any particular concerns that he may wish to share with the Committee.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held in Cleveland September 24 and 25. The agenda includes:

1. Consultation with representatives of the German Conference of the Congregational and Christian Churches and of the Magyar Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.
2. Discussion of Regions (Provinces) in the United Church.

Plans are being made for a joint meeting of Synodical Presidents and Conference Superintendents at Buck Hill Falls on January 29, 1960. It has been proposed that this meeting be followed by area meetings of Superintendents and Presidents.

The following memorandum was sent by Rev. Joseph H. Stein, Chairman of the Committee of Nine, to all Presidents of Synods and Superintendents of Conferences. It indicates succinctly some of the factors the Committee of Nine presently believes all should have in mind when considering the reorganization and realignment of Synods, Associations, and Conferences.

“While it is too early for the Committee to arrive at any final conclusion or to attempt to formulate any definite proposals, the following considerations have commended themselves to the Committee:

1. Conferences and Synods are essentially ‘state oriented.’ Furthermore, interdenominational agencies and various ecumenical enterprises are organized along state lines. This suggests that the state might most logically be the basic unit for the realignment of Conference boundaries in the United Church of Christ.
 - a. In situations of low church density, several states might constitute a single conference.
 - b. In situations of high church density, a state might be divided into two or more separate Conferences. In this latter case, county lines might serve as the basis of division, particularly since federal and state statistics are now reported on a county basis.
 - c. In all instances, the pattern should be sufficiently flexible to adjust the various situations to particular circumstances: i.e. a church or a group of churches in one geographical area, for good or compelling reasons, may prefer to belong to an Association and a Conference in a different

but contiguous area. As a general rule, however, it would seem unwise to encourage such overlapping.

2. Conferences ought to be sufficiently large to support a strong and adequate Conference staff.
3. Conference boundaries should be drawn on a basis which will be inclusive of racial, ethnic, and national groups (this is in keeping with actions of the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches, as well as the Basis of Union with the Interpretations and the actions of the Uniting General Synod)."

Respectfully submitted,

Charles D. Rodenberger, Acting Secretary

Joseph H. Stein, Chairman