

"B"-Interview about religion in Hungary dealing with the Reformed Church of Hungary.

When it became evident in Hungary that the Communist ideology could establish itself in the government the Communists began to take steps in order to succeed against the churches. They started against the smaller churches, the Lutherans and last the Roman Catholics. An agreement with the Lutheran Church was arrived at first, then secondly the Reformed Church. Bishop László Ravasz and the chief elder Kardos and even a representative of the theological schools were called in to the government for this agreement. The agreement has ten points. One of its points is that the state and all churches are to discuss freely and on equal terms, also that the churches are to be independent. The agreement was needed by the Communists because the state could not win certain leaders and it wanted to displace other leaders of the church, certain ministers and theologians. It also wanted to control the flow of young theological students and theologians who were leaving the country on scholarships. This was in 1946. In the following points of the agreement it tried to nail down how the state in effect will try to subordinate the church under the state and to win the church members in favour of the state, that is the Communist

regime. The Communists were not yet sure of the church membership. Certain arrangements were allowed for church possessions and properties. The land next to the church parsonage could remain up to 30 hold which had produced for the minister of the congregation. The parsonages, school buildings, and the character of education are retained by the church. Still four seminaries and four church schools, meaning the Debrecen, Budapest, Pápa, and Sárospatak gymnasiums stand. In the discussions with the Communists Bishop Ravasz constantly maintained that the gymnasiums were needed in order to train and prepare the young men for the ministry. They were also important for the church as related to the professional training of the cantors, church music teachers.

Also in the agreement was contained the idea from the part of the church, that the church will try to adapt itself to the state and urge its members for the new rebuilding of the state. The tenth point of the agreement has stated that the church will pray for the leaders of the state. In Hungarian it was: Az egyház fog imádkozni az állam vezető férfiaiért. This agreement was reached in 1948.

Then followed that the church lands were taken away. The parsonages remained and maybe three hold of land remained with the parsonage. The cemetery parcels were not nationalized. In many cases these parcels were half-occupied

and half unused. The parsonage building no matter how large was not taken over by the government housing office. Up to the end to 1956 even if the parsonage was an eight-room house the housing office did not interfere. Religious education could be carried on only away ^{from} ~~at~~ the regular school. It was not a required course anymore. Religious education took place after school hours. Free practice of religion was impeded. In those towns where there were no church buildings the church people could worship in the school building as they had done previously. The time of worship was set by the school principal. It is at this point where the Party secretary interfered because he scheduled a meeting of the DISZ for the same time as the worship. Thus the school building could not be used. Thus in such sorvány churches where the membership was 400 the attendance at church services dwindled to 12 to 15. In order to hold worship services people had to go to a tanya house, that is a farmer's house not in the village. During this time the enemies of the church grew in strength prior to the Revolution.

Then in August 1956 there occurred the Galyatető meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. About 120 visitors came to Hungary. Both the Hungarian government and the Hungarian Office of Church Affairs did everything so that the meeting would go through most smoothly at a most beautiful place at Galyatető which is a

resort vacation spot for a trade union. . . . When these visitors coming from different parts of the world reached the Hungarian border, their cameras and films were taken from them. This created a great deal of embarrassment for the Office of Church Affairs and the official greeter Imre Kádár asked the government to do away with this ruling not allowing cameras and films to be brought in. Finally the visitors got their cameras back and the films.

Something else deserves notice concerning the Western church leaders as they crossed the Hungarian border. Before these Western church leaders reached the border, friends of the confessing Hungarian Reformed Church made sure that a copy of the Creed or Confession of Faith prepared by Péter Pekete and his colleagues go into the hands of these churchmen. Over 200 Hungarian Reformed ministers had signed this Confession of Faith. These signatures were not duplicated upon the four-page Confession of Faith which was given to the people going to the Galyatető meeting.

When the Western church leaders received this Confession of Faith, Péter Pekete had already been in jail for six months. A Lutheran pastor, István Szamosközi, had secured this Confession of Faith from Hungarian sources and in Austria distributed^x it to the church leaders. The title of this four-page confession in Hungarian was: A hitvalló református egyház hitvallása 1956-ban.

How did this Confession of Faith come into existence?
Pastor Péter Fekete and his colleagues in the Tisza area came together in a spontaneous group to write this Confession of Faith which in turn was distributed around the county. This spontaneous group indicating the Creed of the confessing church did not become a national movement of opposition to the Reformed Church in which these pastors served. But why was this confession written? These churchmen and ministers who signed the confession decided to formulate on paper their position in face of Communism even if the church is split by this confession. The confession can be compared to the Barman Confession of 1934 which Niemöller composed against Hitler. When this confession was distributed around the Tisza Vidék or the Tisza area over which Bishop János Péter had jurisdiction, this Reformed Church bishop had Pastor Fekete arrested by the AVH. This event created a strong indignation among the people and the churchmen. The arrest took place six months before the August 1956 Galyatető meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. When the world council church leaders arrived in Hungary, they began to ask questions about Pastor Péter Fekete and also about Bishop László Ravasz who had been removed from his office soon after the 1948 agreement went into effect. At Galyatető, during the recesses of the meeting, Visser't Hooft, the executive secretary of the World ~~substance~~ Council of

Reformed Churches, talked to Hungarian officials of the Religious Affairs Office and asked them about the Péter Fekete affair. These people said they knew nothing about it and they promised that they would investigate the situation quickly. This is the usual answer that these Communists give about someone whom they jailed. However, the result was that a few weeks later Pastor Péter Fekete was let out of jail. The intervention of Bishop János Péter was evident in this matter but the people hate Bishop Péter and he cannot win them to his side.

At the World Council of Churches meeting the name of Bishop László Ravasz came up time and again who in 1948 was forced to retire by the Communists. In the month preceding the WCC meeting a document containing a statement in the style of Ravasz was distributed throughout Hungary. The official church press denied that this was from Ravasz. In this statement the Reformed Church people and those outside the Reformed Church saw the Communist behaviour toward the church made clear. The false theology employed by the clergy who sympathized with the Communists and the new Communist methods employed to undermine the church.

In the Summer of 1956 Ravasz was in Cluj or Kolozsvár and there this statement came into his hands. His friends tried to have him say something about the statement. However, he would not comment. The Reformed Church

paper Az Út in the month of August published a letter from Ravasz which was these few words: "Nem adtam senkinek meghatalmazást, hogy nevesben bármit is terjesztjen." That is: "I have not given anyone authority to circulate anything under my name." By this he does not deny his authorship and people who read this sentence were encouraged rather than discouraged by saying that he had something to do with the statement. We ~~doubt~~^{thought} that this kind of a sentence would be it really evident that he wrote or saw it before it was published under his name or he had conveyed these ideas to someone who put them down and then published them. The ideas of the statement crystallized the ideas the people of the Reformed Church held as their own in 1956. The statement attributed to Ravasz is as follows: In the first lines the author says that he is looking to the World Council of Churches meeting where he would have to appear and he felt that it is necessary that he puts something down on paper. (Bishop Ravasz although he could not have an active part in the Hungarian Reformed Church ~~he~~ did receive many letters from abroad at his home and he was looking forward to the meeting where he would meet many of those people who carried on correspondence with him.) He felt that he would have to say something to the leaders of the World Council about the situation of the Hungarian church. In the statement the author says that he had talked about his ideas with Bishop Bereczky. (Bishop

Bereczky was the man whom the Communists placed in the office of Bishop Ravasz in 1948.)

Four ideas follow in the statement. He discloses the secret methods of the leadership of the Communist state. He says two methods have been developed against the church. 1., the rude oppression of the church, but this is too primitive. The Communists say that persecution only strengthens the church. 2., knowing the disadvantage of the first method a second method is employed, that is to ruin the church ^{through the church} /all from inside the church.

"Tönkre tenni az egyházat az egyház által." The statement continues that the Communists have not given up their original goal, that of the complete elimination of the church. But the elimination of the church has been slowed down. The Communists appear as patrons of the church, give aid and money, and hand the task of the elimination of the church over to the church itself. But how is this to be done? The Communists build into the church their own men, Communist men, who are in key positions. It divides the church into two groups: The leaders and those who are led, vezetők and vezetettek. The hierarchy of the Hungarian Reformed Church cannot be compared to any other Protestant church or to any other period in the history of the Hungarian Reformed Church. The fact that there exists an upper and lower clergy reflects that the Reformed Church no longer carries out the Presbyterian idea.

Nothing starts from below, everything is directed from above.

The second idea of the statement follows. Part of the present Hungarian Reformed Church order is not legal because the new leaders were placed into office illegally and the old ones were forced into retirement, or the stamp of retirement was put on them without the consent of the Konvent or Conventus. A church dictatorship has developed in the last few years. The author, if it is Ravasz, refers to the fact that certain church leaders overserve the Communist regime. (This can be taken as referring to overproduction in the norm system.) The third idea expressed flashes out at the new theology used by these new church leaders which theology gives them a basis for their activity. He says they call upon the Bible for their basis but he says this theology is not biblical nor is it scientific. This idea is well known by the theologians. What did the clergy do to try to orient themselves to the new regime? Two examples from two people who belonged to this new theology. In 1953 in the month of June either 26th or 28th, at the meeting of the Konvent, the Dean of Kaposvár in the morning was leading a service in Bible study. He referred to the passage from the Book of *Genesis* in the creation story that God saw everything he had ^{was} created ~~with~~ good. Then this Dean of Kaposvár said to the conference of the Konvent that today God looks around

the world also and he sees that everything is good. God looks at our industry, the sub-way that is being built, the new buildings, and God sees that all of this is good; therefore let us also see that it is good, too. Then after this Dean of Kaposvár had finished his message about this portion of ^{the} scriptures someone got up and said: "According to this morning's Szabad Nép which, (of course, the Dean had not read) the Prime Minister Imre Nagy says ^{all this} that all these things are not good. Therefore how can ^{be} good according to our God?" The second example of this new theology occurred when the associate Pastor of the Calvin Square Church, József Farkas, who now is the minister of the Gyulai Pál Utca Church said after the 20th Congress: "Is it a shame for the church if the 20th Congress has the function of renewal in the world trend?" or "Vajjon szégyen-e az egyháznak a megújulási függvénye a világi áramlatnak - a huszadik kongresszus". This statement represented a new change, a fifteen degree turn of criticism and self-criticism of personality cult, that is of criticizing the church also freely. Pastor Farkas said: "It is not a shame." He even brought in the theology of János Victor concerning the idea of external grace. This sermon appeared in the church paper Reformátusok Lapja after the 20th Congress. The fourth idea which the author of the statement, be it Ravasz, tries now ^{is} to find a way out on a basis of the 1948 agreement.

He says there should be a division of the church and state. He says that the state could win the people of the church in that way. If there is not a division the people will keep themselves away from the leadership of the church and from the state. The statement is about a page and a half in length, and very likely someone had who heard Ravasz speak along these lines put his ideas down and distributed the statement in the name of Ravasz.

This so-called Ravasz statement and the Confession of Faith were published months before the Revolution. It created a minor movement that brought about changes in the Reformed Church. Both of these statements were accepted without distinction by the Hungarian people of all religious preferences. They followed a certain trend of purification but this was represented only by personnel changes in the Reformed Church, that is the removal from office of three people: Sándor Fekete, István Finta, Benő Békeffi. Who were these people?

Sándor Fekete was the illegally elected Dean and Pastor of the Fásor Church. He was also the responsible editor and publisher of "Az Út", the church paper of the Reformed Church. He was a Party member. He was forced to resign ~~of~~ these positions and it was said about him that he wanted to become the Bishop of the Danube region in place of Bereczky. In one of his sermons he spoke of Jesus as "that journeyman of a carpenter." The general

opinion was that Bishop Bereczky had to struggle with the Religious Affairs Office to get Sándor Fekete out of his post. Fekete had 4,000 frts fixed pay plus many extras. After being removed from his church office he got a job at the state office of radio and telegraph. He was also a regular writer for the Szabad Nép on the second page.

István Finta was the Chief Legal Counsel for the Konvent. He was the best man that the Communists had built into the Reformed Church. This fellow was given sick leave. It was then said that he would be given a position in one of the congregations. Within the Reformed Church his position was that immediately below the three bishops.

Benő Buschbaum Békeffi was a former Israelite. He was the small king of the ~~disembodied~~ Tisza Videk church district. He had about 28 offices within the church. He was the Pastor of the Nyiregyháza church and Dean, Head of the ecumenics professorship at the Debrecen theological seminary, Head of the Ecumenical Central Council within the church, held leadership and direction of 14 charitable institutions in the Reformed Church, and many other positions. He had three houses, an automobile at his disposal constantly, an office in Budapest and Debrecen with a pay of 8,000 frts in the Nyiregyháza church. He had two assistant ministers, a personal secretary, for deaconesses. His expenses ran 20,000 to 25,000 frts a month. Before a group of ministers

while speaking to them he talked about what a wonderful picture the Hortobagy ^{is} was looked at from an airplane. This was characteristic about him. The reason given for his dismissal and removal from office was that he had committed a series of illegalities, and in September 1956 Bishop János Péter removed him from office and he was put on sick leave.

At this point the Reformed Church of Hungary faced a crisis. No one wanted to take those offices.

Békeffi in carrying out his work often went beyond the limits of even the bishop's office in jurisdiction for Bishop Péter frequently was out of the country and it was Békeffi who was responsible for decisions during Péter's absence. During 1956 up to the time of the Békeffi incident it was figured out that Bishop Péter was in Hungary only 32 days. He was flying about the world in other places. The fact of his absence was used by Bishop Péter to wash his hands of the affair by saying that he was not at home to see what Békeffi was doing.

István Szamosközi, the Dean and Minister of Pécsbánya now becomes editor and publisher of the church paper "Az Út". At this point it is interesting to note that the three men Szamosközi, Finta, and Fekete all went to the same theological school, ~~where~~ were members of the same class, and were all referred to as poor students who had to be disciplined frequently. Szamosközi started

a column of ~~the~~ readers' letters. He tried to win the readers through this column. More and more grievances were expressed here by the readers. Frequently it was the Chief Elder of a congregation that wrote to the newspaper. Ministers could not write or did not dare.

When the little dictator Békeffi was out of office, the classis which had been under him as Dean begins to form a strong movement to reopen the Sárospatak school. The ministers and laity felt that there was freedom once again in the classis. There were many letters, private letters in the church press from Nyiregyháza. In that city the Congregational Day was also held on which professors and others were invited to the Nyiregyháza area to speak to the congregations. In Kisvárda, a town near the Záhony railway line, there was collected 10,000 arts on one Sunday for the Ravasz movement for renewal. The theological students in both the Budapest and Debrecen seminaries supported the movement. The students of the Budapest seminary handed in a petition against Imre Kádár, one of the professors. The students said they would not attend his classes because they do not hold Kádár to be a legal professor of the seminary. Kádár had previously been a theater director of ^fJewish background. He did not have the right to wear the pastoral gown nor did he have a minister's diploma and yet he was a professor of ecumenical history and head of the ecumenics department at

the Budapest seminary. Only in Hungary was there such a professorship in ecumenics and this had been created especially for Kádár. I know the content of the courses he taught because I attended Budapest for a while. He was interested in knowing how much the students knew about the Communist press and the ideas expressed there. The students presented their demands and petitions to Dean László Pap of the seminary. In his calm way and with quieting words he calmed the theological students. Pap saw that Kádár would soon be removed anyway and there was no need for this kind of action on the part of the students. Later Kádár was removed.

Last year was the 25th year of the founding of the theological seminary at Pápa. However, this was not celebrated anywhere in the church. In fact there was an attempt to try to bring the two existing seminaries, Debrecen and Budapest, together but this did not come about. There were emotional ties of the past which had to be counted. In fact in 1956 the former students and church members asked for the restitution of the two seminaries Pápa and Sárospatak which had been closed by the Communists. But nothing was heard from the church leaders. The people who were still loyal to the Sárospatak idea where a gymnasium and seminary and academy had existed, tried to maneuver to divide the Tisza Vidék district of the church into two regions, as it existed previously, into the

Transtisza and the C'istisza regions. Bishop Péter was the Head of the Tisza, ^{Vadék} or the Tisza vicinity district. All of these attempts brought the Revolution closer. It was a reaction against the Communist regime, an internal reaction against those who had been named to leadership in the Reformed Church. It was not external influences which brought this reaction of the Reformed Church and brought about the Revolution.

Education and theological education.

Up to the age ^{of} 14, children attend school for eight years of general education. From the age ^{of} 10 on, they study Russian. A pupil could study religion only with the permission of his parents who then had to accept the possibility of paying higher taxes. After the age ^{of} 14 a student could go on to gymnasium. The Reformed Church had only one remaining gymnasium. This was in Debrecen.

In the general school up to the age ^{of} 14, religious education was conducted by the minister in his parsonage if the school was in a city. If the school was in a village then perhaps the minister could teach in the school. Not many children attended religious education. For example, in my own city Hódmezővásárhely my church had a membership of 8,000 and last year there were 13 confirmands. In 1949 we had 45 confirmands and some years before that there were 100 or more confirmands. In Hódmezővásárhely there were

13 Reformed Churches.

By 1950 a person had to apply for admission to the gymnasium. The admissions office would examine not only the record of grades attained by the student but also the kader sheet. If someone was not accepted or later put out of the gymnasium it was not a shame.

In the gymnasium there were two types of education, the real and the humanistic. There were some 28 technological gymnasiums in Hungary. The real had such courses as history, Hungarian geography, geometry, Russian language. The humanistic gymnasium had weak courses in physics, Latin, put an emphasis on Russian. If someone wanted to study French or English it was given only if the gymnasium demand was great. Greek was not taught since 1946. The level of education-quality fell. There was great pressure put on for knowing Soviet literature.

In 1954 70 boys and 2 girls reported at the Debrecen theological school for admission. Out of this group 35 were called in for entrance examinations. It was hard to decide who was to be admitted. Local pastors gave letters of recommendation and out of these 35, 15 were accepted for the incoming class. I was one of the 15. In the entrance examination we received ten questions in writing. For example, to write down the Books of the Bible in order. There was an oral examination which included various kinds of questions about life of our family, how we expected to

finance ourselves. On the next day we were told who was accepted.

The assembly opening the 1954 academic year was held and then three days were set aside as quiet days in the seminary or a kind of retreat. At the end of the mid-year there were two quiet days and at the beginning of the second semester again two quiet days and at the closing of the school year the three closing days were spent at some resort place or the beach. During these three days of quiet we were given lectures about behaviour and the introduction to the year of school. Professor Pákozdy gave a talk on how a theologian should behave, also how to study a foreign language. Professor Török talked about how to study well. Other talks were how to live in a dormitory and so forth. These three days were extremely important to establish the tone for the year and they were very important for me and for the others in preparation for the year's work.

In one week for the first year a theological student had 32 regular class hours. We studied four languages, 5 hours Hebrew, 5 hours Greek, 5 hours Latin, 3 hours German, 2 hours ecumenics, 2 hours church life today, 1 hour study of the Hungarian constitution, 3 hours philosophy, 2 hours of biblical content (this was offered each year because students came to the seminary without much or little knowledge of the Bible), 1 hour seminar on the

press and news events which was required, 2 hour class theological encyclopedia, a general picture of church dogma. The Heidelberg Catechism, the Helvetican Confession, and other documents were treated by Professor István Török who is an out/^{standing} professor of dogma or systematic theology. During our first year we also had to study the history of the Debrecen colleg. This was a very interesting course. We also had one hour of music and song during our first year and each year following. By this means the seminary hoped to solve the problem of the kantor or choir-master needs presented in the congregations. Thus the minister would be the one who would do the teaching of the choirs. Frequently in congregations it would be the minister now who went up to the organ to play and then would come down to the pulpit and during these long intervals of climbing up and down the steps the congregation had to wait during the worship service.

Second year theological education (4 hours New Testament ^{exegesis} ~~exercises~~ and translation of the Greek New Testament, 4 hour o. Old Testament ^{exegesis} ~~exercises~~; these were more elementary, 2 hours introduction to the New Testament, 1 hour homiletics, 2 hours practical theology, 2 hours ecumenics 2 hours life of the church today, 1 hour Hungarian national constitution, 2 hours seminar on the press, that is the Communist press, 2 hours German, 2 hours introduction to dogma, 2 hours church history, 1 hour music; then one

could select seminars either 2 hours practical theology or two hours New Testament.

Third year theological education. The same as the second year with the exception Old Testament introduction instead of New Testament introduction and history of dogma instead of introduction into dogma.

Fourth year theological education. New Testament or Old Testament biblical history. No language hours were required now. A person could select a language from English, French, Dutch, Italian, Russian or Aramaic, History of the Hungarian Reformed Church, 3 hours of dogma, 3 hours of ethics, 4 hours homiletic practice. During the fourth year students on Tuesdays would go to the Kistemplom in Debrecen where a theological student would preach in the evening. Then on the next day the student class would criticize the sermon. It was part of class work.

Fifth year theological training. All of these subjects taken previously would require colloquiums, each about 28 days. Throughout the entire five years ecumenics would always be emphasized as being important, especially at the colloquium. But the students were not interested because this course was taught by professors whom the Communists put into the seminaries both at Debrecen and at Budapest. In the lectures they would talk about Communism and the church adaptation to it. The Acts of the Apostles 4: 32 to 37 was the shoemaker's last onto which

they tried to put everything. In fact I heard at least ten sermons on this particular text. Bishop Bereczky and at Debrecen Professor Zsigmond Varga used this text and also tried to use the Letters of Paul which can be interpreted in many ways to give a basis for Communist activity, and also the new theology.

Why we needed to study the Hungarian Constitution was answered by saying that we had to learn how we can serve the state and do things legally. The articles of the constitution ~~itself~~ themselves stand very nicely but they do not belong to reality. They are not followed in the country and that is not what happens in the country. These courses such as seminars on the press, Hungarian Constitution, increased the hours to be taken by the students as well as the extra hours in the new subject ecumenics. From Zsigmond Varga we learned the Greek language but his ~~exegesis~~ ^{exegesis} was horrible. He was the director of the dormitory. He took over for himself all the key posts in the seminary where students had contact with professors in extra-^{curricular} organization. That's how he became the director of the dormitory. Professor Sándor Czeglédi who also is the brother-in-law of Bishop Péter was a very good teacher and a good pedagogue. He speaks English and French very well. He was professor of New Testament. Doctor Kálmán Kállay was professor of Old Testament. He was ~~golden~~ ^{golden} in spirit, a great man. He

knows the Aramaic language as well as Dutch. He had ~~a~~ very good syllabus but he did not know how to be strict. He never mixed in politics just as Czeglédi did not either. He is chairman of the Old Testament Committee which now is translating the Bible in Hungary for a revised version.

Dr. Endre Tóth is Dean of the Lebrezen seminary, popular-ly ^{he} was called Bandi bácsi as he wished the students to call him. He gave the courses in Church History and Church Law. His lectures were entertaining. We learned the material right there in the class. He is 64 years old. He could give 24 anecdotes in one lecture without departing from the subject in the anecdotes. He is very close to the students, everyone liked him. Professor János Erdős had a good book on ^{exegesis} ~~exegesis~~. He was working on the New Testament translations in Hungary. In 1953 he retired, however, came in to give the fifth year course in New Testament. He had 40 years of teaching experience. Dr. Márton László Páközdy is a very strict professor. The students fear him. He has the professorship of religious history. He is 42 years old. Also a member of the translating committee in Hungary for the Bible, every month he spends about two weeks in Budapest working on this translation. I knew him best of all the professors. During the Revolution he was in Germany. Dr. István Török, professor of the dogma systematic theology and ethics. He is very strict but just. He was the personal secretary to Dzsö

Baltazár. He has been a student of Barth. He writes his own books, is a very accurate man, and does not mix in politics.

Faculty of the Budapest theological seminary.

László Pap is Dean of the seminary. He maintained close contacts with the World Council of Churches. He studied in Holland, was in Palestine, and is very good in Hebrew exercises. His Old Testament Bible theology is outstanding. He was the middle man between the old men of the church and Bishop Bereczky. He was an assistant to Bishop Bereczky at a time. He always took the biblical point of view. During the Revolution before he did anything he always thought it over carefully. Now he is no longer Dean of the seminary. He has been removed. As a professor he was ^{endearing} ~~kind~~. Dr. József Bodonhelyi visits with Dr. Pákózdý at Debrecen but Bodonhelyi is not on the same level as Pákózdý. He cannot lecture he is homiletics professor. He has all the qualities not to be a professor. While I was at the Budapest theological seminary he was my pro-Dean and the director of the dormitory. István Czeglédi ^{and is} (whose brother Sándor studied in America ~~was~~ professor at Debrecen) ~~István Czeglédi~~ is New Testament professor at Budapest. He has been in Holland and now is the Dean of the Budapest seminary replacing László Pap. He is more an army officer which he was at one time. He knows Greek

well but he is not a good exegete and he is the director of the dormitories or internatus. Imre Kádár has lectures without any themes. He ^{was} ~~is~~ the head of the ecumenics department. He was responsible editor of the Hungarian church paper. He could not prove his knowledge before us and did not know how to preach. Even in a radio sermon ~~on~~ on ~~pentecost~~ ^{Pentecost} he made a problem of the Jewish question where no one else could find a problem. Then Professor Kálmán Bucsay was lecturer for constitutional study, German, church history, and so forth, whatever other subjects left over. He was not a man for being neither a professor nor a theologian. Professor Barna Nagy, professor of dogma and ethics, had been the Dean of the seminary at Pápa. He was a very just man, high above all the colleagues except László Pap. He was a follower of Barth just as János Victor had been. However, he is not a good lecturer. He has no syllabus. After November 4th in the Revolution the Communists arrested him and knocked out all his teeth, beat him, tortured him so that he cannot lecture, ~~as I~~ I heard, because he has lost teeth that are being made. They let him out only on the intervention of Visser't Hooft who is the executive secretary of the ~~Assembly of Reformed Churches~~ ^{World Council of Churches} with offices in Geneva. Gyula Bárczai was Professor Nagy's assistant. Bárczai wrote an article in the "Az Út" during the Revolution, saying that the students had been able to see the Revolution coming on. He had a

scholarship and passport to Switzerland where he was. Letters of the Religious Affairs Office of the government told him to return to Hungary. However, others wrote him not to come home. He is still in Switzerland. [REDACTED] [REDACTED], one of the student assistants, also, had a passport and scholarship to Switzerland. At the seminary he taught Hebrew and was a very good preacher. [REDACTED] finished his theology under Hromalka in Czechoslovakia. He attended several semesters there and speaks Czech and Russian. He is now in Switzerland. He was an interpreter in Hungary for Metropolitan Nikolai of Russia and Hromadka.

Theological Students' Life in Seminary.

The student tries to get a good basis. During the first year he is very confused but has to do very well because the first year is probation or trial year. In one year the professors get to know the student. The first year is a struggle also with languages.

Schedule of life in a seminary: 6.30 bell, 7.00 to 7.15 private Bible reading, 7.30 breakfast, 7.45 to 8.00 short worship service, 7 to 8 minutes meditation led by students and sometimes by professors, 8.00 to 1.30 classes and lectures, 40 minute periods with six lectures each day, 1.30 meal time, 2.30 or 3.00 German class or seminar on the daily press or English hours. By this time the student is very tired. Perhaps the student afterwards

goes out for some sports or for a walk. 6.30 supper, 7.00 to 9.00 every other day the rehearsal of the Kantus at Debrecen seminary, 9.30 to 10.00 meditation and worship service. With a schedule such as this very little time is left for individual study for a person. Food and meals served: For breakfast coffee or tea, a cup per person, and a piece of bread. If a student was lucky and had money perhaps he could have a snack at 10 o'clock but this was not usual. The noon meal was the kind of meal by which they tried to fill the stomachs of the students. There was meat on Thursday and Sunday. We had soups and Supper was usually the weaker meal and not very filling. They served farina and milk and tarhonya. The collegium did not have the money for adequately feeding the 400 who ate there. The Debrecen collegium had in total 800 students, 400 students for economics. They studied outside of Debrecen at the economics university. 260 students in the gymnasium who were sons of ministers and others, plus 40 girls in the gymnasium, 63 theological students which included 4 girls.

The Theological Students and the Life of the Congregation.

The student came into close contact with the congregations in various parts of Hungary through the Legáció three times a year, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and maybe if a congregation ordered a student assistant for the pastor

on Palm Sunday. The Legáció is an old institution and tradition which came to Hungary from the Transylvanian times. The minister would write to the Dean of a theological seminary indicating his need and desire to have a student to assist him during the holiday season. The theological students then would select their choice from the list posted according to definite rules of seniority. The senior student which was a special office had first choice on the list. Then others according to posts held in the student body would have their choice. During my first year I went to the Nyírség church where I received 1,760 frts. The student then would use this money to pay his bills. First his fee at the dormitory or internatus, also the tuition. Four times a year the bill would be paid. 200 frts monthly fee for light, gas, and food. 80 frts semester tuition, 100 frts library fee, use of the key. 40 to 50 frts for each syllabus which the student himself bought.

When the Legátus goes out to the church he is welcomed very well in general. At Christmas time he can usually assist in distribution of the Lord's Supper if he is given special permission, exmissio. This permission is given at the recommendation of the Dean of the seminary by the bishop of the church district. The student has three sermons to preach. These are talked over with the local minister. At such times ideas were exchanged about con-

gregational life. Dinners and suppers are served for the young theological student at various family homes. The student usually visits about 150 members of the congregation. Problems are brought up by these members and as the visits are made the student receives a sum of money from each member as a contribution. The more modern way of eliminating these visits to 150 or so families is of having the church members make a contribution and list of names of those contributing is given to the student. In Budapest the Legáció tradition is maintained as well as theological student days. When the students come to the congregation at such time there are recitations, songs, and the student talks about student life. At this time the theological student gets into the minister's home also where frequently at such times there is a ^{prayer} circle. On such theological student days the congregations give an offering for the Debrecen Academy. 800 to 1,000 frts are given. Such theological days are announced for a few Sundays prior to the event in the congregation. In Budapest and some other places there were also congregational days or Gyülekezeti Nap which were extremely important for the life of the congregation, which through these congregational days was made more vital. For these congregational days professors of the seminary would be invited as well as others to give talks about Christian life and various subjects, in order to build the vitality of the church.

These were held during the last few years. I attended a number of them in and around Debrecen and Budapest.

The Kantus at the Debrecen seminary was a mixed choir of eight members and had a men's glee club group of forty members and the others in the mixed choir were students from the gymnasium. When the choir was asked it went to funerals to sing and the bishop could not interfere. We went where we wanted to. This was a separate organization which was founded in 1736 during the great cholera epidemic by four students. It existed during the time of Csokonai, a great Hungarian writer who attended the Debrecen collegium. The kantus as a separate organization had a separate telephone, had its own stamp or seal, it performed and gave concerts in big churches and went to other cities for concerts. One year while I was there we had a tour and went by bus. The kantus also had an orchestra of 25 members. In 1956 when the World Council of Churches central committee met in Hungary the kantus gave a tremendous performance of "Hallelujah Chorus" for these visitors. In the kantus we learned how to sing. We had seven hours of rehearsal each week.

Technically and legally the Kantus was outside of the jurisdiction of the Debrecen collegium and the seminary. It was a separate organization and not under the control of the school, Although the kantus did have as its honorary president one of the professors. The membership of

the Kantus was made up of gymnasium and seminary students. Here, too, Zsigmond Varga of the seminary faculty, who apparently had been planted on ^{the} faculty by the Communists, got the job of ^{honorary} ~~honorary~~ president of the Kantus. He worked things out so that the other faculty members would be relieved of this position, whereby he was able to keep a finger on what was going on in the Kantus. I personally demanded that Professor Varga leave the seminary and a petition was brought up in this matter with signatures. ~~As a student~~ As a student I got into quite a bit of trouble because of this. This was one of the reasons that I eventually had to leave Hungary.

Student Offices.

The senior was the highest student office at the seminary, it was one of the oldest student offices. The senior had a great deal of power. He was the one who held the contact with the professors in behalf of the students. He also could make recommendations concerning the admission of new students. This recommendation had force and power. The senior sat in on conferences between the faculty and a student. His judgement was accepted by the faculty. The senior usually was a fifth or sixth year student. He received 240 frts a month. He had his own seal and had full power in the internatus. He directed the life of the collegium. He would examine the sermons of the new students, talk over the meditations to be presented in the evening

worship with the students. He carried out the correspondence with the ministers in the matters of the Legáció. Before the coming of Zsigmond Varga, professors did not come into the internatus. Now, however, Zsigmond Varga is the head of the internatus and thereby has limited the power of the senior. The office of esküdt felügyelő in the internatus held by a student comprised such powers as the purchasing of foods, discussing matters with painters with regard to the building and so forth. With the coming of Zsigmond Varga as director of the Internatus, previously Professor Pákozy was the director, his office of esküdt felügyelő was almost eliminated by Varga. Varga made his own men take over these jobs of senior and esküdt. During Professor Pákozy's time of director^{ship}, Pákozy would hardly ever come into the internatus.

The Life of the Hungarian Reformed Church from the Revolution to November 4th. and the Kind of Behaviour it Bared to Exhibit.

After the Revolution and the battles on October 26th a temporary council or committee of the konventus was formed. It included the former Bishop László Ravasz, László Pap, Dean of the Budapest seminary, Gyökössi, Sándor Jób, a very outstanding preacher who separated himself completely from the new theology and Kardos who had been the former chief elder of the Reformed Church and had been the

legal counsellor of the church. (He had been forced to resign in 1948 as chief elder because he was the defender of Bishop Ordass of the Lutheran Church.) Kardos called this committee the legal temporary leaders of the Hungarian Reformed Church until the konventus is called for a meeting.

The temporary committee decided that those leading men of the Hungarian Reformed Church who compromised themselves with the regime will be asked to resign. These included Bishop János Péter, Róland Kiss, the Piszta Mellék chief elder, Pál Nyáry, the minister at Kaposvár, Dr. Imre Kádár, editor and publisher of the church paper, József Parkas, theological lecturer and assistant pastor at the Calvin Square Church, and Bishop Albert Bereczky. (But the decision was that the committee will not bring to Bishop Bereczky notice of this request of his resignation at the moment because he was sick and they were concerned about his health if this decision was made known to him.)

Dr. László Pap received the assignment that through the Szabad Kossuth Radio he should acquaint the Hungarian population concerning the activities of the Reformed Church.

During the days of confusion in the Revolution, Dr. Zoltán Gy. Mezey, the prototype of the new kind of Dealer who was pastor of the Komárom Church, sent a telegramme to the Hungarian Radio Station saying: "In my name and as pastor of the Komárom Church I condemn the Revolution". When on October 29th the Revolution was succeeding

This Dr. Mezey made a special trip up to Budapest to the Radio Station and asked they correct his telegram. He said that he really greeted the Revolution, however, the text of his telegram in Hungarian was: "A magam és a komáromi egyház nevében elítélem forradalom megmozdítását." So probably on November 4th when the Russians began to take the situation in hand again this spineless pastor had his telegram changed again.

After November 4th Dr. László Pap does not break under the pressure applied against him by the Communists. On November 11th from Leányfalv László Ravasz came into the Calvin Square Church by auto to conduct the worship service. In the last four years the Communists did not allow Ravasz to serve as a preacher. During the World Council of Churches meeting in Hungary members of that meeting asked why Ravasz cannot preach. János Horváth of the Religious Affairs Office gave the standard answer that he would investigate the situation, he did not know why. First time that Ravasz was allowed to preach was on November 11th, 1956.

Concerning the letters of resignation which arrived on request to the temporary committee of the Hungarian Reformed Church.

The letter from Róland Kiss who was the lay president of the konvent and the chief elder of his church district after writing long typewritten pages ^{revealed} ~~refused~~ the secrets of the church politics under the Communists and writes

about his own election. He says that once Rákosi, the Hungarian Communist Party secretary, called him to his office and told him that he would like to see him, that is Kiss, in the chief lay office of the Reformed Church. Then Rákosi told him that in the past days a certain János Péter had offered his services for the office of bishop in the Tisza vicinity district. Roland Kiss says in his letter that he was surprised about both of these comments. Then Rákosi asked him who is this Péter because he had not heard of his name before. According to the letter of resignation written by Kiss Rákosi characterized Péter as follows: "Péter Jánca úgy látom jól használható fiatal stréber." That is: "I observed that János Péter will be a very useful, young climber (or opportunist)." (It should be noted at this point, the respondent says, that in order to receive the office of bishop or of chief elder one had to report at the party secretary.)

The letter of resignation of Dr. Imre Kádár. He writes that he wanted to do good but had come out of it. How János Péter became bishop. Péter was the chaplain of the Budapest Bethesda hospital, and he was also the secretary to President Zoltán Tildy of Hungary and as such offered his services to Rákosi. Rákosi wanted someone to be his man in the Reformed Church. During his years as bishop, Péter kept in close contact with Metropolitan Nikolai of Moscow. In the church paper "Az Út"

the exchange of letters between the Metropolitan and Péter were constantly reported. This created dissatisfaction among the readers of the paper, however, "Az Út" called the Metropolitan Nagy ³Papa or grandfather.

The letter of resignation by Bishop János Péter, Péter lies or twists the truth when he says that it is not external forces or an external issue that has brought him to resign but that "the idea has been in me for some time that I resign." Another question that can be asked about his letter is that if he was separate from social issues, then why did he not take a stand against the deportations that were carried on from Budapest. Then he says that ^{he} ~~we~~ will try himself in front of the church district for his previous actions and be held accountable. However, now certainly he can expect his job back from the Kádár government.

At this time János Péter is in a government position. He is chairman of the committee on cultural relations and recently greeted Alexandrov and spoke at that meeting of the gratitude he and, of course, the Hungarian people have for the Soviet that it has served the international proletariat. Péter in his letter of resignation also asked to be forgiven and says that he should not be contacted further about any church affairs. He resigns completely and hands over all power.

(Copy of full Péter letter in CURPH file.)

Full English translation attached to this interview, see pp. 69 ff.

A review of the December 21st, 1956 meeting of the executive committee of the National Renewal Movement (országos megújulási mozgalom) of the Reformed Church.

An introduction to bring things up to date concerning the historical events preceding December 21st and the meeting. Politically important things which influenced the Hungarian Revolution. It was evident on November 11th that the Revolution was lost and that external moral support was not enough to end the Communist rule over Hungary. In order to bring to a halt the losses of life and the deportations, two foreign political issues which influenced the Hungarian situation. First, the Suez question which complicated the Hungarian affair at the UN. The Suez issue was put into the other half of the balance and the Suez question was more important, more heavy. The free Rákóczi and the free Csokonai radio stations were still broadcasting although their reports were not continuous. As for practical purposes it was evident by November 23rd that absolutely there would not be any military help from the West. The second political question which in my mind is worth ~~does~~ studying as influencing the Hungarian Revolution was the presidential election in the United States. The old president could not bring any new arrangement or take the country into a conflict. This influenced the American view. This whole time was very confused. Anna Kéthly left Hungary as representing the new Hungarian government.

~~and~~ The chief idea of the Hungarian people ~~(although)~~ was love of freedom and liberty even in 896 A.D. when they settled in the Danubian Basin, and Leo XIII. wrote about the Hungarian people saying how these Hungarians were lovers of liberty and that was the reason they have left Etelköz because a stronger power wanted to suppress them.

The life of the church begins to develop, many people were starving, many were sick, there was no medicine or bandage available, many doctors had escaped, hospitals were full, and medical students were called ~~into~~ carry on during November. On November 4th at noon the Kádár government proclaimed itself in office and the state begins to strengthen itself against the church.

Between October 29th and December 21st the executive committee (intéző Bizottság) had met ^{at} and the December 21st meeting László Ravasz opens the meeting by summarizing those meetings as well as other events that had taken place making a general report as follows. Ravasz thanks and congratulates the congregations which had sent money to the movement from their Sunday offerings. Kisvárda 10,000 frts, Helvetia 1,700 frts, Gebei 500 frts. He goes on to say that the sacrifices and the strength of giving by these churches should serve as an example to others. There follows then a detailed report on the situation of the church at this time. He also reports about the letter of resignation from Bishop Bereczky. Ravasz goes on to say

that on December 11th the conference of elders and deans was held in the Dunamellék district. Here calm discussions proceeded at which the two deans, Zsigmond Buki and Géza Papp reported to the conference about their December 8th meeting in the Religious Affairs Office. At the December 8th meeting persons present were the two men named above and Elemér Györi, Bishop of the Transdanubian district, László Buza, chief legal counsel for the district, and János Horváth as chairman of the meeting representing the Religious Affairs Office. Ravasz goes on to report that an ultimatum was given by the State Religious Affairs Office saying that if the Reformed Church does not stop the illegalities which it has committed, the Religious Affairs Office will retaliate with stronger measures. It listed the illegalities as 1., the formation of the executive committee and its existence, 2. the action of the committee to force a sick man (this referring to Bishop Bereczky) with an act that endangers his life, 3. that chief elders had been displaced from their office and others put into their positions. If these arrangements and actions will not come to an end the Religious Affairs Office will use severe measures against the church. Furthermore the Religious Affairs Office does not recognize the appointments of László Ravasz as bishop and Kardos as chief elder in the Dunamellék district. Secondly the Religious Affairs Office will start criminal proceedings against two

new men of the konventus, Bodok and László Farkas, for signing checks and giving out money. Thirdly, the Religious Affairs Office ends all payments of pensions and state aid to churches. The Office has given instructions that no money is to be given out for January. Finally the Religious Affairs Office said that it has the right to express its opinion in the elections of the Reformed Church and to practise the right of veto after the elections are completed. Then it added that in all of these questions the Religious Affairs Office and the church can discuss them and talk about them.

Ravasz then goes on to say that the view of the two deans was: "Nem iszák ~~abot~~ ^{abot} ~~ilyan~~ ^{ilyan} forrón amilyen", or "the Religious Affairs Office is not necessarily bent at the wrong words it is using". (They do not drink the wine as hot as it is.) At the December 11th conference of deans and chief elders Géza Papp said that he wanted to talk these questions over with Bishop Bereczky and the Religious Affairs Office. This conference approved almost unanimously with one exception to this step. The one who opposed this decision was Zoltán Kiss, the brother of Róland Kiss. Zoltán was the chief elder of a Baranya classis or megye. He said, this action was improper and he said that he will not resign even if asked one hundred times. He turned for support to legal procedure that he could not be removed from office nor could be others who

had been. (On a legal question the officers of the konventus or now this temporary committee had legal ground for removing persons who had not performed their duties properly and the trust placed in their hands had been shaken.) Finally it was decided that Zsigmond Buki and Giza Papp talk to Albert Bereczky. These men want to talk to Bereczky and separately with the Religious Affairs Office. Then the Religious Affairs Office asked that László Ravasz contact them so that they may carry on discussions with him. Ravasz continued to report to the December 21st executive committee meeting that on December 15th, at 10.30 in the morning, Dusica, a man whom the temporary executive committee had asked to resign, called Ravasz by telephone informing him that the Religious Affairs Office wants him to report for a meeting at 11 a.m. Ravasz said that he cannot go to the meeting and that Dusica should tell the Religious Affairs Office that the invitation came to him too late and that he would go to the Office on December 19th. Then Ravasz asked Dusica how did Dusica come to this role of transmitting the invitation to him. Dusica answered that he did not know how he got this job, merely that the Religious Affairs Office had asked him and that he was surprised at this also. For December 19th no invitation arrived for Ravasz but by the next day, December 20th, an invitation came for an 11 a.m. meeting. Ravasz went to the Religious Affairs Office and there he was told that the reason they did not give him

an invitation for the 19th was that the news had spread that Ravasz was holding discussions with the Religious Affairs Office and the Office did not want to approve this news. So they did not invite him.

Géza Papp and Zsigmond Buki accompanied Ravasz to these discussions and Ravasz in reporting on the 21th says that they came as observers and whenever they spoke up they spoke up most constructively. Ravasz continues by saying that the discussions lasted from 10 o'clock until 2 in the afternoon. Ravasz began the talks in which talks there was nothing new but Ravasz presented a statement which lasted one and a half hours. He said among other things; one, that the Religious Affairs Office holds an ~~erroneous~~ ^{erroneous} view when it says that it has a right to interfere into church decisions and elections; second, the interference of the state would mean giving up complete autonomy; third, this autonomy is guaranteed in the Vienna and Linz Peace Treaties, thus international^{ly} guaranteed (here Ravasz is going back into Hungarian Reformed Church history for his basis of argument); fourth, how decisions have become legal in the state and an approval of our church decisions is only cumulative. Ravasz in his one and a half hour statement says that he does not imagine that where there are two sides to an agreement, ~~the~~ one side should be all powerful alone, be allowed to decide the point of departure, of decision, of fact, and use such

sanctions which touch innumerable innocent men and then say that the church decision is not legal. (Here also Ravasz is building his case on the 1948 agreement between the church and state.) The Religious Affairs Office said that they did not think of this which Ravasz has referred to, that their ultimatum was only a warning. (Here Ravasz comments that this is a characteristic symptom or sign of the day.) Then there are two roads before the government, either to retreat into terror and the methods therein employed or secondly give itself up as a sacrifice and give up its place. In his one and a half hour talk at the Religious Affairs Office, Ravasz goes on to concrete questions of the accusations. First that of the legal basis of the church. He says, a legal basis for the church is the egyházkerület, the church district or synod, and this legal basis will be formed and had as soon as the egyházkerület meeting can be held. Second, the egyházkerület will decide then who is to be bishop and chief elder of the church. Let us be clear about this, he said. Thirdly, if the egyházkerület does not want the former officers of the church then these men will have to resign in legal fashion. Fourth, for the empty offices new elections will take place. This is the only legal way in which these offices can be filled and for this, Ravasz said, the Religious Affairs Office should give its support.

In reply to the Ravasz statement, the Religious Affairs Office answers one, that it would have been most proper after the Revolution if the Hungarian Reformed Church would have put official temporary men into the key posts and next to these as advisers would have been put the men who formerly held the positions. (At this point the respondent says that an official temporary committee was formed but, of course, the government-named men were not on that committee as advisers, so that in a sense the Hungarian Reformed Church did exactly what now they are asking for.)

2. The measures taken against Bodok and Parkas are merely a mistake. 3. The church shall avoid removing from office all officers. The decision of such removals and displacements will be decided with the Religious Affairs Office and in this connections the Religious Affairs Office is willing to make farreaching concessions. 4. The Religious Affairs Office retracts its decision to withdraw pensions and aid to the churches. 5. As a final request to the Reformed Church the Religious Affairs Office said they would like to have the church publish a pastoral letter for Christmas in which the church would say how much good the Religious Affairs Office had done in behalf of the Reformed Church and how much good it will do in the future.

This discussion which László Ravasz had with the Re-

ligious Affairs Office was conducted with him as an individual and not as bishop of the Reformed Church. Thus the Office made no official concessions. Ravasz in reporting this meeting to the December 21st executive committee says that the situation of renewal now must go over to the level of the movement and have church members join the movement for renewal. The whole renewal of the church depends on this, he said. The only constitutional solution is the complete new election of officers. All the deans, everyone who has been put into a job and not elected for such post must be replaced by duly elected men. Ravasz goes on to say we know that the old Communist appointees have not given up their posts and now in order to gain public opinion for the movement for renewal Bible circles are needed, ministerial conferences are required, and during worship services ministers should tell their people about the movement and thus give publicity to the renewal. Every minister and every congregation be a leader for renewal. This was a time of crisis. Professor Barna Nagy had been arrested, Dr. László Fap had been forced to resign, ministers ~~are~~^{are} afraid to speak.

What is the condition of the Hungarian Reformed Churches from January till March 1957?

During the early months of 1957 the terror strengthened. The Religious Affairs Office of the state had been

dissolved as such, but the personnel of that office was moved under the cultural ministry, where a full division was given to religious affairs. There the former office carried on with the same men. A long list of Hungarian Reformed pastors were arrested and many forced to resign from their ministry. Those arrested are Dr. Sándor Job, minister of the Fisor Church, Dr. Barna Nagy, professor of dogma at the Budapest Seminary, György Hegyaljai, minister at the Pest-Hidegkút Church, Henrik Flock, assistant pastor at Csepel, László Ági, the minister of the Csepel Church, József Marósi, assistant pastor at Tatabánya, and many more. The same kind of arrests and even more were made in the Roman Catholic Church. The World Council of Churches in Geneva protested the arrests to János Horváth of the Religious Affairs Division and protested the terror against the pastors of the Reformed Church.

The new weekly church paper "Reformátusok Lapja" appeared with its first issue on April 1st, 1957. The names of these men appeared in the issue. Many of the arrested ministers were pastors of churches whose membership was made up of workers. "Népakarat" wrote stinging articles against the Reformed Church, against the leaders of the Reformed Church as being in the service of the counter-revolution. In a four column article Dr. László Pap was attacked ~~as the preparer of the~~ as the preparer of the spirit of counter-revolution. The article accuses him of

having contact with Western church leaders and ^{of} informed ^{ing} these men about the October days and, with his radio talk of November 1st, ^{is} poisoned the relationship between the church and state in Hungary. Népakarat quotes Western church leaders in comments they made upon returning to their countries after the World Council meeting such as "something is brewing in Hungary". The article says that they saw the counter-revolution was happening already in August. Another comment made in a Western paper by a church leader who was supposed to have said: "We saw this already in August". Therefore, the Népakarat article concludes, Pap can be called a preparer of the counter-revolution. This same article in "Népakarat" does not say that Pap is on sick leave "and was forced to leave Budapest" nor does the article say that Professor Barza Nagy has been arrested nor does it say that Professor Czeglédi's house had been hit by a bomb.

At this time in Hungary assembly is forbidden and the movement for renewal can be carried on only by mail. But even this is dangerous because one does not know who reads the mail.

Now developments in the Hungarian Reformed Church on the basis of reports in the "Reformátusok Lapja" and correspondence received by the respondent.

István Szamoskösi who was responsible editor of "Az Út" is now editor of the "Reformátusok Lapja". His editor-

ship was interrupted for ten days during the Revolution when Dr. Imre Gyököery received the assignment to edit the Reformed Church paper. This assignment came from the temporary committee of the Reformed Church. Dr. László Ravasz has been sent back to his home at Leányfal^u and is almost exiled, however, congregation members give him food and other supplies.

Bishop Bereczky wrote an article or letter to the church which appeared in a prominent place in the church paper entitled "Püspök Üzenete" or "A Message of the Bishop". However, in the article Bereczky does not speak as bishop ^{use} nor preteritions of a bishop. Since he has to begin his article somewhere he says he is sorry that he was sick and now things will go much better.

The second issue of the "Reformátusok Lapja" greets April 4th as Liberation Day, the day on which the Nazis left Hungary and the Soviets entered. The article whose writer is not listed says that we committed illegal ^{acts} ~~acts~~ against our leaders in the Revolu^{tion}, that is the leaders of the Reformed Church. The article also says that László Ravasz will speak in the Calvin Square Church on April 7th and that religious half hours will be allowed on the radio and that Czech and Western church delegations have been in Hungary.

The fifth issue of the "Reformátusok Lapja" gives news of the Piska vicinity, meeting of deans and elders as well

at the Dunasallók meeting. These two districts of the church had been under bishops János Péter and Albert Beresky. The two districts give a joint proclamation. The Dunasallók said that they hold Albert Beresky as the legally elected bishop. They say that it was the daughter of Beresky who by telephone gave the resignation of Beresky to Assisi Pap. Therefore the districts want to say that Beresky really did not resign. The proclamation of the Kassa vicinity district says that János Péter is still bishop and they want to apologize to him. However, the proclamation makes no mention of the letter of resignation submitted by Bishop Péter. The proclamation asks János Péter to come back to the district and certainly they know that János Péter is now at the cultural committee of the government, that he had been in Moscow to make arrangements for a cultural agreement. His name appeared along the name of government people. The proclamation said that they will ask him whether he would like to come back but they are sure he will. The meeting has no doubt that Péter will return. The respondent also feels that state pressure will be placed upon him to return to his bishop's chair for the state can use him to greater advantage there. Concerning the movement for renewal which demanded complete new elections both proclamations said this demand was sinful. The proclamation ends by saying that they are ready to cooperate with the state on a minimum the basis of the 1948

agreement. The style of the proclamation is one of submission.

Hopes and Some New Signs in the Church.

Three points which seem to indicate some hope and offer some reassurance. 1., According to the 1951 ruling regulating missions, a minister was allowed to preach in another church or another pulpit other than his own only with the permission of his bishop or his dean. However, now a program of ^{evangelism} ~~evangelism~~ is allowed which means ministers are exchanging pulpits. But undoubtedly this will be stopped. This is something like allowing juke-box^s in Hungary, at the present time letting people to dance the kind of dances they want and so forth. But this will be stopped, too. This is opening the valve to let the steam off. 2., In certain churches youth meetings are held for the various neighbouring churches. They are ^{evangelism} ~~evangelism~~ meetings. Such themes as: "Do you love me more than these?" (which Jesus asked Peter) are found. 3. Religious education to be offered in the schools will be regulated in a different way. This was announced on March 27th by the order No. 21/1957. It regulates the religious teaching for the school year 1957/58. According to it, registration for such education will take place not on one day ~~or~~ but during an entire week. Moreover this registration week will be announced over the radio and by the ministers of

congregations. At registration time either a parent or a guardian has to appear. Previously both parents had to appear to register. Religious education, it was announced, will last ^{from} the beginning of a school year to the end of a school year. Previously such religious training was only for four or five weeks. It must be conducted in the school building, but if space is not available it can be done in a church building. The teacher or leader of such religious education will be named by the church with the approval of the local county council's proper division. The order furthermore said that the state in fact will oppose those who try to interfere with religious education. This order has been announced and published, but as yet it has not been put into force or into effect.

The Common Fund, Közalap, of the Reformed Church.

Before the Communist system took over in Hungary, the church had large land holdings, forests, pastures, buildings which came to the church through ^{bequests} ~~bequests~~ and gifts. The church also had schools and out of its land holdings the church gained money by which it was able to maintain its institutions. However, not every minister was well paid and there were too many ministers for the number of congregations and openings available. Therefore there were fights to gain certain church posts. For some of the openings 200 assistant pastors candidated. Especially for

openings which offered large land holdings along with the church which meant that the pay of the minister or the livelihood would be better. About 50 percent of the ministers were underpaid and in a poor situation. Usually the assistant pastor had to do all the work. Nationalization of church property took everything from the church. Now all the ministers were poor or in the same situation.

There were attempts to establish a schedule of pay on a basis of years of service in order to equalize the pay or to offer the same pay to all ministers. The 1948 agreement tries to regulate the pay of the ministers and it establishes the state aid to the churches, kongurácia, that is that every five years the state aid will decrease 25 percent up to 1965, December 31. After that no state aid will be available for the congregations.

This meant that the churches in the meantime would have to make some arrangement for self support. The question was simply where to get this money to replace the state aid lost each five years. The Reformed Church tried to establish a common fund on the following principles:

- 1., the church classis and district according to its membership and wealth will ^{apportion} ~~apportion~~ or tax the congregations and they will have to pay every month. (This presented many problems. Up to 1944 the church tax had been collected by the state. After that this became a voluntary contribution not a required tax and especially when

everyone became poorer fewer people made this contribution or tax. The money for the common fund was taken in by certain appointed members of the church who would visit every member. 2., the next source of income for the common fund was from church property and possessions. Certain lands remained in possession of local congregations, land next to the church or in the cemetery. Income from these lands and from the sale of cemetery lots could go to the common fund. 3., income of the regular offerings during the worship services and from gifts given to the churches; these to be sent in to the common fund on the basis of the amount required.

The problem then was, what if this amount required by the common fund does not come in, say 11,000 or 30,000 frs?

The experiment of the common fund started in January 1956 to run through December 31, 1956 for one year on a trial basis. This in itself made additional expenses and created new offices in the Konventus. Up to September about one third of the required goal had come in. With this amount the Konventus tried to make the pay of ministers more equal because some churches locally were able to pay additional amounts to their pastors. In fact there was even talk about merging the two theological seminaries of Debrecen and Budapest at the Debrecen site. Personally I feel this would have been a good idea. From the common fund it was ^{planned} ~~planned~~ to aid theological instruction, to assist

the 14 charitable institutions, provide funds for the church districts and classis, and continue the in-service/^{training} for further education of ministers.

The common fund did not succeed and it had a great deal of opposition. Theological students themselves opposed it because they would have to give up the legacio which was rather lucrative for the students. However, the Konventus agreed that after the fifth year of theological training it would give the students a pastoral gown and a black suit. However, this most often would not equal the amount of money that students would be able to accumulate during five years for their various visits to congregations and holidays. Ministers according to the advance laid out after January 1st, 1957 would get equal pay with an increase for each five years of service. This, of course, was opposed by those who would lose under this program.

Bishop Albert Bereczky was pushing the common fund along with the following people: Tibor Bartha, Zsigmond Varga, Benő Dékeffi, István Finta, Gyula Szamosközi, Tibor Herman, minister of Hódmezővásárhely, Árpád Munkácsy, the Dean of the Csongrád classis, and Zoltán Horváth, the Dean of Békés classis.

One can speak of the good side of the common fund since it offered an equality in the salaries for ministers. The common fund was ~~was~~ good in principle, but there were

great oppositions to it if the hierarchy had 9,000 frts pay per month and the lower clergy would have only a 1,000 frts or below salary per month. The Budapest seminary students especially were against the common fund and had drawn up a petition against it.

The In-Service or Further Education of Hungarian Reformed Ministers.

For the last three or four years now no matter how old a particular minister was he had to participate in post-graduate in-service program of training in every district of the church. These training programs were one or two weeks long and were required of all ministers. At first these training sessions dealt with theological problems, especially the new theology. The theological letters of Paul were used for ~~exercises~~ ^{exegesis} because all letters can be twisted for one's own use as the Communists did. However, seminary professors who helped at these training sessions hoped they could thus keep the ministers abreast of modern theology from abroad. The second area studied was the ecumenical church. This was especially important for the ministers of the villages so that they may become familiar with ecumenical studies. In the third place present church problems were discussed. This was important but it was connected with the first point, that is ~~exercises~~ ^{exegesis} ~~riser~~ and the new theology. In this area lecturers needed

to be developed, those who were comrades. Bishops Péter and Bereczky selected these lecturers or they themselves spoke. A few hours were allowed for discussion of the inner church, the Reformed Church confession. But in this area not too much time was allowed so that finally the ministers did not dare to speak up at all because there was enough friction on these points. Under this area the ministers talked about the financial problems and strong debates about the common fund developed. The leaders ~~opponents~~ of the church tried to have it accepted by the ministers before they instituted it, however, nothing of the discussions and debates and strong arguments was ever reported in the papers. Also discussed were homiletic problems, that is how to prepare sermons under the new theology.

In spite of all the disadvantages of this post-graduate in-service training of ministers it had a great many advantages. One, the ministers of the Reformed Church met one another frequently and thus shared ideas and the result of this was the Confession of Creed of the confessing church which came out in 1956, because in such meetings the writers of the Creed were able to gather signatures for the confession. Two, spiritually the men were motivated because they were assigned various themes which they had to work up and present at the next session. Three, these training sessions also had the effect of

awakening the faith and spiritual life of the ministers. They heard some very excellent sermons and received many examples of sermons.

Connected with the continued education of ministers were the small circles of ministers who came together in cities or in an area. In these small circles or *kis körök* the ministers not only received outlines of sermons but brochures were given them containing certain viewpoints for certain texts. The church paper "Az Út" carried a schedule for Bible readers (*Biblia Olvasó Katalógus*) which was prepared by Dr. Lajos Darányi who had been a professor at ~~the~~ Sárospatak and now was a minister in Sárospatak. According to this outline and schedule people read their Bible and according to it ministers did their preaching. For example, if on the 25th of a certain month a certain Bible reading was listed in the schedule, the *konventus* would give certain points for the sermons on that particular text. In the small circles or *kis körök* ministers talked over these suggestions. This all took much time on the part of the ministers to prepare these things. Moreover in the small circles ministers had to read the Hungarian state constitution. They also had to read the daily press in order to be prepared for discussions about the press. The ministers did not like this and on top of this they had so many people who went to them with over-abundance of problems. The minister had his trouble

with the church sexton, the choir-master, and by the time he was ready to do the job that was his he was tired out and could not comfort his people. This was ruining the church from the inside.

The Problem of Hymns and the Training of the Choir-Masters.

The 1925 psalters were used which contain 150 psalms and 350 hymns. There was an attempt to change to get back to rhythmic singing and to sing the ~~songs~~ psalms rhythmically. In fact 7,000 music books for the ~~songs~~ psalms were purchased to be used by the organist. These were purchased from the Dutch, however, I believe most of these are still in the konventus office. The new psalter and hymn book was prepared by the committee of Zoltán Kodály, Jenő Ádám, and ~~and~~ Kállay. The new book ~~contains~~ includes 150 ~~songs~~ psalms, and 275 hymns. The new book was printed, but too few were printed. The problem then was how to get the books used in the new singing. In 1948 when the further education of ministers and the small circles were started the new tunes and the new singing was introduced. Here the minister would learn ten new tunes, go home to teach perhaps two to his congregation if he was lucky, finally found out that he had to start with the youngsters. The oldsters, especially men, opposed the new tunes. It was strange for everyone and they were against it.

The education of choir-masters in prewar time was

done by the choir-master school. They were ^{"preparáté"} ~~preparáté~~ who finished their gymnasium training and were prepared for elementary school teachers. They also learned harmony and music. When the church schools were nationalized, the church teachers were not allowed to teach church music. Thus only the kántor or choir-master remained to do this teaching in the church. Then there were attempts to get two or three-week courses in 1947 organized. Békeffi organized it. He tried in Debrecen to solve the music problem with three divisions set up in the collage. First, the humán, second, reál, third, reál music. The kántor or choir-master problem was not solved because there was no money for it, did not have any sheet music nor money for organists in the church.

How Ministers Were Removed From Their Church Pulpits.

József Berényi, the pastor of the Mester Street Church in Debrecen who had been influended by the Bethanist movement in Hungary was sent on a leave of absence to study by Bishop Péter. This recommendation came to the Bishop's office through his assistant Károly Ferenci. Berényi had to do some more studying because his New Testament ^{exegesis} ~~exercises~~ was bad, and the bishop put Zsigmond Varga over him as an overseer. Varga gave Berényi a theme to work on during his leave of absence. But Berényi was not satisfied with it.

The real source of the trouble was that Berényi was a popular preacher. Too many people went to his church and most of the students from the Debrecen collegium went to his church on Sundays. During Berényi's leave of absence Ferenci and even the bishop filled in the pulpit. The congregation had a rather good inner life of faith although this inner life was not ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Bethanist.

Berényi could not be one for the new theology. So they tried to make a deal with him. But a few months later he was arrested. No new minister was elected to Berényi's post and other ministers went in as supply preachers. Finally last summer Berényi regained his right to wear a gown but he was told that he had no right to preach because his ^{exegesis} ~~exegesis~~ was bad. After that tremendous crowds went to his church and it was at his church that the first Congregational Day was held, at which time at ten in the morning Bishop Péter served as preacher. He tried to win the people to himself. (Bishop Péter in the same afternoon was in Pest for a meeting). In the afternoon Professor István Török preached. There was a prayer circle, recitations, and organ recital. In the evening during the Congregational Day there was an assembly and prayer. Dr. Lajos Vasárhelyi ^{era} started his ministry at Ungvár. During the Arrowcross ~~era~~ he got a job in a factory, got out in 1945, went to Sátoraljaújhely, and from there went to Hádmezővárhely, to the same church in which I was a member. He did a fine decent

work there, was very active. His wife was very charming. The people were satisfied with him. In the meantime a bigger church in Hódmezővásárhely opened up. He was elected regularly to that pastorate in 1948. Beginning in 1949 he was the minister of ^{this} ~~the~~ larger church. The trouble with him was that he always desired more and wanted to be the dean of the classis. However, Arpád Mankácsy last year during the time of the Berényi issue Vasárhelyi was defrocked because he made some irresponsible statements against the Soviet. He still has not received his right to preach. However, during the Revolution he preached twice. Last December he was asked to leave the parsonage and was offered a smaller house. Now the Dean Szentes has elected himself to this pastorate. Vasárhelyi has said that he will not leave the parsonage and told the authorities to put him out into the square if they want. He was offered the pastorate of a small church but would not accept. He was called into the Party office, into the police also. At the point when I lost view of the situation he did not know what to do. The people did not look at him as pastor anymore.

The Szeged Student Movement and Its Consequences.

On October 15th a small meeting of medical students in Szeged was held. They tried to talk about those problems which had been perplexing them and bothering them in their university life. They wished to have military service regulated so that it comes during the time they are still in medical school. They wished to eliminate the study of Marxism and Russian. They wished to have eliminated the weekly two hour course on ^{national defence} ~~national defence~~ ^{facultativ} ~~facultativ~~ and wanted to make physical education a ~~facultativ~~ ^{facultativ} course. Moreover they wanted to reduce the hours even more ~~time~~ by dropping the above courses. In the heat of things they decided that they would step out of the DISZ and organize the MEFESZ under the presumption that university students should have a separate organization and that peasant youths and youth workers should also have separate organizations. They wanted to emphasize that they respect all people in their own profession or work, or the peasant on the land, but they could not imagine a peasant boy representing a university student. These medical students were defending their own interests.

So this group then sent a letter out to the other universities in Hungary and even sent delegates and representatives to these universities throughout Hungary, to all university cities so that these delegates may tell the students what had happened at Szeged. When this

happened, all the university students in Szeged were united in the demands which the medical students had propagated.

The need for sending delegates to all parts of the country was necessary because the Communist press as they well knew distorted the truth or would not carry the demands of the students. When this happened the state government became disturbed that these stubborn youths want the truth told anyway. Especially the Szabad Ifjuság opposed the demands of the students. When these Szeged students went out over the country one meeting followed another. Sopron, Pécs, three students to Veszprém, one student to Debrecen. The call went out from the students to the young workers and peasants also that they should meet. These youths also started to move. The state did not approve this either. The present education minister went out to Szeged by plane and tried to quiet the university students. He promised them that the next day he would telegraph them concerning what agreement can be made. He made a definite agreement in the elimination of the Russian language but he refused to restore the autonomy of the universities. By October 21st and 22nd at night the news had spread that in reality the Russian language was dropped from the curriculum. Budapest, the heart of the country was also beating with the university students at the head of the movement.

Especially the engineering students were very daring in their demands. They did not limit their demands to scholastic ones but went over to political demands and not limited to their own ~~demands~~ interest but spread out to the national problems. They demanded 1., the Russian troops leave Hungarian territory, 2., dissolve the Warsaw Pact, 3., give the workers appropriate wages and eliminate the norms, 4., make public the fate of Hungarian uranium, 5., place before a court of law Mihaly Parkas and his partner, 6., the use of the Hungarian and Kossuth emblem, 7., permit university students to go abroad.

The other universities took over these demands and their demands went further and further. The university students assured one another of their solid unity and decided that if their demands are not read into the radio they will go out [!] into the street for a parade. On the night of October 22nd all this happened. They telegraphed these events to all universities, to all of us. At noon on October 23rd Gerö and Rákosi got home from a visit to Tito. They came home before expected and planned, they had shortened their visit. This made the nation and student group even more restless than they were. The nation by now was boiling. When the students' demands were not met the students went out into the streets in Budapest and this happened in all the other cities also. At Szeged the streetcars stopped at noon, 30,000 people

^{with} on the streets. In Budapest the parade, ^{was led} to the statues of Bem and Kossuth by 10,000 students on the street. In the meantime the Red Star starts falling just as red flags are torn down. Stalin's picture is torn from the walls. By evening a tremendous crowd now demands that the demands of the students and also of the entire country be heard. At the Radio Station the crowd is received by AVH gunfire instead of being allowed to read the demands of the demonstrators into the radio. Gerö holds his talk in the radio and this still increases the anger of the crowd. The crowd wanted to go into the radio building. In the meantime the AVH received new reinforcements. The commander who came with the new group when he saw clearly the desires of the crowd stepped among the demonstrators and took their side. This he made evident and he was shot from the window of the Radio Station. Upon this now the demonstrators attacked the building. They took guns from the soldiers who had been brought up to the Radio Station and some of the soldiers joined the crowd. Out of the Radio Station building Gerö left by a white ambulance and escaped. The same ambulance returning to the Radio Station took arms to the AVH who were inside the Station. A ferocious battle developed.

In Szeged on October 23rd there occurred a demonstration and procession. At 11 p.m. in the evening everyone was chased home by the AVH and police. Thousands had been

in the streets. The AVH shot at the feet of the processioners and warned them they had 30 minutes, 20 minutes, 10 minutes to get out of the streets. The demonstrators were steel workers, printers, and so forth. At midnight next to the theater in the student hotel about 25 AVH men entered and all the students were told to get out into the halls. The pretext for their entrance was they were looking for arms and leaflets. All the students were asked whether they were party members or not, members of the DISZ or not, and even party members were beaten by the AVH. The students were asked where the director of the hotel was. When he came in he was beaten up, too. The next morning a police captain appeared at the hotel and asked to be forgiven. He apologized and said he did not know about the previous night's events. On October 24th news of the Budapest Revolution arrived at Szeged and in Szeged the workers councils were formed and the removal of the Communist councils took place.

In Debrecen where I was on October 19th there appeared a student from Szeged. The Debrecen students as well as students from the theological seminary went to a meeting to hear this Szeged student. He told us of the events on October 16th in Szeged and of the demands which they drew up, also told us of the plan for going ⁱⁿ to the streets on October 23rd. Then on October 23rd the whole crowd of students went out ⁱⁿ to the streets. As we reached the city

our group got larger. We started out with about 8,000 and after three kilometers the crowd was 30,000. We went into the city for two reasons. One, that we may get the workers from the various factories to join us, the wagon factory, furniture factory, tool factories, and others, and second, talk over with them and unite our points so that immediately we may print the demands in the print shop. We started out at 11 a.m. from the university and by 5 we were able to come back to the center of the city with the workers to the print shop at the Arany Bika Szálló Building. Factories stopped working. The Red Stars, Stalin's pictures were torn down and thrown into the street. The crowd surrounded the City Hall and took the Star off it. The crowd did not leave the vicinity of the print shop until the leaflets, 10,000 of them, were thrown out of the windows onto the street. The reason we wanted the leaflets printed with our demands on the same day was that a few thousand peasants were in town for market that day. This provided the opportunity for the peasants to take the leaflets back to their villages. By 9 p.m. the AVH came out with 50 men carrying bayonettes and ready to fire. The first volley of firing ~~was~~ occurred at 10 p.m. We were in worship just then. When we went out we found four dead and six wounded. An innocent old man and his wife and daughter were fatally hit on the sidewalk. After this people went home and a curfew was enforced. The following morning we could hear over the Buda-

pest radio that shooting was taking place in Budapest on October 24th. On October 26th the students were out in the city in ^{guard} service. Two students, two soldiers, and one policeman. We saw a truck filled with Russian soldiers run through the city. A good number of the Russians on the truck were drunk. They stopped often and frequently came close to us. They shot down from the back a 16 year old boy who saw them and was running home. Eight people were killed by the soldiers from this truck. In the next few days and even on November 4th and in other times no shots were fired in Debrecen.

Translation of Bishop Janos Peter's Letter of Resignation

Honorable Presbitery*:

In December 1949, I began my duties in the Presbitery feeling certain of having been called to my post, in fears and terrors I was consoled and strengthened by the promise of the Lord. Though I did not openly promise at the outset of my term of service that I would after a time submit my activities to the free judgment of the Presbitery, I nevertheless from the very first day have expressed in various forms that the Lord who calls us to service is supremely free in the giving and revoking of His assignments. With this I have also referred to myself unmistakably. Now, for some days the decision has been maturing in me to offer my post for disposal to the Presbitery. There are some to whom I have already at that time spoken about this. Innumerable signs of the Church's inner life point to opportunities of new beginnings under a renewed influence of grace for the Church and for ourselves within her. It is one of the life laws of God's congregation that opportunities of renewal are accompanied by the inner revival of those who serve the Church and often with their replacement.

In the present situation of our nation and our Church, it is my fullest conviction that I have to leave my present post in the interests of both the Church's and my own renewal.

I arrived at this decision in deep suffering and penitence

*Church District in the Hungarian Calvinist Church.

and was not forced to it by external circumstances. This decision has matured in faith, in the Church, and for the Church.

In my duties as a bishop I was mainly conscious of the following tasks: 1/ to witness, both in the Church and outside her, that in the gospel of salvation, unfettered by the social situation, the Church is proceeding freely towards the Day of the Savior who will come to judge mankind. 2/ In the tense world situation and in the domestic conditions which are connected with it, I would have liked to achieve through my service that the great transformations should take place with the minimum of human suffering and the least possible damage to the Church. 3/ In fostering our ecumenical connections, I sought for the strength of a united Church and for the recovery of the peoples living in a state of tension.

My strength in faith and my knowledge proved inadequate to these tasks. Together with my great failings, this spoiled my work and its results. Already I am partly aware of my mistakes. I know that the Lord who searches all of us will gradually open up all of them to me. The more distinctly I began to see the possibilities of a new beginning during the past months, it became increasingly clear that at the time of renewal I will have to try myself in the open before the congregation. Though I am well aware that our work is not tried by human judgments but by the Day of Fire, we still have to look at those among whom we do

our service as Jacob looked at Esau: on the faces of men we see God's face looking at us. I looked into this mirror too, and saw that my decision was right.

I do not mitigate for a moment the responsibility for my mistakes either before myself or before others with references to any external circumstances of the recent past. I am alone responsible for all my statements, decisions, and actions.

I am grateful that the prayers and services of our Church have helped to bring about this improving of the situation in which our people could look for greater national independence and our Church for a hope of fuller religious freedom. But I deem it to be a consequence also of my own mistakes that the time of new beginnings is not that of undisturbed thanksgiving, but of loss of lives and tragic events. With my resignation, which is so painful to me as to be hardly bearable, I do not want to avoid either the responsibility for my past actions or the obligations which should await me afterwards. In my case, too, I see the proof of penitence in the willingness of undergoing disciplinary action; I commend my faith and also my future services in whatever capacity to the Congregation and submit it to the mercy of the Lord of the Church who takes us all to account.

Forgive me in whatever I have sinned against you and that with which I have harmed you.

I present this letter to the ^{Presbitery} ~~Session~~ Council ~~at Princeton~~ ~~NY~~

with the request that, without consulting me any further, they should make the necessary recommendation to the appropriate bodies either at the time of receiving this letter or later, according as they judge fit in the interests of our Church to make my resignation effective.

When the Presbitery Council takes this step, I will also announce my resignation of the pastorate in the appropriate manner at the Northern Presbitery of Debrecen Nagytplom, i.e., at the presiding body of the Presbitery of Debrecen.

Thanking for the patience which the Presbitery has shown me during my past tenure of office, knowing that our lives are in God's mercy,

I am,

the grateful servant of the Honorable
Presbitery,

(sgd) Janos Peter m.,
Bishop

Debrecen, October 31, 1956.