

Reformed Church in Ukraine
Bishop Laszlo Horkay
Munkácsi ut 242
UA - 90200 Beregszász / Beregovo
Ukraine

Berne/Zurich, June 2006

Dear brothers and sisters,

Let us first of all express our warm greetings from the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches and from its Agency Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS)!

We have been informed recently, among other things through your own letter dated 6 February 2006, about some far-reaching decisions of your synod concerning for instance the ordination of female ministers in your church. We have read your explanations very carefully so that we can better understand your background and context. We fully recognize the various practical difficulties you and your ministers are facing when leading congregations in the midst of such burdening problems and constraints. We are also quite aware of the whole situation from frequent visits to your church.

Nevertheless, we want to express our serious concern about the decision taken and would like to urge you to reconsider it as soon as possible. Many European churches, also in Switzerland, recognize the validity of the Confessio Helvetica Posterior, but do ordain female ministers with full rights anyway. We do not think these churches can just be accused of being unfaithful. We rather believe that this Confession has been written in a very particular context and needs re-interpretation nowadays. Especially, the Confession wanted to address the issue of baptism of small children without any links with a congregation. Almost all member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe CPCE – Leuenberg Fellowship, both of them alliances which you are part of, do recognize the ordination of female ministers and praise the Lord for the blessings that those female ministers have brought into the life of the churches. It has been a long and difficult path for the churches till they came up to that decision, which is now very well accepted and rooted in the congregations.

Swiss Reformed churches and congregations have developed during the last 15 years several partnership relations with the Reformed Church in Ukraine, especially through the work of Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS). As Swiss churches value their friendships to the Ukrainian church and are committed to deepen the relations between Switzerland and Ukraine, they feel

obliged to express their deep concern and disappointment about those latest developments. We strongly hope that you may find ways to reconsider these decisions seriously. Maybe common deliberations about how to enhance the theological exchange among each other could prove helpful to deal with this issue or any another.

With fraternal greetings



Rev. Serge Fornerod
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
Director Department of Ecumenical Relations



Rev. Andreas Hess
HEKS
Head of Europe /Asia Desk

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- WARC, Geneva
- WARC Europe Committee
- CPCE, Berlin
- Reformed Church in Hungary