

Ács, Gydeon

„Reformátusok Lapja”  
1968 október

12

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Certificate

Wherewith I do testify that the bearer Reverend Gedeon Ács, a Protestant Magyar from Hungary, having distinguished himself by his patriotic zeal during our country's struggle for freedom and independence, and by his devotedness in his quest of a Protestant field-chaplain, was obliged to go into the exile after our country's immediate fall. Thus one of the earliest band of patriots who sought and found an asylum in Tur- key he amidst the sorrows and privations of exile, administered assiduously the consolation of religion to the homeless emigrant and when I, and some others of my fellow-refugees have been sent into detention at Sütöbánya, Ács, through his upon my re- quest accompanied us spontaneously as Chaplain of the cele- gated emigration sharing our privations to the last, till we all have been freed by the generous intervention of the U.S. and landed in this asylum of the oppressed.

Reverend Mr Ács is a gentleman conspicuous by learning, by true Christian virtue and purity, professing the true principles of the divine religion of charity, and acting according to them; modest and unassuming in his manners but zealous and untiring in his duties, in the same time tolerant towards others, as a true Christian has to be.

I cordially recommend him to the attention and pa- tronage of all who have a heart to appreciate the utmost merit of an equalled patriot, and the merit of a man- ted mistreatment of an equalled patriot, and the merit of a man- equally distinguished by learning, scientific attainments, cha- racter and morality. New York, July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1852.

*Dr. J. Smith*

Gedeon Ács

Gedeon Ács, a minister of the Reformed Church in Hungary, joined the War for Hungarian Independence in 1848, under the leadership of Lajos Kossuth, elected Governor of Hungary.

The Hungarian Army fought victoriously in many battles, but the King asked the Czar of Russia for help, and then the Hapsburg Army, strengthened by the 200,000 Russian soldiers, crushed the Hungarian forces. Kossuth left his homeland and went to Turkey, England, and to the United States, seeking help abroad to liberate his beloved homeland. He was graciously received wherever he went, and he pleaded his cause in eloquent English, but without success.

Kossuth was accompanied by many Hungarian statesmen and high ranking military officials. Later, some of these men settled in America and became famous either for their scientific skills or their bravery in the Civil War. Also in Kossuth's company was the Rev. Gedeon Ács, a former pastor of the Lasko Hungarian Reformed Church. Ács was a young Reformed minister who had joined the Hungarian Army as a chaplain. He was captured in the War, and the Austrian

Martial Court sentenced him to death, but he escaped. He journeyed with Kossuth to Turkey and the United States. They arrived in the United States on December 5, 1851.

At that time, there was a considerable Hungarian colony already in New York. Being a minister, he saw the spiritual needs of his fellow immigrants, and through the help and encouragement of several dedica- ted American women, and by the New York Presbytery, he held the first Hungarian Reformed Worship Service on March 14, 1852 in New York City in the Chapel of the Old North Reformed Church, which was located on the corner of William and Fulton Streets.

His Sunday congregations, contained not only mem- bers of the Reformed Church, but included Roman Catholics and Jews, and his American patrons who helped him to maintain the Church. The local papers applauded his work and urged him on. It was at this time that Ács started preaching for the Hungarians living in Newark, New Jersey.

His congregations consisted of few regular mem- bers, and since they could not assume the financial

responsibility of their minister, and without the continued support of his American patrons, Ács was forced to work in a factory during the week, but he continued his ministry on Sundays. However, after a short time, with growing disinterest, he discontinued his Services. His final sermon was preached on January 2, 1854, after which he went to secure work in Syracuse and Ithaca, New York for the Binghamton Railroad. Still later, he went to Boston where he found employment as an apprentice photographer.

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Ács became very homesick, and after many trials and hardships, he boarded a British ship returning to Hungary on February 23, 1861. He received amnesty, but much time elapsed before he was able to secure a position in the ministry. On April 23, 1862, he was elected pastor of the Reformed Church in Csúza, located in the south of Hungary. He died there on November 12, 1887. The only honor ever bestowed upon him was naming the only street in his village after him.

In newspaper accounts, in a book, and in pamphlet form, Gedeon Ács is remembered not only in Hungary, but also in the United States.

The Eastern Classis of Calvin Synod in commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Reformed Church of Hungary, dedicated a bronze plaque in memory of the Rev. Gedeon Ács.

The dedication took place on May 28, 1968 at 2 P.M. in the Interchurch Center, N. C. C. The plaque reads as follows:

IN MEMORY OF THE REV. GEDEON ACS, MINISTER OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY, CHAPLAIN TO LAJOS KOSSUTH, GOVERNOR OF HUNGARY, CONDUCTED THE FIRST HUNGARIAN REFORMED WORSHIP SERVICE IN AMERICA ON MARCH 14, 1852 IN THE CHAPEL OF THE OLD NORTH REFORMED CHURCH, FULTON AND WILLIAM STREETS, NEW YORK CITY. Erected by the Eastern Classis of the Calvin Synod—Conference of the United Church of Christ at the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the Reformed Church in Hungary—1967.

The program: Invocation by the Rev. Leslie Egly, President of the Eastern Classis; Hymn, Psalm 90;

Address by the Rev. Francis Vitez; Poem, written by the Rev. Gedeon Ács, read by the Rev. Joseph Kecs-kemethy; Unveiling and Presentation by the Rev. Dr. John Butosi, President of Calvin Synod; Receiving of the Plaque by Dr. H. Leroy Brininger, Associate General Secretary of the National Council of Churches; Introduction of Guests by Dr. Butosi; Prayer by the Rev. Dr. Zoltan Fule; and Benediction by the Rev. Dr. Stephen M. Bessemer.

The following attended the dedication ceremonies: Dr. R. H. E. Espy, General Secretary, N. C. C., Rev. Leroy Brininger, Associate General Secretary for Administration, N. C. C., Mrs. Cynthia Wedell, Associate General Secretary, Division of Church Unity, N. C. C., Rev. Stephen Feke, N. C. C., Mr. H. Belec, N. C. C., Rev. Dr. Ben M. Herfster, President, United Church of Christ, Rev. Joseph Evans, Secretary, United Church of Christ, Rev. Frank A. Kostyn, Associate Editor, United Church Herald, Rev. Gabor Csordas, Rev. Dr. Andrew Harsanyi, Dr. Sandor Kiss, Rev. Andrew Hamza, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Nyary, Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen M. Bessemer, Rev. Leslie Egly, Miss R. Egly, Rev. Francis Vitez, Rev. Joseph Kecs-kemethy, Rev. Dr. Zoltan Fule, Rev. Dr. Alexander Havadtoy, Rev. Dr. John Butosi, Mr. and Mrs. David Bardos, Mr. Charles Toth, and Rev. August J. Molnar.



The plaque was prepared by Mr. David Bardos, a 3rd generation Hungarian sculptor of South Norwalk, Connecticut.

The inspiring dedication acted as a link between the denominational leaders, our people, and the old and new homelands.

It is our hope and desire that one day soon, his diary may be published. How beneficial it would be for both of his countries. Let the inhabitants of both countries that he loved so well, long remember his name, and pass it along in history.

Gedeon Ács, a dedicated man, who sacrificed much for Hungary and for America, but who received so little.

Rev. Francis Vitez