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A History and Philosophy of the World Council of Churches

Arthur Lemuel Carl

Approved By

Major Professor: Nobel V. Sack

Co-operative Reader: Kenneth P. Wesche

Professor of Thesis Form: Nobel V. Sack

A HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF
THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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Arthur Lemuel Carl

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine, on the basis of its history, the philosophy of the World Council of Churches.

Justification for the Study

There are few books by evangelical scholars that deal with the World Council of Churches in an objective manner. Often personal presuppositions and biases made the books so subjective that the evaluation had to be discounted. Often the view is limited because of a writer's inability to see every facet of a subject. This writer has attempted to enter the subject as free from presuppositions as possible. Wide investigation has been done with the hope that a valid view has been attained.

Another justification was the fact that the subject of ecumenicity is perhaps the most live theological subject of the day. It is a matter of general knowledge that most present day denominations are divided on matters of theology, polity, and social order. When those holding to widely divergent views were able to get together in church unions or ecumenical movements, many questioned what the basis for such a union was and what held them together.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation is that which is suggested by the title of the thesis. There are various ecumenical movements. Each has a slightly differ-

ent position and spirit. The writer chose to limit this study to one of these groups, the World Council of Churches.

There had to be limitations even within the framework of the subject chosen. Historically, only the main conferences were dealt with. There seemed to be general agreement that the modern ecumenical movement had certain well-defined roots.

There have been two Assemblies of the World Council of Churches. A third is planned. These have been covered comprehensively. Intertwined around all these conferences were lesser meetings or committee gatherings. These were not handled.

Philosophically, the writer limited himself to the official records of the conferences. Men, involved with the conferences, have made many alarming statements, on their own and off-the-record. To fairly ascertain the position of the Council, the writer had to limit himself to the official statements of the Assemblies. These often differed widely from certain off-the-record statements made by those who form only a voice in the total picture.

Methods of Procedure

A chronological-historical and philosophical approach was used for the over-all pattern of the paper. The conferences leading up to the formation of the World Council of Churches were dealt with in a historical way, with little emphasis on the philosophy. The World Council Assemblies were handled in their historical setting with primary emphasis on their philosophy.

The entire thesis has been documented with primary sources. Each

conference had an official record. These records have been carefully consulted for the official histories and philosophies. Some secondary sources were used to supplement the primary sources. These for the most part were written by men who have been involved with the ecumenical movement. Their record of certain facts were considered very close to primary sources.

Statement of Organization

The research material is classified in the following manner:

Chapter two is a cursory chapter dealing with the historical roots out of which the World Council came.

Chapter three treats the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The treatment is historical with main emphasis on the philosophical positions which cover the theological and sociological aspects of the reports.

Chapter four concerns the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The same general format is used as in chapter three.

Chapter five is a short chapter dealing with the proposed plans for the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

Chapter six is the summary and conclusion of the work.

II. THE HISTORICAL CONFERENCES THAT LED TO THE
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL CONFERENCES THAT LED TO THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

I. INTRODUCTION

The quest for unity has been one of the problems of the church since the beginning of the Christian era. The first generation of Christians was faced with division over a faith for which Paul stood and the Judaistic parasite which was attaching to it. Paul also had to deal with problems of division in Corinth and at Philippi. The Gnostic heresy, which tried to divide the church, had to be handled by Paul and John in their writings. These problems persisted through the second century.

With the coming of the third century, the idea of "catholicity" had penetrated the church. The Catholic Church was the one which held to the recognized but still developing doctrinal formulations and ecclesiastical hierarchy. The unity of this church was due to two factors, namely, the practice of condemnation and the political structure within which it rose.¹

Unity by exclusion has been practiced far and wide throughout church history. Perhaps it was lawful at times for the protection of the cardinal truths of Scripture. Again, perhaps at other times, it was out of place. Diversity or difference is far different from schism of spirit. The shame of the church is that

¹Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Emergence of a World Christian Community. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 5.

differences, instead of enriching the whole Body of Christ through mutual service are feared and artificially suppressed. Unbelief always thinks that the exclusion of difference, namely uniformity, is the veritable strength of the community.¹

Unity by compulsion was the next step. Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 AD, which gave toleration to all religions, was at once a victory as well as a setback for the church. It was a sign that the Roman Empire was being won. But only sixty-two years later, Theodosius issued the edict that made Christianity the religion of the Empire. All nations under his rule were to be Christian, and were so declared. Further edicts appeared condemning all heretics. Cardinal differences were made punishable by Church and State. Here was Church-State compulsion. Tragically, all differences, small or great, came to be regarded as heretical. Thus from the fourth to the seventeenth century, to dissent was a crime against God and the State. Excommunication and inquisition were resultant.²

In spite of these conditions, when the Roman Empire began to disintegrate and finally dissolve, the church which inherited the Roman name and tradition proved unable to hold together across the barriers of nationality and language, the Christians in the communities that once comprised the Empire. The Eastern Orthodox went their way. The Gregorian (Armenian), Coptic (Egyptian), Jacobite (Syrian), and Nestorian (Persian) churches all broke away. Culminating this history of cession was the Lutheran protest.

¹Winfred Ernest Garrison, The Quest and Character of a United Church. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 9; and W. A. Visser 't Hooft, The First Assembly of The World Council of Churches. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 34.

²Garrison, op. cit., p. 9.

Martin Luther, on October 31, 1517, challenged the theological and ecclesiastical hierarchy with a return to the liberty of the conscience of every man to determine the truth for himself. The suppression of liberty always breeds rebellion. Luther led a rebellion that was to break compulsory unity in favor of a liberty in unity.¹

Protestantism, by nature, has been the most divided of all the branches of the Christian Church. This is probably due to its two basic principles--salvation by faith and the priesthood of all believers. Great variety has arisen. "Until the last one hundred and fifty years, the record of Protestantism was one of progressive division."² However, there has dawned an ecumenical awakening that has attracted not only Protestants but the Old Catholic and Eastern Churches as well. The development has come through a series of alliances, federations, and general missionary conventions. Historians are generally in agreement that the modern ecumenical awakening started with the historical World Missionary Conference of 1910.³

II. THE WORLD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

Edinburgh, 1910

The Background. William Carey, the great British missionary, was perhaps the first to suggest the need for interdenominational missionary conferences for the planning of over-all strategy. He suggested that the first conference take place at Cape Town, South Africa in 1810.⁴

¹Latourette, op. cit., p. 6. ²Ibid., p. 11. ³Ibid.

⁴Norman Victor Hope, One Christ, One World, One Church (Philadelphia: Church Historical Society, 1953), p. 27.

Carey's dream became a reality in what came to be a rather frequent occurrence of missionary conferences. Conclaves were held in New York 1854, in London 1854, in Liverpool 1860, in London 1878, in London 1888, and in New York 1900. The New York meeting of 1900 saw the greatest cooperative effort to date with forty-eight countries represented.¹

The twentieth century began with two preparatory conferences: The Decennial Missionary Conference in Madras 1902, and the Centenary Missionary in Shanghai 1907. These conferences appointed committees to prepare for a world conference. The International Committee met at Oxford in 1908. The group consisted of five members from North America, ten members from Great Britain, and three members from the Continent. They selected eight subjects for research and discussion. Around each subject, was formed a commission consisting of twenty members each, or a total of one hundred and sixty people.²

The Officers. The president of the conclave was the Honorable Lord Balfour of Burleigh. The vice-presidents included the Honorable Lord Reay, Sir John H. Kennaway, and Sir A. H. L. Fraser. Two secretaries were chosen. Mr. J. H. Oldham was the general secretary and Mr. Kenneth MacLennan assisted. The treasurer was M. H. W. Smith. Mr. John R. Mott was honored in a special way in being chosen by the conference to preside at the majority of sessions where the eight reports were to be discussed.³

¹Ibid., p. 28.

²W. H. T. Gairdner, Echoes From Edinburgh, 1910 (New York: Revell Co., 1910), pp. 17-19.

³George Robson, The History and Records of the Conference (New York: Revell Co., n.d.), p. 35.

Because of Mr. Mott's great influence, it is appropriate to examine his life in a more detailed manner.

John Raleigh Mott was born in 1865. His conversion to Jesus Christ was part of an inter-continental chain of events. The 1870's and 1880's showed a revival of interest in Christianity in Britain and in its ancient universities, Oxford and Cambridge. In 1882, seven outstanding men from Cambridge gave up all to go to China under the China Inland Mission. As a result, other Cambridge men crossed the Atlantic to carry their message to American universities. At Cornell, J. E. K. Studd came in contact with a young Methodist, John R. Mott. At the age of thirteen Mott had had a religious experience, but now he was uncertain about Christianity and the future. "Studd was used to bring him to a definite and uncompromising surrender to Jesus Christ."¹

After finishing his work at Upper Iowa and Cornell universities, he began the work that was to be his great interest all of life, that of the Young Men's Christian Association, the Student Volunteer Movement, and the World Student Christian Federation.²

At the age of forty-five, at the height of his powers, having never been a missionary, he was called to the chairmanship of the greatest missionary event in history up to that time. Though a layman, an American, a Methodist with only the English language at his command, he still was

¹Stephen C. Neill, Brothers of the Faith (New York: Abingdon Press, Revell Co., n.d.), p. 35.

²F. L. Cross, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 930.

personally qualified for the task. As chairman, he adhered strictly to the rules. He was often authoritarian and brutal in the chair.

Dr. Mott presided . . . with promptitude and precision, with instinctive perception of the guidance required, and with a perfect union of firmness and Christian courtesy, of earnest purpose and timely humor, which won for him alike the deference and the gratitude of the members.¹

The very appearance of John R. Mott was impressive. There was a magnitude, a dynamic, that brought a response from the observer.

The whole physique of the man suggested strength, with its frame built on large lines, finely-moulded head, and rock-strong face. . . . the strong square jawl, . . . the broad brow knit and scowl . . . the dark shaggy eyebrows almost met while from under their shadow shoots a gleam from suddenly-kindling eyes. . . . the craggy tender face; the voice vibrates, with fierce emphasis and stresses with gestures. . . .²

Thus, John R. Mott carried the ecumenical burden for nearly forty years. He was the outstanding luminary in 1910 because he was able to carry the whole world before the vision of all with his well-known battle cry, "the evangelization of the world in our generation."³

The Prominent Members. What an unusual meeting of the great Christian leaders of the world! Julius Richter, the well-known German historian of missions, was there. Anglo-Catholic Bishop of Birmingham, Charles Gore, was seen. He was considered the most powerful mind in the Church of England. And there was Robert E. Speer, great American missionary; William Temple, a twenty-seven year old scholar of England; John Baillie, later to be principal of New College, Edinburgh, and a President

¹Neill, op. cit., p. 18.

²Gairdner, op. cit., p. 63.

³Neill, op. cit., p. 20.

of the World Council of Churches; Theodore Roosevelt, who had planned to be there but could not and therefore sent a gracious message; William Jennings Bryan of the United States; Arthur J. Brown, Presbyterian missionary from America; and Samuel Zwemer, the great missionary to the Moslems.¹

The Churches Represented. June 14, 1910 found twelve-hundred delegates gathered at Edinburgh. One hundred and fifty-three missionary bodies sent delegates. Forty-eight British groups appointed delegates. Sixty American groups, forty Continental groups and twelve groups representing South Africa and Australian bodies were in attendance. There was therefore an official sense to this conference.²

The Reports. The first aim of the conference was that it be consultative instead of informational as its predecessors had been. Eight reports were researched and studied at the conference. They were:

1. Carrying the Gospel to All the non-Christian World.
2. The Church in the Mission field.
3. Education in Relation to the Christianization of National Life.
4. The Missionary Message in Relation to the non-Christian Religions.
5. The Preparation of Missionaries.
6. The Home Base of Missions.
7. Relation of Missions to Governments.
8. Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity.³

Almost all the reports struck a preliminary note concerning unity. This seemed to be the underlying purposive element. Whenever the theme came up, the conference immediately caught it up with significant applause. This theme was culminated in the final report on "Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity." The chairman of this report was Sir Andrew H. L. Fraser, an

¹Ibid., p. 17.

²Robson, op. cit., pp. 35-71.

³Ibid., p. 19.

English official in India and well-known for his ability in irenics. This report and the discussion of it pointed out several significant facts. It was found that the lack of cooperation on the foreign field often finds its source in the lack of cooperation at the home base. China, especially West China, seemed to be the best example of unity on the field. China exhibited the fact that the work of the field could be doubled without the addition of a single person, if everyone cooperated. Cheng Ching - yi of China reported that the church in China was looking to Edinburgh for leadership in this area. He also pointed out the fact that denominationalism had never interested the Chinese Church. A united church was needed to meet a united heathendom. Unity was needed for such an indigenous church.¹

The Message. The message of the conference to be transmitted to the churches was one of depth and beauty. First, to the members of the church in Christian lands: This was a message close to their hearts. They had prepared for two years and had now discussed in conference for ten days. It was discovered that these were momentous days. With the awakening of great nations, the opening of long-closed doors, here was a different world to be won. The ensuing ten years could be a turning point in history. One of the big questions was: How can we best utilize our existing forces by unifying and consolidating agencies, by improving administration, by training agents, and by a greater unity of common action? For one thing, it was sure that a deeper sense of responsibility to God for the evangelization of the world was needed. Furthermore, the old scales and ideals were

¹Ibid., pp. 180-185.

inadequate for our new world.¹

To the members of the Christian Church in non-Christian lands: There was rejoicing over the steady growth in numbers, zeal, and power. The inspiration of their evangelistic energy and their longing for unity was gratifying. It was acknowledged that theirs was the "hottest part of the furnace" in which the Christian faith was being tried. Confidence was expressed that God would bring them out a finely tempered weapon. And actually, only they could ultimately finish their work. Their own people would be convinced by their own holiness and moral power. Therefore, they were asked to take greater responsibility in the binding unity of prayer for one another.²

The Continuation Committee. With definite indications that the delegates wanted some method and permanent organ of cooperation consummated, Sir Andrew H. L. Fraser moved a resolution that was seconded, spoken to and carried without a dissentient. The resolution so adopted was:

That a Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference be appointed, international and representative in character, to carry out, on the lines of the conference itself, which are inter-denominational and do not involve the idea of organic and ecclesiastical union, the following duties:

1. Co-operation in missionary work.
2. Further investigation.
3. Prepare for a second conference.
4. Maintain contact between groups.
5. To help home boards in mutual counsel and co-operation.
6. To investigate the how of the formation of a permanent International Missionary Committee.
7. Take steps to carry out suggestions made in the reports of the commissions.³

¹Ibid., pp. 108-109.

²Ibid., p. 110.

³Ibid., pp. 187-188.

Thus the Continuation Committee was formed with John R. Mott as the Chairman and Mr. J. H. Oldham as the full-time secretary. The presence of such a group distinguished it from all previous conferences which had made no plans for self-perpetuation. Here was laid the foundation upon which a superstructure was to be erected that would finally become the World Council of Churches.¹

The World Missionary Conference perpetuated itself outside of the mainstream that marked the modern ecumenical movement. In 1921, it was organized as the International Missionary Council. Its membership consisted of national and regional bodies, such as the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, the Conference of Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as various national Christian councils. The membership in 1947 included 26 such bodies from all five continents and Australia and more were soon added. They purposed to meet approximately every ten years. Meetings have been held at Jerusalem in 1928, at Madras in 1938, at Whitby, Ontario in 1947, and at Willingren in 1952. Since the founding of the World Council of Churches, the International Missionary Council has had an official relationship with the Council.²

III. THE UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE ON LIFE AND WORK

Stockholm, 1925

The Background. Life and Work, (or that group organized for the

¹Ibid., pp. 134-135.

²Latourette, op. cit., p. 23.

promotion of unity not so much in theology as in practical action, in the application of Christian principals to social, economic and political spheres) had its origin in the informal conference between churchmen of Great Britain and Germany. These had met together in 1907 and 1910 in order to allay the rising tensions between the two countries.¹

In August of 1914, at Constance, Switzerland, there was founded largely on United States initiative, the World Alliance for the Promotion of International Friendship through the Churches. Then suddenly, World War I came crashing in. Though communications were broken up, some measure of success was achieved.² Following close on the heels of this new organization came the first steps toward Life and Work (November, 1914). The indignities of war were perhaps the first motivation for an ecumenical gathering of Christian communions. The Bishop of Upsala, Nathan Soederblom, tried to initiate a conference in the war years, of all nations whether belligerent or neutral. There was no success.³

Following World War I, the World Alliance held a meeting in September and October (1919), at Oud Wassanaer, The Hague, Holland. Archbishop Soederblom of Upsala, Primate of Sweden, suggested the calling of an ecumenical conference, representative of Christendom. It was to consist of official members who would consider practical problems. A small committee was appointed to decide on future procedure. In November (1919), this committee called a group of counselors to meet at Paris. The Paris group

¹Hope, op. cit., p. 44.

²Ibid.

³C. K. A. Bell, ed., The Stockholm Conference 1925 (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 2.

appointed Dr. Fredrick Lynch (Secretary of the Federal Council Commission on Peace and Arbitration) as a committee of one with full power to take practical action soon. Under the auspices of the Federal Council, a preliminary meeting was held at Geneva in August of 1920 to consider a Universal Conference on Life and Work. One hundred delegates from fifteen countries met and set up a Committee of Arrangements to prepare for the conference.¹

This provisional group met again at Sweden in 1922 and dissolved itself, setting up an International Committee to serve until the Life and Work Conference came. An executive committee was formed and the program agreed upon. As a result, the conference became a reality, meeting at Stockholm, Sweden, in August, 1925.²

The Officers. Four presidents for the meeting were chosen: The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Archbishop of Upsala, and Rev. Arthur J. Brown of the United States. Four vice-presidents were also chosen: Rev. C. S. Macfarland of the United States, Rev. J. A. McClymont of Scotland, Dr. Kapler of Germany, and Germanos Strinopoulos, the Metropolitan of Thyateira. The general executive secretary was Rev. Henry A. Atkinson of New York. There were three associate secretaries: Prof. E. Choisy of Switzerland, Rev. T. Nightingale of England, and Dr. Adolf Keller of Switzerland.³

Because Dr. Soederblom was the instigator and guiding light of this

¹Hope, op. cit., p. 45.

²Bell, op. cit., p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 12.

conference, his life is now considered more minutely.

Nathan Soederblom was born (1866-1931) in Trono near Soderhamn, not far from the Arctic circle. The home of a poor country parson was his residence. Soon he was off to university where he studied at Upsala. It was not long until Soederblom distinguished himself as a brilliant student. In his study he pursued the history of religions. Following his studies, he was ordained to the Lutheran ministry (1893). Paris became his next field of activity where he was appointed chaplain to the Swedish legation and pastor of the Swedish church. In 1901, he was called back to the University of Upsala, this time as a professor. From 1912 to 1914, he held a lectureship at Leipzig. It was here that he received word that the King of Sweden had appointed him the Archbishop of Upsala, the chief pastor of the church of Sweden. Soederblom was forty-eight years old. The appointment was opposed only by the more conservative elements of the church, for Soederblom was a liberal having been influenced by Sabatier and Ritschl.¹

Soon after his archbishopric, World War I struck. The horror into which Europe had been plunged gripped Soederblom. He intensely desired to do something about war. But he could not.

Gradually, thoughts took shape, and Soederblom saw the vision of an ecumenical meeting in which the divided churches of Christendom would come together, not like the councils of old to define dark and mysterious doctrines of the faith, but to discuss frankly together the urgent problems of practical Christianity. He had failed to mobilize the leaders of the churches in time of war; now he would set to work to bring them together in the days of peace.²

¹Neill, op. cit., pp. 29, and Cross, op. cit., p. 1267.

²Ibid., pp. 30-32.

The growing sense of social responsibility coupled with the untiring efforts of the Archbishop brought together in 1925 what has been called the first ecumenical gathering of the churches since the reformation. Soederblom, at the age of sixty was elected the chairman of the conference. No better one could they have chosen. He had an international training. He was perfectly at home in the language of the Swedish, French, German, and had a good knowledge of English. He was well-read in the literature and theology of many nations.¹

The Prominent Members. Some of the same personalities that had graced the 1910 conference were also seen here: Arthur J. Brown, Charles H. Brent, Samuel Zwemer and Julius Richter. Metropolitan Germanos was there, as well as Adolf Deissman. Also carrying great weight were the messages received from His Majesty the King of England, and the President of the United States, Calvin Coolidge. The President of the German Reich, Von Hindenburg and Professor Adolf von Harnack, as well as many others sent their messages.²

The Churches Represented. The conference was the largest and most universally representative and ecclesiastical gathering of that generation. From August 19-30, 1925, seven hundred persons from thirty-seven nations gathered to execute the business. Each delegate was elected or appointed from their own communion. The churches included those with episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational governments, from the East and from the

¹Ibid., pp. 29-30.

²Bell, op. cit., p. 21 and p. 119.

West, with the exception of the Roman Church. Representatives of some of the younger churches were also present. It was clearly the greatest success to date for an ecumenical gathering.¹

The Reports. The aim of the conference was clearly delineated:

The Conference on Life and Work, without entering into questions of Faith and Order, aims to unite the different churches in common practical work, to furnish the Christian conscience with an organ of expression in the midst of the great spiritual movements of our time, and to insist that the principles of the Gospel be applied to the solution of contemporary social and international problems.²

Life and Work differed from Faith and Order in that doctrinal questions were not handled. It differed from The World Alliance in that the scope was larger, dealing with more than the questions of peace and international goodwill. The conference differed from the International Missionary Council in that it did not deal with the questions of missions. Therefore, with a distinctive purpose, the conference studied and considered the following subjects:

1. The Purpose of God for Humanity and the Duty of the Church.
2. The Church and Economics and Industrial Problems.
3. The Church and Social and Moral Problems.
4. The Church and International Relations.
5. The Church and Christian Education.
6. Methods of Co-operative and Federative efforts by the Christian Communions.³

The discussion on co-operative and federative efforts at union was full and comprehensive. Whether a simple spiritual union was desired or actual organic union was not agreed upon. However, all felt very deeply the need for a lasting and true unity.

¹Ibid., pp. 12-37.

²Ibid., p. 1.

³Ibid., pp. 1-2.

The Message. To all the followers of Christ: ". . . this has proved the most signal instance of fellowship and co-operation, across the boundaries of nations and confessions, which the world has yet seen."¹ The war had forced the admission that the world was too strong for a divided Church. Leaving the differences of Faith and Order, they sought unity in practical action through Life and Work. Confession of the sin of disunity was necessary. Under Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, they were able to discuss practical problems and to worship in love.²

The application of the Gospel must be in all areas of life, industrial, social, political, and international.

Thus in the sphere of economics, we have declared that the soul is the supreme value, that it must not be subordinated to the rights of property or to the mechanism of industry, and that it may claim as its first right the right of salvation.³

Industry should operate for service, and not simply for profit. Cooperation must exist between capital and labor. The "golden rule" should prevail. Further social morality was considered. The problems of unemployment, laxity of morals, drink, crime, the woman, the child--all these things being the responsibility of the community. They also sought a Christian internationalism in unity, abhorring war, and living in peace.⁴

They felt that the church should educate itself so that unity and peace could exist. Evil, the deterrent of unity, was in the human will, therefore one must surrender to the will of God.

Even Christian ideas and ideals cannot save the world, if separated

¹Ibid., p. 710.

²Ibid., pp. 710-711.

³Ibid., p. 712.

⁴Ibid., pp. 710-711.

from their personal source in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and unless themselves are taken up into the personal life of the believer.¹

Therefore, each man was to accept his responsibility for doing God's will.

To the workers of the world: a fraternal social order was sought.

A continuation committee was advocated to follow up the work of the conference and to care for the inward unity of each one as one is drawn closer to the Crucified, "In the Crucified and Risen Lord alone lies the world's hope."²

The Continuation Committee. The conference desired a Continuation Committee. The Metropolitan of Thyateira moved, Arthur J. Brown seconded, and it carried unanimously. The Continuation Committee was established, not to act in matters of Faith and Order, nor to commit any Church by its actions. It was not to be an authoritative or permanent organ, but rather a medium through which the work of the conference could be carried on. The recommendation was:

That the Conference appoint a Continuation Committee from its present membership, international in character and as broadly representative as practicable, with duties which should include the following:

1. Perpetuate and strengthen the spirit of fellowship.
2. To publish the proceedings of the meeting.
3. To carry on the work of the conference.
4. To work for union.
5. To consider another Life and Work conference.
6. Consist of sixty-seven members, representative denominationally and geographically.
7. Only to raise those funds that are necessary for the discharge of duty.³

The Chairman of the Continuation Committee was the Archbishop of Upsala. The general secretary was Dr. Henry A. Atkinson.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 713-714.

²Ibid., pp. 715-716.

³Ibid., pp. 707-709.

⁴Ibid., p. 756.

Oxford, 1937

The Background. The Conference at Oxford was the successor of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm in 1925. The Stockholm meeting had appointed a continuation committee that brought into existence the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. An institute for research was established. This institute studied and discovered great problems concerning the church and social order. The council invited Dr. J. H. Oldham to chairman a research group for the preparation of a world conference on the subject. The United States also did research under John R. Mott and Dean H. P. Van Dusen. More than a dozen small international conferences took place for three years prior to Oxford. They considered and weighed the issues. Papers were circulated. It was found that this ecumenical interchange on social and political questions was highly successful. The preparation was thorough.¹

It was at one of these preliminary meetings at Fano, Denmark, in 1934, that it was decided the next conference was to meet at Oxford, England. With the rise of totalitarian states in Germany, Spain, Italy, and Japan, the mounting tension suggested that the urgently relevant theme "Church, Community and State" would be used.²

The Officers. Some of the older pioneers had now died. New names began to appear in the leadership as well as a few old. There were six

¹J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference (New York: Willett, Clark and Co., 1937), pp. 6-9.

²Hope, op. cit., p. 49.

presidents of this conference: Rev. Cosmo Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury; Rev. Germanos, Archbishop of Thyateira; Rev. Erling Eidem, Archbishop of Upsala; Rev. V. S. Azariah, Bishop of Dornakal, India; Rev. William Adams Brown, Union Theological Seminary, New York; and M. le pasteur Mark Boegner, Protestant Federation of France. Dr. John R. Mott was Chairman of the Business Committee.¹

The Prominent Members. Oxford was no exception in array of notables. Henry Sloane Coffin, the president of Union Theological Seminary, as well as William Adams Brown who was a professor at the same institution, were there. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, John Foster Dulles, John R. Mott, Samuel M. Cavert of the Federal Council and H. P. Van Dusen were all there. Such notables as Emil Brunner, Bishop Azariah, Archbishop Germanos, and W. A. Visser 't Hooft were also in attendance.

The Churches Represented. The Conference on Church, Community (Society), and State met at Oxford, July 12-26, 1937. It was called "catholic" because it represented the world, though admittedly there was more Anglo-American influence than Asian or European.² However, it did not represent the whole of Christianity. There were two notable abstentions: the Church of Rome and the German Evangelical Church. The former excluded itself by declining to participate while the latter was absent due to the Nazi government. There were a few representatives from the German "free" churches, but none from the state church.³

¹Oldham, op. cit., p. 275.

²Ibid., p. IX.

³Ibid., pp. 2-3 and Hope, op. cit., p. 49.

Some four hundred and twenty-five delegates gathered for the conference, three hundred of which were appointed by the United States and Great Britain and Colonies. They represented one hundred and nineteen churches and forty countries. Along with the regular episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational type churches, came also the Orthodox and Old Catholic churches. In wide contrast was the presence of delegates from the younger churches. Laymen and women were also delegates. Youth was given a place.¹

The Reports. The theme of the meeting was the relation of the Church to the state and to the community. It was an attempt to penetrate in a concrete and relevant way a definitive view of the Christian responsibility for the social order of man.²

There were five reports in the convention:

1. On Church and Community.
2. On Church and State.
3. On Church, Community and State in Relation to the Economic Order.
4. On Church, Community and State in Relation to Education.
5. On the Universal Church and the World of Nations.
 - 1) Subsection on Church and War.³

Every report carried reference to the cause of unity. The fifth report was as pointed as any in its explanation of the Ecumenical Church. It stated: The Christian Church was becoming ecumenical. The missionary movement has shown the universality of the Church. With political systems usurping the Church, Christians were awakening to a fresh consecration to the Church. True ecumenicity must be the goal of all efforts. Toleration

¹Ibid., and Hope, op. cit., p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 1, and Hope, op. cit., p. 54.

³Ibid., p. V.

of each other was not enough. They must all be members of one body. Lack of unity hinders the supreme purpose of the Church, evangelism, or the cure of souls.¹

The Committee of Thirty-Five. The committee was appointed by the Universal Council for Life and Work and the continuation committee of the World Council on Faith and Order, in August and September of 1936. The purpose of the committee was to review the work of ecumenical cooperation since Stockholm and Lausanne. They were in turn, to report to the Edinburgh and Oxford conferences regarding the future of the movement.²

The committee thoroughly reviewed the progress of ecumenicity and submitted a report calling for a merger of Life and Work with Faith and Order in what would be called "The World Council of Churches." The Conference on Life and Work approved the report of the Committee of Thirty-Five and resolved to appoint a committee of seven and a business committee to cooperate with Faith and Order to bring into existence the World Council of Churches. The Constituent Committee representing Life and Work was composed of the following men: M. Mark Boegner, William Adams Brown, Bishop of Chichester, Archbishop Germanos, Bishop Mahrarens, John R. Mott, and J. H. Oldham.³

The Message. To the Churches of Christ throughout the World: The Church must be the Church, committing its message to the world. They must repent of their sins. Despite divisions, there was an actual world fellow-

¹Ibid., pp. 152-154. ²Ibid., p. 261. ³Oldham, op. cit., p. 267.

ship. They were one in Christ.¹

Race distinctions are part of God's purpose. Racial pride or national egotism is not. "The deification of nation, race or class, or of political or cultural ideals, is idolatry, and can lead only to division and disaster."²

War was condemned "unqualified and unrestricted." War was the fruit and manifestation of sin. The Church must remain the one Church in spite of the possibility of war.³

The state, in its own area, was the highest authority. But all authority was from God and the state stands under His judgement. Their loyalty to God was first and foremost. The Church must make disciples whether the state consented or not.⁴

Economic classes were condemned. Godless utopian economic movements for equality could not be surrendered to. A utopia was impossible in this world. Rather, all economic problems must be made subservient to fellowship with God.⁵

Loud voices called for the youth of that day. The call was to serve political and social ideals. The voice of Him who called to service for the eternal kingdom was hardly heard. Some did hear. Their education was to be God centered, in meaning and end.⁶

The absence of the Russian Church and the German Church was deeply regreted. Prayer was made for them.⁷

¹Ibid., p. 45.

²Ibid., p. 46.

³Ibid., p. 47.

⁴Ibid., p. 48.

⁵Ibid., p. 49.

⁶Ibid., p. 50.

⁷Ibid., p. 51.

Since Stockholm twelve years previous, much progress had been made. As progression in unity was going on, a World Council of Churches was under consideration for the furtherance of unity.¹

The Continuation Committee. This group was, in effect, the members appointed to the Constituent Committee for the purpose of forming the World Council of Churches. Their names have already been listed.

IV. THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER

Lausanne, 1927

The Background. The origin of the Faith and Order movement, goes back to 1910. Here Bishop Brent caught an ecumenical vision. It was reflected in the statement he made before that meeting:

We are sons of God, and being sons of God it is not fitting that we should have anything less than a task which will bring out all the capacity of God's children. During these past days a new vision has been unfolded to us. But whenever God gives a vision, He also points to some new responsibility, and you and I, when we leave this assembly, will go away with some fresh duties to perform.²

Edinburgh, 1910, had repercussions in areas beside missions. Dr. Charles H. Brent, Missionary Bishop of the Philippine Islands of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A., saw in evidence a united Christendom not simply on missionary and social problems but also the possibility of unity in doctrine and theology.

He saw that God was trying to give a united church to men and that

¹Ibid., p. 51.

²Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 407.

if Christians would work for it with hope, courage and open-mindedness, they could receive it. At Edinburgh, God laid hold on him to persuade men so to work. The Conference was his call to be an apostle of church unity.¹

Brent determined to ask his church to take the lead in preparation for a new conference to deal with matters of Faith and Order. The general convention of his church met the same year, October 19, 1910, at Cincinnati, Ohio. The idea was readily accepted and the following resolution was passed:

That a joint commission be appointed to bring about a conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, be asked to unite with us in arranging for and conducting such a conference.²

Robert Hallowell Gardiner, a layman and a lawyer, took upon himself the burden of the work aided by a \$100,000 dollar gift from Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, who was deeply impressed by the movement.³

This was the beginning. As a result, the Great Britain Anglicans and the Scottish Episcopalians were contacted. Their response was affirmative. The Orthodox Church of Russia, the Roman Catholic Church and the Old Catholics were all contacted. By 1911, the proposed conference had been put before the leaders of churches of every type all over the world. By 1913, thirty commissions were in operation which would become sixty-nine by 1918.⁴

Suddenly, though anticipated, World War I broke out. For Faith and

¹Hope, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

²Rouse, op. cit., p. 407.

³Ibid., p. 407.

⁴H. N. Bate, ed., Faith and Order (New York: Doubleday Doran and Co., 1928), p. VIII.

Order it was severe. Political lines of division were added to the church division. Four and a half years of blocked communications interrupted the work. However, after the armistice of November 1918, work was resumed.¹

August of 1920 saw a group gather at Geneva representing forty nations and seventy churches. They met with Bishop Brent for further study. The commission for Faith and Order dissolved itself into a continuation committee that was representative of all the churches. Thus the responsibility for leadership fell to the new international interchurch committee. The Protestant Episcopal Church was thus released of controlling interest. The new committee had authority to call the long projected conference.²

From 1924, there was much preparation. Funds were raised in America. The center of the work was the Secretariat in Boston. The main driving power was Mr. Ralph W. Brown, American layman, successor to Robert H. Gardiner who died June 15, 1924. The Continuation Committee met at Stockholm and decided to hold the conference in 1927. In 1926, Lausanne, Switzerland was selected as the place.³

The Officers. The president was Charles H. Brent. Alfred E. Garvie was elected as deputy chairman. There were four vice-presidents chosen: Nathan Soederblom, Archbishop Germanos, Pastor Charles Merle d' Aubigne, and Professor Adolf Deissmann. The treasurer was George Zabriskie with Mr. Ralph W. Brown as the general secretary.⁴

¹Ibid., p. IX, and Rouse, op. cit., p. 413.

²Ibid., p. X, and Rouse, op. cit., p. 417.

³Ibid., p. 36.

⁴Ibid., p. 508.

Dr. Brent's life was given closer scrutiny because of his unquestionable leadership of this movement.

Charles Henry Brent was born at Newcastle, Ontario, Canada in 1862, the son of a Canadian parsonage. Brent was a brilliant student at Trinity College, Toronto. Having been ordained a priest in 1887 in the diocese of Toronto, the years 1888 to 1891 were filled with pastoral work in Boston, Massachusetts, where he became an American citizen. In 1901, Dr. Brent was appointed the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of the Philippine Islands. In 1918 he was advanced to the position of Bishop of Western New York. The years 1917-1919 found him as Chief of Chaplains of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe. Brent was also well recognized outside of his religious circles. In 1909 he was the president of the Opium Conference at Shanghai. So well versed was he on this matter, he was appointed representative for the United States on the League of Nations Narcotics Committee.¹

As a person, Bishop Brent was devout. He knew the secret of a life hidden with God. He liked to spend the first hour of his day in meditation, followed by a half hour of prayer, with an hour in the study after that. This gave him a remarkable power.

On those who met him casually or in public, Brent always left an impression of strength and decision . . . he was at times bowed down by an almost morbid sense of failure and unworthiness.²

Perhaps Brent is best known for the ecumenical vision he caught in 1910. Upon being asked the question if service did not unite people while doctrine tended to divide, he answered:

¹Cross, op. cit., p. 195.

²Neill, op. cit., p. 44.

Up to a certain point we can say that such divergences are no part of our immediate concern, but how far can we really act together, if there are undisclosed differences of conviction, unresolved contradictions in our way of getting at things? Questions of Faith and Order may be postponed; they cannot forever be evaded.¹

The Prominent Members. Archbishop Germanos of the Orthodox Church was once more on the scene. From Germany came such notables as Bishop Martin Dibelius and Professor Adolf Deissmann. France produced Eugene Choisy. Archbishop Soederblom made one of his last appearances. From America came Samuel Zwemer, and Francis J. McConnell. Last, but far from insignificant, was the presence of William Temple.

The Churches Represented. In August, 1927, the first World Conference on Faith and Order convened with Bishop Brent in the chair. There were three hundred and ninety-four delegates that represented one hundred and eight churches. All the churches that had regularly been there were present along with the Eastern churches and the Old Catholic ones. Africa was represented. However, from all of Asia, there were only two nationals and a few missionaries.²

The Reports. Seven reports were prepared, given, discussed, redrafted, and finally accepted by the conference for transmission to the churches. The conference, having been on faith and order, considered their agreements and disagreements.

This is a conference summoned to consider matters of Faith and Order. It is emphatically not attempting to define the conditions of

¹Ibid., p. 42.

²Rouse, op. cit., pp. 420-421, and Hodgson, op. cit., pp. 527-530.

future reunion. Its object is to register the apparent level of fundamental agreements within the conference and the grave points of disagreement remaining; also to suggest certain lines of thought which may in the future tend to a fuller measure of agreement.¹

The reports given were:

1. The Call to Unity.
2. The Churches Message to the World - the Gospel.
3. The Nature of the Church.
4. The Churches Common Confession of Faith.
5. The Ministry of the Church.
6. The Sacraments.
7. The Unity of Christendom in Relation to Existing Churches.²

Acute theological differences emerged. They were faced frankly and courteously. The seventh report on "The Unity of Christendom in Relation to Existing Churches" had to be kept open because of the complete lack of unanimity regarding it. The chairman felt that the conference was not ready for it. It was referred to the Continuation Committee for completion.³

Despite all the differences, agreement was reached on two important matters. Regarding faith, the Apostles and Nicene creeds bear witness to the faith of the Christian church. Regarding order, there is a place for the episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems. The need for further study at this point was indicated.⁴

The Message. To the Christian churches: "God wills unity." The conference was evidence of the desire to return to unity. They justified the beginnings of disunion, but lamented its continuance. They gained insight into one another. It was daring but God justified the daring. More

¹Bate, op. cit., p. 459.

²Ibid., pp. 460-474.

³Ibid., p. 438.

⁴Hope, op. cit., p. 36.

than half the world was unreached. It has turned away because of the churches "corporate feebleness." Missions were revolting from Western divisions and were seeking a unity in their own right. Their spiritual children were outpacing them.¹

There was but one Church, holy, catholic, and apostolic. One life and one body was to be manifest to the world. A united witness was necessary. They wished to fulfill the Saviour's prayer that the disciples be one.²

We are united in a common Christian faith which is proclaimed in the Holy Scriptures and is witnessed to and safeguarded in the Ecumenical Creed, commonly called the Nicene, and in the Apostles Creed, which faith is continuously confirmed in the spiritual experience of the church.³

Yet, it was to be remembered that the external and written standards are void without inward and personal experience with God in Christ.

The Continuation Committee. The Lausanne Conference appointed a group of about one hundred members to act as the Continuation Committee. The principal functions were: to circulate the report of the Lausanne Conference, to advance the cause of unity, calling a second conference if and when it was deemed advisable. The chairman was Bishop Brent.⁴

Edinburgh, 1937

The Background. During the years between Lausanne and Edinburgh, the Continuation Committee met and made several decisions. On March 27,

¹Bate, op. cit., pp. 460-461.

²Ibid., p. 464.

³Ibid., p. 466.

⁴Hope, op. cit., p. 39.

1929, Bishop Brent died. Bishop William Temple was immediately placed as chairman. In 1930 they moved the headquarters for the movement from Boston to Geneva. During the meeting of 1931, they set the date for the next world conference for August of 1937. Due to the financial depression there was no meeting of the Committee between the years of 1931 to 1934. Between these dates, several other reverses were experienced. Mr. R. W. Brown resigned as general secretary as well as Dr. Bate of England who headed the theological study post. However, there was a man prepared and ready to step into the gap, Leonard Hodgson of Winchester, England. He took over both positions. In the years 1934 to 1937, several meetings of the Committee transpired, notable of which was the Denmark meeting where it was decided to hold the next conference at Edinburgh.¹

The Officers. Dr. A. E. Garvie gave an opening address to the Second World Conference on Faith and Order. In it he eulogized past leaders and placed in nomination the name of Dr. William Temple for chairman of the conference. It was unanimously endorsed. Dr. Temple responded in a speech paying tribute to Bishop Brent, Dr. Deissmann and Dr. Zoellner, all of whom were now deceased.²

The rest of the officers of the meeting were nominated from the chair and elected by the group. The vice-presidents so elected were: Rev. Gustaf Aulen, Pastor Mark Boegner, Rev. A. V. Garvie, Archbishop Germanos, and

¹Leonard Hodgson, ed., The Second World Conference on Faith and Order (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938), pp. 5-10.

²Ibid., pp. 28-29.

Rev. J. Ross Stevenson. The general secretary was Canon L. Hodgson. The associate secretaries were Rev. F. W. Tomkins and Professor H. Clavier. The financial secretary was Canon T. Tatlow. Miss J. Dundas was the office secretary.¹

A close look at the heritage and life of Dr. Temple is advisable.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury and father of William, was among the greatest churchmen in the world.

Gifted with a powerful mind and the capacity for lucid and forceful expression, famous for his abrupt replies to silly questions, with a rugged outward strength concealing infinite tenderness within - when Frederick Temple moved among men, they sometimes felt as though one of the old gods had come down again and was walking the earth as in the legends of classic times.²

Frederick Temple remained unmarried until he was fifty-five years of age. When Frederick was at the age of sixty, his second son was born and baptized by the name, William. William, born in the purple, grew up at Fulham and Lambeth palaces, homes of the Bishop of London and the Primate of all England, respectively.

It seemed that fortune had given William Temple every good gift—the example of a wonderful father, early training in a simple, manly form of the Christian faith, a nimble mind, a cheerful disposition, and countless friends.³

Academically, he was Exhibitioner of Balliol College (1900), Fellow of Queens' College, Oxford (1904), and Headmaster of Repton (1910). Ecclesiastically, he was Rector of St. James, Piccadilly (1914), Canon of Westminster (1919), Bishop of Manchester (1921), Archbishop of York (1929),

¹Ibid., p. 30.

²Neill, op. cit., p. 81.

³Ibid.

and Archbishop of Canterbury (1942).¹

With all of his good success, he did not have good health.

In later years what most people noted in the Archbishop were his jovial, friendly disposition and his reverberating laugh. Few except his intimate friends knew that his whole life was an endless struggle with gout, one of the most painful and incapacitating of sicknesses. . . . It seemed hard that a lifelong teetotaler should be afflicted with a disease generally associated with excessive indulgence in the pleasures of port wine. They could not guess, and perhaps only Mrs. Temple fully knew, the severity of the battle that the Archbishop had to fight. Very few had any idea that he could speak with such penetrating power just because he himself had so often passed through dark places, and that his wonderful spiritual power was a power born of suffering patiently endured.²

The Prominent Members. From Sweden came Rev. Gustaf Aulen. Pastor Mark Boegner of France was there. The British Isles produced Professor E. P. Dickie, Rev. Alfred E. Garvie, Archbishop Germanos, Canon L. Hodgson and Archbishop William Temple. From the United States came Samuel McCrea Cavert, Bishop F. J. McConnell, Dr. John A. Mackay, Dr. John R. Mott, G. Bromley Oxnam, and Samuel Zwemer.

The Churches Represented. The conference convened August 3, 1937. There were three hundred and forty-four delegates, representing one hundred and twenty-three churches and forty-three countries. Counting the alternate members, the youth and other special delegates, there were five hundred and four official delegates at the conference. The churches that had regularly participated were there as well as representatives of the Old Catholic and Eastern Churches. Significant also was the fact that there were present ninety-five persons who had been to Lausanne. This gave the meeting a

¹Cross, op. cit., p. 1329.

²Neill, op. cit., p. 82.

breadth of understanding.¹

The Reports. With Archbishop Temple in the chair, the conference met in the same historical hall where the vision for such a group first started with Bishop Brent. Five reports were considered:

1. The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The Church of Christ and the Word of God.
3. The Ministry and Sacraments.
4. The Communion of Saints.
5. The Churches Unity in Life and Worship.²

The section meetings were held. The work of the sections was reported to the conference. There was a first, second, third and final revision of the reports, on the basis of corporate discussion and suggestions.³

The Committee of Thirty-Five. With regard to the proposed World Council of Churches, the Lausanne Faith and Order Continuation Committee met at Clarens in the summer of 1936. It had before it the proposals which were approved the week before by the Administrative Committee of Life and Work, suggesting a meeting of leaders to review the ecumenical movement and lay the results before the two conferences that were to convene in 1937. Faith and Order passed on this and proceeded to appoint its share of the Committee of Thirty-five. Such well-known men as Cavert, Germanos, Hodgson, Visser 't Hooft, and Temple served on the group.⁴

Dr. William Temple presented the following report from the committee:

¹Hodgson, op. cit., pp. 281-283, and Rouse, op. cit., p. 433.

²Hodgson, op. cit., pp. 35-36. ³Ibid., pp. 116-190.

⁴Ibid., pp. 192-193.

Having realized the close relation between Faith and Order and Life and Work, and the common interests and purposes, a union was needed. Therefore, approval of the proposed plan for a World Council of Churches was sought. Temple recommended that the churches sympathetically welcome the plan without committing themselves on details. It was further recommended that that conference appoint seven members to cooperate with a like number from Life and Work to form a Constituent Committee of fourteen. They were to complete the plans for the World Council and submit the final form for approval of the Continuation Committee of Faith and Order. They were also to convene a World Council. It was further desired that the first World Council Commission on Faith and Order be the Continuation Committee appointed by that conference. Further appointments were to be members of churches which accepted the creed of Faith and Order, "which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." Lastly, it was stipulated that the World Council was to consist of official representatives from the churches. Any council held before the general assembly was to be called "provisional." The general assembly was to determine the constitution for the central council.¹

Following Dr. Temple's presentation and interpretation, there was much discussion to be sure that the basic creed of Faith and Order as well as the trinitarian basis was maintained. The report was passed with one dissident. Seven members were appointed to the Constituent Committee to cooperate with Life and Work. They were: M. Marc Boegner, William A. Brown, Bishop of Chichester, Archbishop Germanos, Bishop Marahrens, John R.

¹Ibid., pp. 270-272.

Mott and J. H. Oldham.¹

The Message. The official report, issued in pamphlet form, was a stating of the position of the five reports. Largest and most significant was the report on the theme of the Churches Unity.

The report was as follows:

We believe that no visible unity, acceptable to God and to the people of God, can be achieved save on the foundation of this spiritual unity.

Our goal is to realize the ideal of the church as one living body, worshipping and serving God in Christ, as the fulfillment of our Lords prayers and of our prayers.²

There were several conceptions of church unity expressed. Cooperative action, intercommunion or mutual recognition and corporate union were all possibilities. In point of fact, this was the order of progress in unity. Corporate union or organic union was the most difficult. This type of union was not to be conceived as rigid governmental union and yet it would be difficult to conceive of an existing unity between churches within the same given area, that would not incorporate some measure of organizational union. Autonomy of constituent parts of the whole to the neglect of the federal principle is unconceivable.³

Some things were deemed as not being necessary for cooperative action. They were: likeness in faith, confession, non-sacramental worship, sacra-

¹Ibid., pp. 194-196.

²Report of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order (New York: 1937), p. 28.

³Ibid., pp. 28-30.

mental faith and practice, orders, and polity. In fact, certain things were obstacles. They were: faith and order problems, social and political problems, and historical and cultural factors.¹

The report finally gave concrete examples of what could be done to foster more unity. There were several basic suggestions. Study was first. A wider knowledge among the laity and in theological institutions was a must. Study groups were to be erected. Fellowship could not be overlooked. A fellowship in spiritual worship and in practical work was recognized as a binding force. Finally, the report recommended the establishment of the World Council of Churches as a concrete way of effecting the suggestions.²

The general message of the conference would not be complete without referring to the Affirmation of Union that was drafted and adopted by the conference without dissentient. The Affirmation of Union in Allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ, was a manifesto telling the world that they were one in faith around the Lord Jesus Christ. The unity consisted not in the agreement of minds or in the consent of their wills. It was founded on Jesus Christ. This was a unity of heart and spirit. They humbly acknowledged their divisions as contrary to the will of Christ. In Christ alone, they found the one hope of union. In this they affirmed their union.³

The Continuation Committee. A committee was maintained until such time as it could dissolve itself by a vote of confidence in the work of the committee of fourteen that was drafting the merger plans. The committee was,

¹Ibid., pp. 31-36.

²Ibid., pp. 36-41.

³Hope, op. cit., p. 43.

however, to continue to function as a part of the new World Council in the area of faith and order.

V. THE MERGER OF THE UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE ON
LIFE AND WORK, AND THE WORLD CONFERENCE
ON FAITH AND ORDER

Utrecht, 1938

The Background. Although the two movements were slightly different in background and interests, they had more than a casual relationship with each other. Many of the same persons were interested in both movements and attended both conferences. The conferences served the same churches and were paid for by the same churches.¹

After the Stockholm Conference (1925) and the Lausanne Conference (1927), both groups gathered momentum. It was clear that one could not consider life and work or faith and order, without overlapping. Both involved each other.² As early as 1928, there was a growing feeling that the two movements tended to cover the same ground more and more. Consequently, Faith and Order appointed a committee to confer with a committee from Life and Work on the subject of their mutual relationship.³

One of the first concrete steps was taken in May, 1933. Dr. William Temple invited ten persons to spend the night with him in the archepiscopal palace at Bishopthorp, York. These included persons from Faith and Order, Life and Work, International Missionary Council, World Alliance, and Youth

¹Ibid., pp. 55-56.

²Ibid., p. 56.

³Rouse, op. cit., p. 426.

Movement. There was a frank and friendly interchange of views. No decision regarding the future was made. However, the group authorized Dr. Henry L. Henroid of World Alliance, and Dr. William Temple to reconvene the committee from time to time. It was now called the Consultative Committee.¹

In 1935, Temple went to the United States and met with a group of ecumenical leaders in the home of Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, then president of Princeton. He gave a report on the work of the Consultative Committee. A motion was passed recommending that the executive committee on Life and Work and Faith and Order sponsor the Consultative Committee and thus give it official status. They further authorized the Consultative Committee to gather a group of officers from the various ecumenical movements to London in 1937, prior to the meetings of Life and Work and Faith and Order. Here they were to consider the matter further.²

The enlarged Consultative Committee, or the Committee of Thirty-five, met at Westfield College, London, July 1937 with Dr. Temple in the chair. It was resolved that the two groups should merge. This decision was approved that same summer by the two groups involved. They each appointed seven members to form a fourteen member committee to work out the details, subject to ratification by the Continuation Committee of Faith and Order.³

The Constitution Framed. The Constituent Committee, or the fourteen delegates from the two movements, co-opted several officers from the two movements for the purpose of settling some basic problems. These being settled, a group of seventy-five met at Utrecht in May 1938. Dr. Temple

¹Hope, op. cit., p. 56. ²Ibid., p. 57. ³Ibid., pp. 57-58.

was again in the chair. Issues were settled. A draft constitution was drawn up. With the ratification of the Faith and Order movement, the constitution was sent to the churches in September 1938 with an invitation to join the World Council of Churches. A Provisional Committee was named with a small Administrative Committee as its executive branch.¹

War Interruption, 1938-1948

The Provisional Committee met once before the war. It set up some refugee work at that time. However, in September 1939, World War II struck. This posed a threat to the closer integration of the ecumenical movement. The first meeting of the World Council had to be indefinitely postponed. Between the years of 1940 to 1946 no fully represented meeting of the Provisional Committee could be conducted.

But from another point of view, the war helped rather than hindered the growth of the ecumenical movement; for, by confronting the churches so starkly with the menace of organized paganism, it not only brought out their fundamental underlying unity of spirit and purpose and message, but it challenged them to co-operative Christian enterprises in study and ameliorative effort.²

The war years were years of service for the provisional World Council. Work was done among the prisoners-of-war and in areas of relief and interchurch aid. Study was carried on. So fruitful were all these endeavors, that in spite of the war, the Council grew from fifty-five affiliated member churches in 1939 to ninety in 1945.

The war years did not weaken the Council. On the contrary, they became the occasion to demonstrate how inevitable its existence is if the church is to live up to its calling. Never before in ecumenical history had it become so very clear that there are urgent tasks which

¹Hope, op. cit., p. 59.

²Ibid., p. 61.

no church alone can perform and that there must be a body, however small and weak, which by its very existence demonstrates the ultimate cohesion of the churches.¹

By the spring of 1945, it was evident that the war in Europe was about over. After several meetings, it was decided to call a meeting of the Provisional Committee for early in 1946. After having not met since 1939, the Provisional Committee convened in February of 1946. The long post-poned date for the first meeting of the World Council was finally fixed for August-September 1948. The central theme was to be "The Order of God and the Present Disorder of Man." Preliminary studies were ordered.²

Replacing Dr. Temple, who had died in 1944, was Rev. Ingve T. Brilioth, Bishop from Sweden, Dr. Newton Flew was vice-chairman in place of Dr. A. E. Garvie.³

The Provisional Committee adopted a message. It acknowledged the burden of mankind and called upon the church to meet the need. The ecumenical fellowship had broadened in the war years. It was still knit together in love.⁴

VI. SUMMARY

The World Council of Churches, as it is known today, stemmed directly from five previous conferences. The World Missionary Conference of 1910, held in Edinburgh under the direction of John R. Mott, American Methodist layman, was the beginning of the modern day ecumenical movement. As a

¹Ibid., pp. 62-63.

²Ibid., p. 63.

³Rouse, op. cit., p. 436.

⁴Hope, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

result of the intense desire of this meeting, particularly as it affected Charles H. Brent, American Episcopal Bishop, there came two World Conferences on Faith and Order, Lausanne 1927, and Edinburgh 1937. Much in the same spirit, though different in purpose, there were two Universal Conferences on Life and Work held in Stockholm 1925 and Oxford 1937. Nathan Soederblom, Swedish Archbishop, was the inspiration of this movement. Because of the closeness of spirit underlying Faith and Order and Life and Work, as well as the duplication of personnel and supporting churches, an amalgamation was desired. Under the leadership of William Temple, English Archbishop, such desires were realized in the forming of the World Council of Churches.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES - AMSTERDAM, 1948

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I. INTRODUCTION

Amsterdam was a Mecca for millions in 1948. The monarch of Denmark, Queen Wilhelmina, celebrated her Golden Jubilee during the two weeks of the Assembly. Special exhibits drew art lovers from the world over. A world congress of philosophers met just preceding the Assembly. For all these special events, Amsterdam was scrubbed clean and lavishly decorated. For the first time since the war, the canals were illuminated at night. It was a time of great festivity and excitement. Amsterdam was crowded.¹

The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, was held in Amsterdam, Holland, from August 22 through September 4, 1948. The World Council was the result of "the confluence of three streams that have poured their contributions into a central channel." The three movements were the World Missionary Conference of 1910, which pointed up the world-wide aspect; the Life and Work Conferences of 1925 and 1937 which studied the effect of the churches on society; and the Faith and Order Conferences of 1927 and 1937, which explored the doctrinal differences of the churches.²

¹Walter Marshall Horton, Toward A Reborn Church (New York: Harper and Bros., 1949), p. 73.

²W. A. Visser 't Hooft, ed., The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (New York: Harper and Bros., 1949), p. 12.

II. THE SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly called for four conferences to run simultaneously. The main conference was the Assembly. The others included a conference for Alternates, the Youth Delegation conference, and the Accredited Visitors conference.¹

The Assembly was composed of five main elements. They were: worship, plenary sessions, sections, committees and addresses.

Worship was common to all. It was arranged for by the conference and by the authorities of the churches represented. The Assembly "Handbook" had a form of worship printed that was often used. However, because of the diverse traditions and disciplines regarding the Holy Communion, the Assembly itself did not conduct any. The churches did this in accordance with their own tradition. Those celebrating were the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church whose communions were open. The Church of England and the Eastern Orthodox Church also celebrated but only to their own constituency.²

Two plenary sessions were held. Each consisted of several days. One was held at the beginning of the conference for the purpose of constituting the World Council of Churches and to adopt the theme and sections. One was held at the end to discuss, modify and adopt the reports of the sections and committees.³

There were four sections. They composed the philosophical study groups. The "Universal Church in God's Design" and "The Church's Witness

¹Ibid., p. 16.

²Ibid., pp. 16-18.

³Ibid., p. 18.

to God's Design" were the theological sections dealing with what the church was and what the church did, respectively. The "Church and The Disorder of Society" and "The Church and The International Disorder" were the sociological sections dealing with general social problems particularly regarding capitalism and communism and the question of war.¹

While the sections were the activity for the morning hours, the afternoons were filled with the business of the committees. Committee I was concerned with the Constitution and Rules and Regulations. Committee II dealt with Policy, and Committee III with the Program and Administration. Committee IV studied the Concerns of the Churches in the areas of the life and work of women in the church, a Christian approach to the Jews, the significance of the laity, and Christian reconstruction.²

The General Meetings

The Opening Worship. The opening worship took place at the Nieuwe Kirk at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The service began with a procession of delegates in national costume and official garb. Sober black was on the whole predominant, but there were academic hoods of many colors and brilliant splashes of red, purple, orange and gleaming white, especially among the Eastern churchmen. There were bare heads, turbaned heads, velvet caps and birettas; the faces of all the races of mankind; ruffled collars on Scandinavian ecclesiastics making them look like Rembrandt portraits; full beards and high black headdresses distinguishing the Eastern Orthodox; round collars, Geneva bands, pectoral crosses, and many other insignia of office from different lands and different churches.³

The procession took almost twenty minutes.

The messages of two men filled the worship hour. Dr. John R. Mott,

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 19.

³Ibid., pp. 21-22.

eighty-two year old veteran of the ecumenical movement, gave a roll call of the past conferences and pioneers that had led the way. Rev. D. T. Niles, a young leader from the Methodist Church in Ceylon, spoke giving "a remarkable utterance, incisive, theological, hopeful. . . ."¹

The Opening Addresses. They took place in the main hall of the Concertgebouw, where all the plenary sessions were held. The delegates were seated on the main floor. Presiding officers and speakers were on a high platform. Press representatives, consultants, and youth delegates were seated in choir seats, high above the platform. Visitors filled the balconies.

Earphones similar to those used at the United Nations organization were given out to the audience as it filed in, and their use was briefly explained: a lever for switching on and off, a small wheel with numbers corresponding to the desired language: French, English, German, or whatever language the speaker is using. In three booths at the top of the choir seats, interpreters listened to and simultaneously translated whatever was said on the rostrum. We are indebted to the International Business Machines Corporation for thus saving us an immense amount of time.²

The chairman of the meeting was Archbishop Eidem of Upsala, Sweden. He gave the floor to four speakers who presented the historical development of the World Council of Churches. Dr. Bell, Bishop of Chichester, spoke of the Life and Work Movement. Bishop Brilioth of Sweden recalled the Faith and Order movement. Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary gave a moving account of the missionary heritage. Pastor Marc Boegner of France covered the work of the Provisional Committee of the World

¹Ibid., pp. 22-23.

²Ibid., p. 24.

Council that existed between the years of 1938 and 1948.¹

The Council Constituted. The Assembly met in the Concertgebouw at ten o'clock in the morning on Monday, August 23, 1948. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geffery Fisher, was in the Chair.²

Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert of New York, chairman of the Committee on Arrangements, explained the nature of the Assembly and the three main parts of the program: worship, work, and study. This was not to be simply an ecumenical conference but the creation of a "permanent instrument of fellowship and cooperation on a world-wide scale."³

Pastor Boegner then rose and submitted a resolution in the name of the Committee of Fourteen and the provisional Committee:

That the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches be declared to be and is hereby constituted, in accordance with the constitution drafted at Utrecht in 1938 and approved by the churches; that the Assembly consists of those persons who have been appointed as the official delegates of the churches, adhering to the council; and that the formation of the World Council of Churches be declared to be and is hereby completed.⁴

Pastor Boegner's resolution was adopted "nemine contradicente" meaning without dissent. The Archbishop of Canterbury declared the formation of the Council to be completed. A wave of applause followed. All then stood in silent prayer as the Archbishop offered verbal expression of praise to God.⁵

Fifteen recommendations concerning rules, program, committees, were given by Pastor Boegner, concluding with the recommendation that the

¹Visser 't Hooft, *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

²*Ibid.*, p. 27.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵*Ibid.*

Provisional Committee be dissolved. It was so ordered.¹

The general secretary, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, closed the meeting with a report on behalf of the Provisional Committee. He defined the World Council functions as follows: it was a council of churches, the very name indicating the weakness and shame of the church. There can be and is finally only one church. Plurality was a deep anomaly. They were aware of the situation in which the church found herself, and were moving toward the One Holy Church.

Our council represents therefore an emergency solution--a stage on the road--a body living between the time of complete isolation of the churches from each other and the time--on earth or in heaven--when it will be visibly true that there is one Shepherd and one flock.

. . . to a world obsessed by the power--complex, the formation of this council may seem as the emergence of a new center of ecclesiastical power which will enter in competition with those which exist already. . . . Now this assembly will surely have to make it abundantly clear that nothing is farther from its intentions. We are not forming this council in a spirit of ambition and in order to join in any struggle for power. We form it in a spirit of repentance for our failure to be the Church together and in order to render clearer witness together to the Lord Who came to serve all.²

At this stage, the Council was purely a fellowship between churches.

The Theme Introduced. That afternoon, with Pastor Boegner in the chair, and in the presence of Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard of Holland, the theme was presented: "Man's Disorder and God's Design." It was introduced by two speakers, Professor Karl Barth of Basel and Professor C. T. Dodd of Cambridge.³

Professor Barth, speaking in German, pointed to the uselessness of the Council unless one remembered that God's design was His and not ours.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 29-31.

³Ibid., p. 32.

It was not to be confused with any "Christian Marshall Plan" one might concoct. It was His plan. The care of the church and the world was not our care. If it was, only further disorder was forthcoming. This was the final root and ground of all disorder--man as the Atlas "who is destined to bear the dome of heaven on his shoulders." One must not begin the debate on the church by citing present divisions or with complaints about the absence of Rome and Moscow. The beginning place was with "our Lord's will for His Church." In evangelism, "we must not try to be God's administrative technical experts, but simply His humble witnesses." With regard to social and international problems, it was remembered that "we are not the ones to change this evil world into a good one." Ours was to be an obedience to a living Lord of a heavenly kingdom.¹

Professor Dodd spoke of the Bible as the story of God's design and man's response to it. As the Bible spoke, the desperate need of the nations was met. God's design appeared in Christ. If we have spoken God's word, it will have been a word both of judgment and of promise, for this was "the stuff of which the whole Biblical colloquy between God and man is composed."²

The Sections Introduced. The morning and afternoon of Tuesday, August 24, was the time designated for the introduction of the study areas. In the morning, with Archbishop Germanos in the chair, five speakers introduced the first two sections. The afternoon, with Dr. John R. Mott in the chair, saw the introduction of the last two sections.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 32.

²Ibid., pp. 32-33.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 33.

The Universal Church in God's Design. Professor C. T. Craig of Yale pointed out the agreements and differences regarding the nature of the church.

'Such divisions among us,' he urged, 'should never be ignored nor combatively defended, but examined frankly, in a common room where all are brothers . . . with the assumption that we belong together.'¹

The people of the churches share so much. The Holy Spirit would lead past the barriers that divide.

Professor Florovsky of the Academy of Orthodox Theology, Paris, next took the rostrum. He proclaimed that there was no simple answer to the ecumenical problem. "We face the challenge of the world instead of challenging the world ourselves." The Church has lacked initiative. Only repentance and faith could heal the schism. Healing was needed in theological thinking and eventually with Rome, although not the present Rome but its heritage. The Divine solution must come.²

Professor Regin Prentor of the University of Aarhus, Denmark, spoke next. The shame of the church was that

. . . differences, instead of enriching the whole Body of Christ through mutual service, are feared and artificially suppressed. Unbelief always thinks that the exclusion of difference namely uniformity, is the veritable strength of the community.³

The Church's Witness to God's Design. Bishop Stephen Neill, covering the field of Christian missions, gave a gripping account of Christian evangelism. There were areas of problem such as Buddhism and Islam. Yet God used the church from "sedate Anglicanism to fiery funda-

¹Ibid., p. 34.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

mentalism" to reach the world.¹

Dean T. C. Chao, of Yenching School of Religion, Peiping, China, spoke of the Christian witness in his land. Communism was spreading. Too many have looked at Christianity as a way of ethical living as in Confucian humanism. There was still too much support by missionaries and their funds. The native leadership was poor.²

The Church and the Disorder of Society. Mrs. Kathleen Bliss of the Christian News-Letter, stated that the church was not in great conflict with science or technology. The problem was of power and its control. Many have thought it would solve itself.³

The church has been unable to meet the world because of a professional clergy which has been divided from its laity and thus a division between the church and the world has come. The church must walk into the market place and council chambers of the world and work for its deep transformation.⁴

Professor Jacques Ellul of the Faculty of Law at Bordeaux addressed the Assembly next.

He urged that the Church should not stand off from the world's disorder as judge or as physician, but acknowledge its own responsibility of it, and approach it as one who has need to be forgiven and healed of the same disorder.⁵

This disorder was seen in two symptoms: the rupture of the personal tending to complete depersonalization and the preoccupation with technics

¹Ibid., p. 35.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 36.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Visser 't Hooft, Ibid., p. 36.

divorced from values and purposes. The church's answer to these problems was to testify and evangelize, not just in words but in life.¹

The Church and the International Disorder. John Foster Dulles of New York, was the churchman who spoke from the West. He stated that the world was looking to the Assembly whose unity-in-diversity was needed to save the world. The delegates response to the hopes of the world would be to expose the futility of war. "War may be the lesser of two evils, but there is no holy war. . . ." The avoidance of war would be to recognize the supremacy of moral law over man-made law and the sanctity of every human individual. Western democracy reverences these principles. Marxian Communism denies them both in theory and in practice and thereby makes violence inevitable. Those who adhere to moral law and human dignity must prove this faith by more effective works. The West has been living too long on its spiritual capital. Its practices no longer express a great faith. The Church must restore faith to the West and also remember that God loves the world, not simply the West.²

Professor Hormadka of Prague was the spokesman from the East. He challenged Mr. Dulles' outlook. The futility of war and the rich Western heritage were agreed to. But, it was his settled conviction that the West could not regain world supremacy. It had to be shared with the East. "The West must get over its almost metaphysical horror" of trends in Soviet Russia. He acknowledged the presence of Czaristic imperialism in the Soviet regime and the dangers of dialectic materialism. Yet, Hormadka

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 38.

felt that communism represented much of the social impetus of the Church.¹

With these introductions made concerning the various problem areas, the Assembly was now generally oriented and ready to proceed in study and discussion.

III. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The structure or the governing process of the Assembly was the area covered by the committees. All of the committees will be discussed except Committee IV on the Concerns of the Churches. This group discussed subjects that more properly fit into the philosophy of the Assembly. Therefore, this committee was discussed under that heading.

The Constitution and Rules and Regulations

The constitution was finally amended and adopted by the Assembly on August 30, 1948.²

The basis was in the simple creedal statement: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour."³

There were those factions that tried to get the basis of the constitution accepted provisionally, subject to revision. To have weakened the formulation of "Jesus Christ as God and Saviour" would have seriously impaired the Assembly. Many would have reconsidered their membership.⁴

¹Ibid.

²The Story of the World Council of Churches, (nd), p. 26.

³Ibid.

⁴Neill, op. cit., p. 147.

Regarding membership, churches were eligible who expressed their agreement with the basis and satisfied any criteria which the Assembly or Central Committee prescribed. A two-thirds vote of the member churches elected a church to membership.¹

The functions of the Council were to carry on the work of Faith and Order, and Life and Work. It was to facilitate cooperative action, study, and ecumenical consciousness. They were to relate to denominations, federations and other ecumenical movements. To call world conferences and to assist the churches in evangelism was also a part of the functions.²

The authority of the Council was limited. It was to offer counsel and opportunity for united action. It was to act on behalf of the constituent churches in matters that one or more might commit to it. The authority to call world conferences was vested in the Council. The crux of the whole matter of authority was well stated:

The World Council shall not legislate for the churches; nor shall it act for them in any manner except as indicated above or as may hereafter be specified by the constituent churches.³

Organizationally, the World Council discharged its duties through the Assembly and the Central Committee. The Assembly was the principal authority of the Council. It was to meet every five years. The composition was of official representatives of the churches, both clerical and one-third lay membership. This group appointed officers and a central committee that acted between the main assemblies. The Central Committee

¹The Story of the World Council of Churches, op. cit., p. 26.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 27.

consisted of the presidents of the World Council of Churches and not more than ninety members chosen by the Assembly from the Assembly. The members were to be chosen with regard to the numerical size of the member churches, an adequate confessional representation and representative geographical distribution.¹

The right to appoint commissions to carry out part of the functions of the Council was granted. The commissions were to stand under the supervision of the Central Committee and to report annually. Commissions were to be especially established for the carrying on of the work of Life and Work, and Faith and Order.²

Relationships were to be established with other ecumenical Christian organizations. Invitations were to be sent to world confessional associations and ecumenical organizations, to observe the Assembly or Central Committee or to act in a consultative capacity.³

The constitution provided for its amendment by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly if the Central Committee had received the amendment and notice was sent to constituent churches no less than six months before the Assembly met. The Central Committee as well as churches could oppose.⁴

The final portion of the constitution made provision for rules and regulations. The Central Committee could make and amend rules and regulations concerning all organs of the work.⁵

Actually, the constitution adopted did not differ much from the

¹Ibid., pp. 27-28.

²Ibid., p. 28.

³Ibid., p. 29.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Pamphlet, op. cit., p. 26.

Utrecht draft. Two exceptions concerned the procedure for admission of members and the confessional as well as geographical representation in the composition of the Central Committee.¹

The Program and Administration

The program of the World Council of Churches was considered. The committee asked that the Assembly adopt the following departments or agencies:

1. The General Secretariat.
2. Faith and Order.
3. Study.
4. Reconstruction and Inter-church Aid--Refugees.
5. Youth.
6. Ecumenical Institute.
7. International affairs (with the I.M.C.).
8. Finance and business.
9. Prisoners of war.
10. Department of publicity and promotion--ecumenical press service.
11. Women's work in the church.
12. Secretary for evangelism.²

Action was then taken regarding the organization, administration and staffing of the council. The General Secretary presented detailed plans regarding the Secretariat. These were accepted by the committee with the concern that the staff be adequate and qualified.³

The Policy

This committee was discussed out of order as it was a liaison committee between Committee I and Committee III. It approved certain actions taken by these groups as being in line with the general policy.⁴

The authority and nature of the Council were again reviewed with the

¹Rouse, op. cit., p. 720.

²Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 138.

³Ibid., p. 139.

⁴Ibid., p. 124.

Committee on Policy having made the following statement: "The Council disavows any thought of becoming a single unified church--structure dominated by a centralized administrative authority."¹

The group accepted a budget asking that all churches share in the cost. The proposed budget for 1949 was for \$539,660 dollars. The principle sources for the budget included \$60,000 dollars from the Rockefeller Foundation designated for the Ecumenical Institute; special gifts amounting to \$3,000 dollars for the Life and Work of Women; revenue from the churches and private gifts amounting to \$300,000 dollars; and gifts for the purpose of church reconstruction and aid of \$176,660 dollars. This budget was dispersed in the following manner:²

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Secretaries</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
General Secretariat	4	\$118,900.
Study Department	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	31,000.
Youth Department	4	30,000.
Evangelism	1	9,000.
Work of Women	1	6,000.
Publicity Department	3	17,000.
Library	-	3,000.
Ecumenical Review	-	4,000.
Ecumenical Institute	4	65,000.
Finance and Business Department	2	- 0 -
Faith and Order	1	25,000.
Reserve Fund for Second Assembly	-	10,000.
General Reserve Fund	-	10,000.
Church Commission on International Affairs	4	33,000.
Ecumenical Press	-	600.
Reconstruction	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	176,660.
	Total	\$539,660. ³

¹Horton, op. cit., p. 79.

²Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 143.

³Ibid.

The Officers

Dr. John R. Mott, veteran of the modern ecumenical movement since its inception in 1910, was proclaimed Honorary President. Acting presidents included six men: Pastor Mark Boegner of France; Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, England; Dr. T. C. Chao, of China; Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of the United States; Dr. S. Germanos, the Archbishop of Thyateira; and Dr. Erling Eidem, the Archbishop of Upsala. The Central Committee was established with ninety members. Eight of the seats were left vacant with the hope that the Orthodox Church would fill them. The General Secretary, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, was continued.

Because of his great importance in the ground work of the Council, it seemed best to examine his life further.¹

Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft was born at Haarlem, Netherlands. He was educated at the University of Leyden where he took his doctorate. He studied in the United States for a short time. He received honorary degrees from Princeton University, Trinity College in Toronto, Yale University, Oberlin College, and Oxford University.²

In 1924, he took up work with the Young Men's Christian Association, specializing in international student affairs. The Stockholm conference of 1925 found Mr. Visser 't Hooft as its youngest member. In the year 1931, he became the General Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation. In 1937, Visser 't Hooft was chosen to cooperate with J. H. Oldham in writing the Oxford preparatory book entitled, The Church and Its

¹Ibid., p. 217.

²Grace Douglass Orr, A Layman's Guide to Ecumenicity (n.d.), p. 35.

Place in Society. The Provisional Committee at Utrecht in May, 1938, had to choose a general secretary. Visser 't Hooft's name was suggested and met with much approval. Some felt that at the age of thirty-seven, he was too young for such a great task. It was Temple's authority that turned the scale. The young General Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation was chosen.¹

Visser 't Hooft, like Soederblom, spoke four languages: Dutch, English, German, and French, with the ability to read several others. With the student federation, he had traveled widely.

. . . alert observation had made him familiar with the conditions and the problems of many churches. . . . his sensitiveness to currents of thought, his willingness to try out new experiments and to abandon methods of work that were no longer relevant, were proverbial.

Stephen Neill further describes him:

A brilliant mind, more effective in analysis than in construction, enables him to go quickly to the heart of almost any situation. By his quickness of thought he can dominate almost any committee. On the platform, his speech is almost always effective sometimes profoundly moving. He has in very high degree the capacity to win and to hold the confidence of older men and to win and hold the admiration of younger men. Beneath all these many qualifications lies a quiet and resolute faith in Jesus Christ, so restrained in expression that casual observers might well fail to realize what is the driving force behind everything that the man does.²

Visser 't Hooft was a man with strong convictions who respected men of strong viewpoint. But his method of leadership varied from that of Soederblom or Temple. In describing this difference, Neill comments:

. . . instead of reconciling all divergent views in one monumental synthesis, he flings out his own views with complete frankness, challenging all comers to wrestle out the truth with him, in a sort of student 'bull session,' and gladly abiding by the decisions that come

¹Neill, op. cit., p. 143.

²Ibid., p. 144.

out of the process of give and take.¹

Limitations were a part of every great man. Some have felt that the early influence of Karl Barth's theology on Visser 't Hooft had made him less sympathetic with points of view other than continental theology. Many felt the gravest was that, though ordained by the Dutch Reformed Church, he has had no pastoral experience, which alone could give him the knowledge of the Church lived at the "grass roots."²

The Delegates and Member Churches

Amsterdam did not stand alone. It had a wonderful heritage beginning with Edinburgh, 1910, the year of the modern ecumenical awakening. Dr. John R. Mott, Miss Ruth Rouse, and Dr. J. H. Oldham provided, by their presence at the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches, the link with the year of ecumenical beginnings. Archbishop Germanos had been with the movement since 1920. The Bishop of Chichester, Dr. Bell, was at Stockholm in 1925. Dr. Visser 't Hooft was at Stockholm in 1925. Bishop Dibelius was at Lausanne in 1927. The presence of these individuals at Amsterdam gave to the conference a breadth of understanding that was so essential.³

There were three hundred and fifty-one delegates present. Eighty-one of these were laity and sixteen were women. The alternates composed two hundred and thirty-eight people. One hundred consultants, fourteen fraternal delegates, twenty-one observers and two hundred accredited visi-

¹Horton, op. cit., p. 90.

²Neill, op. cit., p. 144.

³Rouse, op. cit., p. 719.

tors were also present. All of the staff members were there. These delegates represented one hundred and forty-seven churches in forty-four countries.¹

Amsterdam could not wait, though Rome had refused to participate, thus eliminating the largest single communion. The absence of Rome and Moscow imposed a lack of balance in the Assembly, yet there was hope that a new final understanding would come.²

The Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches was not ignorant of the Roman Catholic position and therefore decided not to send official invitations for official delegates. In the early stages of preparation, in 1939, they decided to keep the Holy See informed as to plans. Since many inquiries were made by Roman Catholics, the Provisional Committee decided in 1947 to invite a limited number of unofficial Roman Catholic observers to attend the Assembly. Many that were invited desired to come. However, the Holy Office decided that no one could go. Apparently a few came, regardless.³

The Orthodox presence was only partial. The Greek Orthodox and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople were both there. The Orthodox of Russia, Yugoslavia and the United States were not present. Of eighty-five places reserved for the Orthodox in the Assembly, only twenty-four were claimed.⁴ The Provisional Committee made it very clear that the full

¹Hope, op. cit., p. 65.

²Harold E. Fey, "The Amsterdam World Assembly of Churches", The Christian Century, Volume LXV Number 40, October 6, 1948. p. 103.

³Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 30.

⁴Fey, loc. cit.

participation of the Orthodox Church of Russia was welcome. Certain communications from the church gave great hope. However, a meeting in Moscow decided otherwise. A resolution was adopted that described the Assembly as not really concerned with the unity of the Church, but rather with the gaining of political and social influence. Therefore, they could not participate with the Council in its present form. The Patriarchate of Moscow indicated that they were still interested in the Council's activities and wished to be kept informed. Dr. Visser 't Hooft expressed his hope that the reasons given for the abstention were based on a complete misunderstanding of the true nature of the World Council of Churches. The door was still ajar to all the Eastern Orthodox not yet represented.¹

Other groups noticeably absent were the evangelical conservative groups of the United States. The Southern Baptists were very outspoken in their refusal to cooperate. Also absent were most of the holiness, pentecostal and fundamentalist groups.²

Representatives from the Old Catholic Church were present. This group broke from Rome in 1870 over the infallibility of the Pope, and presently numbers about four hundred thousand communicants.³

The Monophysites, those holding to the unity of nature in Christ, and excommunicated because of this view in 451 A.D., were also present. Though scattered and disunited, they continued to endure, numbering around fifteen and one-half million communicants. They included the Copts of

¹Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 30.

²Horton, op. cit., p. 76.

³Orr, op. cit., p. 42.

Egypt, the Jacobites of Syria and of Malabar India, and the Gregorians of Armenia.¹

The churches that had been traditionally associated with the ecumenical movement, continued the relationship.²

IV. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ASSEMBLY

Four sections and one committee formulated the core of the philosophy of the Assembly. With such diversity of tradition in the Assembly, it was remarkable that each section was composed with so much clarity and content. Furthermore, after some discussion, and a few revisions, each was unanimously received by the Assembly as the official position of the World Council of Churches. To be sure, the reports have not caused any real concessions on the part of any tradition. They mainly recognized the differences between them, and to their amazement found much that they could agree upon.

The Universal Church in God's Design

The Given Unity. "God has given to His people in Jesus Christ a unity which is His creation and not our achievement."³ In spite of their divisions, they were one in Jesus Christ. They had long misunderstood, ignored or misrepresented each other. Yet this they all believed: Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, died and was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven and gave the Holy Ghost to dwell in the Church.

¹Ibid., pp. 43-44. ²Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., pp. 230-235.

³Ibid., p. 51.

This Church is the common concern that drew them together and in this concern they discovered their unity in their Lord.¹

The Deepest Difference. Their differences were faced in love. It had many forms and deep roots. In clearly understood senses, some were Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Local Congregation, "gathered community," and Free Church members. In a broader sense, the stress lay mainly between Catholic and Evangelical or Protestant.

The section pointed out an interesting fact.

The essence of our situation is that, from each side of the division, we see the Christian faith and life as a self-consistent whole, but our two conceptions of the whole are inconsistent with each other.²

The "Catholic" church carried a primary insistence on the visible continuity of the Church in the apostolic succession of the episcopate. The Evangelical side gave primary emphasis to the initiative of the Word of God and the response of faith, centralizing in the doctrine of justification, "sola fide." Yet, in some sense, each gave some stress to the other's distinctive. The Catholics stressed faith and the Evangelicals stressed a continuity of the visible church in some form. Both recognized that ignorance of each other had complicated understanding. Even when this ignorance was erased, there still remained a hard core of disagreement.

The section further pointed out:

Each of these views sees every part of the Church's life in the setting of the whole, so that even where the parts seem to be similar

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 51-52.

they are set in a context which, as yet, we find irreconcilable with the whole context of the other. As so often in the past, we have not been able to present to each other the wholeness of our belief in the ways that are mutually acceptable.¹

The Common Beliefs and Problems. The beliefs and problems were grouped around the nature and mission of the Church.

Concerning the nature of the Church,

We all believe that the Church is God's gift to men for the salvation of the world; that the saving acts of God in Jesus Christ brought the Church into being; that the Church persists in continuity throughout history through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.²

The differences between the churches lay in three main areas. First, there was confusion over the relation between the old and new Israel and the relation of the visible church to the "new creation" in Christ. Second, the relation was not clear, in the saving acts of God in Christ, between objective redemption and personal salvation; between scripture and tradition; between the Church once founded and the Church as Christ's contemporary act. Third, agreement was lacking concerning the place of the ministry in the Church, and the nature of its authority and continuity; concerning the number and interpretation of the sacraments; concerning the relation of baptism to faith and confirmation. The relation of the Universal Church to the local church, the nature of visible unity and the meaning of schisms were also quandaries.³

Concerning the mission of the Church, the section made this great statement:

We believe that the Church has a vocation to worship God in His

¹Ibid., p. 52.

²Ibid., p. 53.

³Ibid.

holiness, to proclaim the Gospel to every creature. She is equipped by God with the various gifts of the Spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ. She has been set apart in holiness to live for the service of all mankind, in faith and love, by the power of the crucified and risen Lord, and according to His example. She is composed of forgiven sinners yet partaking already, by faith, in the eternity of the kingdom of God and waiting for the consummation when Christ shall come again in the fulness of His glory and power.¹

Differences again lay in three areas. First, agreement was lacking in the relation between the Godward vocation of the Church in worship and the manward vocation in witness and service. Second, concerned the degree to which the Kingdom of God can be said to be already realized within the Church. Third, there was division over the nature of the Church's responsibility for the common lives of men and their temporal institutions.²

The Unity in Difference. Although they could not fully meet, their Lord would not let them turn away from each other. The Body of Christ was a unity making it impossible for them to forget each other or to find agreement on isolated questions while leaving others unreconciled. They sensed their disagreements which they traced back to their different ways of understanding the whole. Beneath their disagreements, there was an agreement in a unity that drew them together and would not let them go.³

The Glory and Shame of the Church. The glory of the Church was wholly in her Lord. Under the Lord there have come many rediscoveries such as: the Church under the cross, the Bible as a living and contemporary book; a sacrificial identification with the homeless and desperate; and of union and unity.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 54.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 55.

⁴Ibid.

The shame of the Church is her sin.

Although genuine convictions and loyalty to truth itself have their part in the making and perpetuating of divisions, we confess that pride, self-will and lovelessness have also played their part and still do so.¹

. . . it is in our estrangement from Him that all our sin has its origin.²

The evils of the world have deeply penetrated the churches. There were worldly standards of success, class division, economic rivalry, secular mind, segregation by race and color. The Church had lived too introspectively instead of forgetting itself in an outgoing love and service. There was too much domination of ecclesiastical officialdom, both clergy and lay. Prayer was made that the Church might be renewed and unified.³

The World Council of Churches. The Council was a movement in the direction that He willed. It had helped them to recognize their unity in Christ. Therefore, they brought all their difficulties to the Council. They were discussed fully, not pretending to an agreement that their churches would as a whole repudiate. Of this they were sure: There was but one Lord and one Body. They could not rest with their present divisions. A sense of responsibility was sensed for each other. They came with penitence for what they were and with hope for what they were to become.⁴

The Church's Witness to God's Design

The Purpose of God.

The purpose of God is to reconcile all men to Himself and to one

¹Visser 't Hooft, Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 56. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 64.

another in Jesus Christ His Son. That purpose was made manifest in Jesus Christ—His incarnation, His ministry of service, His death on the cross, His resurrection and ascension. It continues in the gift of the Holy Spirit, in the command to make disciples of all nations, and in the abiding presence of Christ with His church. It looks forward to its consummation in the gathering together of all things in Christ.¹

Much was hidden but certain things were plain. All one needed to know of God's purpose was already revealed in Christ. God willed the proclamation of the Gospel to all men. God had chosen to use human obedience in the fulfillment of His purpose.²

The Church was to spread the Gospel to all. Those who heard were confronted with a personal decision, yes or no. The Gospel expressed God's love to man and His claim to man's obedience. Those who obeyed were delivered from the power of a sinful world, and possessed in the fellowship of God's children, eternal life. Those who rejected shared in His judgment and the impending doom.³

The Present Situation. The structure of the world has been shaken by two world wars. Social and political convulsions, moods of despair, frustration and blind indifference were the common lot. The millions of Asia and Africa have determined to shape their own destinies.⁴

The word "faith" had acquired a new context. It meant reliance in a new society pursuant to the "good life." Man could master his own fate. Absolute truth was relevant. Achievement was the word. Lost in the maze of irrelevancy, personal decision was evaded. In fact, Christian faith had been relegated to a historical past. It seemed irrelevant to the

¹Ibid., p. 64.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 65.

ignorant. Some felt that it did enshrine some spiritual and cultural values. While foreign countries pressed their historical religions for the foundation of a politically homogeneous state, Christianity stood threatened.¹

So the Church viewed the world. But how did the world see or think it saw the Church? It saw a divided Church with the separate parts either hesitant and complacent or domineering. It was a Church that had largely lost touch with the realities of life, trying to meet the needs of a modern world with antiquated techniques. The Church had failed to speak effectively on the subject of war and thereby appeared impotent. The Church was under suspicion of having used missionary enterprise to further the foreign policies of states and imperialistic designs of the West. The Church was accused of having been blind to the movement of God in history, and aiding with the vested interests of society and state. Much of this indictment might be untrue, but the Church had failed to manifest the true Gospel of God for what it is.²

The Church's Task. The Church was required to be faithful to the Gospel and to realize more fully its own nature. In the fulfillment of this task, several things were considered.³

Worship and witness in the Church must never be held in separation. The call was to love God and one's neighbor. The Church was not simply people worshipping in a building. There was a fellowship, but it was often so impoverished that it failed to attract. All barriers had to be broken

¹Visser 't Hooft, Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 65-66.

³Ibid., p. 66.

down for true fellowship and outreach.¹

The Church was to be a people of God in the world. The Church had to find its way to the places where men really live, penetrating the world from within and familiarizing men with elementary realities of God, sin and purpose. It was to identify itself with the life of the world.²

Finally, the Church was to have an ecumenical sense. That is, it was to be conscious of the world fellowship of which it was a part.³

The Missionary and Evangelistic Strategy. The whole Church was to be working for the winning of the whole world for Christ. It was a great day of opportunity for laymen. "The work of God required that every member of the Church, ordained and lay, be an active witness."⁴ The layman had duties in the church in worship and stewardship. But he also had a task in the world outside. His was to be a powerful witness in the home, at the daily work, and in preaching and intercession.⁵

The Church must cooperate in evangelism. Comity should be practiced. While millions waited to hear, the Church had to cooperate in getting the message out. A church properly "gifted" by the Holy Spirit was to be a unified one. The younger churches, created by the older, were pressing for unity. Now, was the accepted time. To study evangelism in its ecumenical setting was to sense the urgency of the hour. All were to hear the Gospel. The Holy Spirit had to help create the new evangelistic movement, a program of the World Council of Churches. "Now, not tomorrow, was the time to act."

¹Ibid., p. 67.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 68.

⁵Ibid.

One does not have to be perfect. God would use faithful, imperfect instruments.¹

The Church and the Disorder of Society

The Disorder of Society.

The world today is experiencing a social crisis of unparalleled proportions. The deepest root of the disorder is the refusal of men to see and admit that their responsibility to God stands over and above their loyalty to any earthly community and their obedience to any worldly power.²

The depth of evil in human nature and the full height of freedom and dignity in Christians have both been underestimated.

The Christian approached disorder in society with faith in the Lordship of Christ and in seeking God's kingdom. Christians were aware of the sins that corrupted society. The disorders that aggravated the perennial evil in society were to be overcome, whether by elimination or control.³

The section also realized that changes in systems did not bring unqualified good, but often fresh evils. "New temptations to greed and power arise in systems more just than those they replaced," because of the presence of sin.⁴

Two chief factors have contributed to the crisis. The first was the vast concentrations of power. Under capitalism, they were mainly economic. Under communism, they were economic and political. Such conditions enhanced greed, pride, and cruelty. The "momentum of inertia" of great organizations have absorbed men and their ability to act as morally

¹Ibid., pp. 69-70.

²Ibid., p. 74.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

accountable beings. Collective actions have tended to replace personal responsibility.¹

The second was a society dominated by technics. Mechanism has helped in the use of nature for the relieving of drudgery and poverty. But it also furthered the possibilities of destruction by war and the breakdown of the family, neighborhood and craft.²

The Church had to help people achieve a fuller life within technical society. But the Church had often contributed to the disorder of society by identifying itself with the special privileges of the dominant classes, races and political groups. In being too "other-worldly," the church had failed to concern itself with social justice and political freedom.³

The Economic and Political Organization. The industrial revolution freed economic activity from social controls and created the capitalistic order. New controls emerged, but there was still a need for productive stability. All economic activities should be subordinated to social ends. The insecurity of inflation or depression was intolerable.⁴

The Church cannot resolve the debate between those who advocate the socialization of production as the solution and those who in turn fear such a course knowing it leads to new and inordinate combinations of political and economic power, culminating at last in the omniscient State. To the socialist, the Church must say that the institution of property is not the root of corruption in the human race. To the capitalist, it says that

¹Visser 't Hooft, Ibid., p. 75.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 76.

⁴Ibid.

ownership is not an unconditional right. It must be preserved, curtailed or distributed justly.¹

In all organization, the maintenance of personality was a must.

. . . we must vindicate the supremacy of persons over purely technical considerations by subordinating all economic processes and cherished rights to the needs of the community as a whole. . . . we must preserve the possibility of a satisfying life for 'little men in big societies.' We must prevent abuse of authority and keep open as wide a sphere as possible in which men can have direct and responsible relations with each other as persons.²

Society must be coherently and purposefully ordered. Government cannot shirk this responsibility, even though it cannot all be done on this level.

To achieve religious, cultural, economic, social and other ends it is of vital importance that society should have a rich variety of smaller forms of community, in local government, within industrial organizations, including trade unions, through the development of public corporations and through voluntary associations.³

Preventing undue centralization of power in government as well as in the smaller communities, one avoids the perils of tyranny as well as anarchy.⁴

The Responsible Society. Man was created a free being, responsible to God and his neighbor. If the State or society tends to prevent man from acting responsibly, they have effected a denial of God's purpose.

A responsible society is one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people, whose welfare is affected by it.⁵

Man was never to be a means for political or economic ends. "Man was not

¹Ibid., pp. 76-77.

²Ibid., p. 77.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

made for the State, but the State for man. . . . Man was not made for production, but production for man."¹

A responsible society must give people freedom to control, criticize and change their governments. This power would be made responsible by law, tradition, and a wide coverage of public decision. Equality of opportunity is also needed. Therefore, they condemned any limit of freedom to witness, to obey God, and to act responsibly. Any denial of men to participate in the shaping of society or any prevention of the learning and spreading of truth was equally condemned.²

Communism and Capitalism. It was noted that communism in its totalitarian form was making a strong appeal to the masses. Christians "should recognize the hand of God in the revolt of the multitudes against injustice that gives communism much strength."³ Christians should have solidarity with the world's distressed, not curb their aspirations for justice. For the young, communism seemed to stand for human equality and universal brotherhood.

Christians who are beneficiaries of capitalism should try to see the world as it appears to many who know themselves excluded from its privileges and who see in communism a means of deliverance from poverty and insecurity.⁴

It was also noted that communism appealed for racial equality and for the cause of colonial peoples. The Church has been involved in the inequalities that have created conditions favorable to the growth of communism.

¹Visser 't Hooft, Ibid.

³Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 78.

⁴Ibid.

The Church has acted indifferently to the plight of the masses. Further, Christians have failed to call youth to sacrificial disciplined purposive response. Communism has filled these moral and psychological vacuums.¹

However, the good in motive and aspiration of communism has been transformed into new forms of injustice and oppression. It became more than socialism. It became an atheistic tyranny. It concluded that Christianity differed with atheistic Marxian communism in the following areas:

1. Communism promised what amounted to the complete redemption of man in history.
2. Belief that certain classes, by virtue of their role in the new order, were free from sins Christians believe are characteristic of all men.
3. Materialistic and deterministic teachings are incompatible with belief in God, or in man as a person, made in God's image and responsible to Him.
4. The ruthless methods used to deal with opponents.
5. The demand on party members for exclusive and unqualified loyalty, which belongs only to God, and the coercive policies of the communistic dictatorship in controlling every aspect of life.²

The Church must resist the extension of any such system!

Christianity does not wholly endorse capitalism. It is in conflict with capitalism in the following areas:

1. Capitalism tends to subordinate the primary task of economy, the meeting of human needs, to economic advantages of those in power.
2. Capitalism tends to produce serious inequalities. (Trade unions, social legislation and responsible management have reduced this.)
3. Capitalism has produced a practical form of materialism that has developed in spite of Christian background--that of money seeking.
4. Capitalism has kept people subjected to the fate of mass unemployment.³

The Christian churches should reject the ideologies of both communism and laissez-faire capitalism and should seek to draw men away from

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 79.

³Ibid., p. 80.

the false assumption that these extremes are the only alternatives.¹

The Social Function of the Church. The greatest thing the Church can do to renew society, is to renew itself in faith and obedience to its Lord. A clearer conception of the meaning of the Gospel to the whole life of men is needed. If the Church will overcome national and social barriers which divide it, it would help society to overcome them. The Church must preach and teach on this subject. Christians live under very different social conditions in many countries. They need to learn from each other.²

The Church and the International Disorder

The World Council of Churches had met in their first Assembly at a time of crucial international strain. The hopes of the past for peace, had been dashed by the war. Despair and spiritual vacuum were everywhere evident. Men wondered what the future held.³

The Church believed the world was in God's hands. "His purpose may be thwarted and delayed, but it cannot be finally frustrated." This belief forbade despair.⁴

War was not inevitable. War was the result of disregard for God. If men would return to God there would be no irresistible trend toward war. Sometimes, war started over immediate causes that Christians were unable to meet. Yet, the Church did not work alone. God was watching over all. Therefore, men could find their place in the Divine purpose and be faithful

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 80-82.

³Ibid., p. 88.

⁴Ibid.

and obedient, resting in an Omnipotent God.¹

The Problem of War. To settle disputes by war was incompatible with the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. War was a sin against God and a degradation of man. "Law may require the sanction of force" but war tends to destroy the basis on which law rests.²

Was war just? A unanimous answer could not be given. Some held that war might be a Christian duty, but it was never an act of justice. Others held military action to have been the ultimate sanction of the rule of law. All citizens had an obligation to defend the law. Still others refused military service of all types as an absolute witness against war. The Council was perplexed in the face of these conflicting opinions. They asked the guidance of God and theologians concerning the problem.³

It concluded that the Church must uphold justice, nationally and internationally. The Church must uphold moral principles in war or peace. The Church must not become the tool used by the State in war time as a means of propagating an ideology. The Church must teach love for enemies in war and swift reconciliation after war. The Church must stand for the maintenance of good faith, the honoring of pledged word, the resistance of pretensions of imperialist power, the multilateral reduction of arms. Spiritual resistance of evil, lasting peace treaties, rebuilding for peace, the return of prisoners of war and the end of purges and war crime trials were advocated by this section.⁴

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 89.

³Ibid., pp. 89-90.

⁴Ibid., pp. 88-89.

The Causes of Conflict. "The greatest threat to peace came from the division of the world into mutually suspicious and antagonistic blocks."¹ This was true in national matters as well as economic and political systems. Christianity must not be equated with any system. Rather, it condemned all infringement of human rights and tyranny, whether it be economic, religious or political. Totalitarianism was utterly opposed. Aggressive imperialism was also opposed. This section took a stand for co-existence, without war, of competing systems such as communism, socialism and free enterprise.²

The Rule of Law. Christ taught the sovereignty of God! Therefore, no state may claim absolute sovereignty. "It must accept its responsibility under the governance of God, and its subordination to law, within the society of nations."³

The authority of law must be recognized and established between nations. International law must have international institutions to come to grips with problems on their own merits and not in the light of national interests. The United Nations was such an instrument and should be further developed. The churches should assist in laying the common foundations of moral conviction.⁴

Rights and Freedoms. "The Church has always demanded the freedom to obey God rather than man." All men are equal before God and their

¹Ibid., p. 90.

²Ibid., pp. 90-91.

³Ibid., p. 92.

⁴Ibid.

rights were derived directly from Him. The State did not deny or grant rights. They merely embodied them. These rights included duties, and freedom entailed responsibility.¹

This section set forth the following list of basic rights:

1. Every person has the right to determine his own faith and creed.
2. Every person has the right to express his religious beliefs in worship, teaching and practice, and to proclaim the implications of his beliefs for relationships in a social or political community.
3. Every person has the right to associate with others and to organize them for religious purposes.
4. Every religious organization, formed or maintained by action in accordance with the rights of individual persons, has the right to determine its policies and practices for the accomplishment of its chosen purposes.²

Concern was expressed over the violation of these rights in many parts of the world. Persecution and discrimination were evident. The Church had to take a firm and vigorous stand against such and work for a wider understanding of the basic human rights. To protect the homes, minorities, races, colors, and religions, an international bill of rights should be established.³

The Church's Obligation. The Church and the State were guilty of indifference and failure. Neither could excuse themselves. In remedy, the Church would have to pray for all men, especially those in authority. Hatred and the resignation to war would be combated. The Church would support negotiation rather than arms, advocate Christian principles in national policy, sacrifice for the hungry and homeless, and above all, win

¹Visser 't Hooft, Ibid., p. 93.

²Ibid., pp. 97-99.

³Ibid., p. 93.

men to Christ, creating a Christian fellowship, free from discrimination and devoted to the will of God.¹

The Life and Work of Women

The Present Situation. The Church consisted of men and women, both responsible to glorify God and do His will. "This truth, accepted in theory, is too often ignored in practice."² Full cooperation of men and women had not been achieved in many countries. The Church needed to utilize the contribution of all its members. Often the only effective work could be done through cooperation.³

Certain problems called for special attention. They concerned voluntary organizations and their integration into the total church structure; the use of women on church governing boards; the use of women as professional church workers; and the problem of the ordination of women.⁴

The Significance of the Laity

The Present Situation. The churches were concerned about the possibility of rightly using and training the laity. They sensed deep dissatisfaction over the non-use of available laymen. The laity were present and waiting to become effective members of the church. The laity had an essential place in the task of the church. They were ill-equipped and too little had been asked of them.⁵

The Laity in the Church. The importance of the laity was obvious.

¹Ibid., p. 94.

²Ibid., p. 146.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 147.

⁵Ibid., p. 153.

It constituted ninety-nine per cent of the church. The latent resources of the rank and file were urgently needed in the work of the church. This need, however, had not been sufficiently recognized. The laity spent their lives in their homes, occupations, and community. Only they could take the message of the Bible and show its relevance to the real problems and needs. "Only by the witness of a spiritually intelligent and active laity can the church meet the modern world in its actual perplexities and life situations."¹ While millions had seen the Church floating over the modern world, the laity could bring it back down.

The Basic Needs.

The laity requires strengthening through Biblical and theological study and discussion with special reference to the bearing of Christian faith upon daily life. This will include the study of Christian stewardship, which means nothing less than faith in action. Without such a theological understanding of stewardship, it may easily degenerate into a well meant activism.²

Rethinking would need to be done on such Biblical statements as "a royal priesthood," (1 Peter 2:9), and "Body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:16). The adequate training and complete personal commitment of the laity were mandatory.³

The Laity in the World. Laymen had to be shown how to obey God in the stress and problems of their lives. How to live in a secularized world as Christians, how to give witness to faith, the relation of Christianity to economic, social, political and cultural realities—all these demanded answers. Left to their own wits, their lives became

¹Ibid., p. 154.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

departmentalized into secular and religious areas, resulting in frustration and spiritual weakness. The Church was no longer a source of strength and light, but simply a place to have religious needs satisfied in isolation of the everyday realities of life that are "molded by the effects of industrialization, technics and standardization." Jesus claimed the whole of life. Christian faith must be expressed in all realms of life. The Church must come to grips with the intellectual, moral and religious problems of the laymen.¹

The Christian Approach to the Jews

Concern over the Jews was inescapable as one viewed the disorder of man. No people had suffered more from the disorder. Six million Jews were exterminated during the war. God had bound the Church to the Jews in a special solidarity. His design linked the two destinies.²

The Meaning of the Jews. Israel had a unique position in God's design. God had made His covenant with Israel. God gave His law and revealed His name to Israel. The prophets were sent to Israel. The Messiah, Jesus Christ the Saviour of all mankind, was promised to Israel. The Church, having received this heritage, was bound to render it back in the light of the cross. The Church had to tell them that the "Messiah for whom you wait has come."³

The Barriers to Overcome. The Church had built many barriers and would have to remove them. There had been a failure to manifest Christian

¹Visser 't Hooft, Ibid., p. 155.

²Ibid., p. 160.

³Ibid.

love toward the Jews. They had failed to show a will for common social justice, against anti-semitism. The Church must show the Jews that it had denounced all anti-semitism as a sin against God and man.¹

The Christian Witness to Jews. Complying with the universal command to evangelize, the first mission was to the Jews. The Church had failed to maintain this mission. Specially trained ministers and special literature should be made available for the Jews. One strong way to win was to show a radiant and contagious victorious life of love expressed in contact. Once converted, the Jew requires particular tenderness and full acceptance because of the deep wounds caused by the loss of family and friends when Christianity was accepted.²

Israel as a State.

The establishment of the state of 'Israel' adds a political dimension to the Christian approach to the Jews and threatens to complicate anti-semitism with political fears and enmities.³

Politically, the Palestine question involved the conflict of "rights." The Committee did not wish to express a judgment on the matter. The problem had to be dealt with morally and spiritually and not just as a problem of expediency--political, strategic or economic. The Church had to deal without discrimination to help both the Jews and the Arabs in their need.⁴

The Message

The message constituted the consummated thinking of the Assembly.

¹Ibid., p. 161.

²Ibid., p. 162.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

With great conviction it set forth the faith of the Council. They were presently divided from each other, but, they could find one another once again if they would corporately find their oneness in Christ. It concluded that the Church was filled with divisions in matters of faith, order and tradition. However, in Christ there is the full and adequate remedy.¹

For the full text of this message, see Appendix A.

The Closing Plenary Sessions

The plenary session reconvened on Monday, August 30 to Saturday, September 4, for the purpose of hearing the reports of the committees and sections. Under the leadership of Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, Dr. H. P. Van Dusen, Pastor Marc Boegner, and Dr. Erling Eidem, the committee and section reports were discussed, revised in some instances, and accepted unanimously by the Assembly.²

On Saturday morning, after some short business, the Archbishop of Canterbury declared the business of the First Assembly to be completed. Within five minutes, the great hall, Concertgebouw, stood dark and empty. A twinge of regret mingled with unbounded joy at the meaning and achievement of the two weeks, were the reactions of one observing.³

V. SUMMARY

The History

August 23, 1948, at Amsterdam, Holland, was the date and location of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The theme of the

¹Ibid., pp. 9-11.

²Ibid., p. 42.

³Ibid.

Assembly was "Man's Disorder and God's Design." Under this theme, the conference functioned in five main areas: they worshiped, listened to addresses, held plenary sessions, and divided into sections and committees for study. One of the first acts was to constitute the World Council of Churches. This was done without dissent on August 23, 1948. Dr. John R. Mott was chosen Honorary President. Six other church leaders were selected as active presidents to lead the organization.

The Philosophy

Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, the General Secretary, clearly stated the nature of the Council. Although there was and could be only one Church, they were yet to reach the ideal. The Assembly was a council of churches, an emergency solution between division and unity. He wanted to make it very clear that the World Council of Churches was not an attempt for ecclesiastical power nor had it any intentions in that direction.

Doctrinally, the Assembly was clear. Though there was room for varied interpretation, the basic theological formulations held by the Church from antiquity, were affirmed. Gleaned from the official reports were these words: Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, died and was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven and gave the Holy Spirit to dwell in the Church. The Christocentric basis of Jesus as God and Saviour was made the very basis of the organization. Forgiveness of sins, the present possession of eternal life, Christ's second coming, His judgment, and the impending doom were all affirmed. The Christocentric, Trinitarian basis along with the endorsement of these other basic truths, was set forth as the position of the World Council.

The doctrine of the Church was given the major emphasis. The Church was God's gift to men for the salvation of the world. The redemptive work of Christ brought the Church into existence, which Church persists in continuity throughout history through the Holy Spirit. This was how it defined what the Church was. It also said what the Church was to do. The vocation of the Church was to worship and witness. The Gospel was to be proclaimed to all the world. The Church lives for this purpose. Every member, clergy and lay, must enter into the vocation.

The world was facing a social crisis of unparalleled proportions. The deep roots of the social upheaval were to be found in man's refusal to accept the sovereignty of God. First responsibility must be to God. He comes before the state or any earthly community. On the extremes of the crisis were two competing systems, capitalism and communism. The Council went on record as rejecting the ideologies of both laissez-faire capitalism and communism. The Church was to renew society by first renewing itself.

The problem of war was carefully considered. The world was in God's hands, and though His will might be thwarted, it could not be finally frustrated. War was incompatible with the teachings of Jesus Christ. It was to be resisted and never to be considered inevitable. Recognizing the sovereignty of God, the rule of law had to prevail. The rule of law would guard the rights and freedoms of man and prevent war.

The life and work of laymen in the Church was considered. With ninety-nine percent of the Church made up of laymen, it was concluded that poor use was being made of this latent force. Only through the laymen

could the Gospel be taken to the world and made relevant to the daily life of the people.

The Jewish people were considered by the conference. A recognition was given to the fact that they had special meaning to the Christians for it was through this race that the world received its Messiah. It was recognized that the Church had failed to maintain the original mission to the Jew. The Council stood for renewed missionary work in great tenderness and love and a vigorous attack on anti-semitism.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES - EVANSTON, 1954

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I. INTRODUCTION

The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches was held at Amsterdam in 1948. Here, a permanent ecumenical structure was created within which the churches were to grow and advance their common mission to humanity. Six years later, on August 15, 1954, the Second Assembly was held at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.¹

The preparations were thorough. A chief preparation was the negotiations with the United States government to insure entry of all members of the Assembly. All but a very few received their visas in time.²

Northwestern University, founded by the Methodists in 1851, was essential to the preparation for the Assembly.

Its ample and comfortable accommodations were . . . basic. The services of its staff, especially that related to administration, public relations, dormitories and commons, buildings and grounds, were extensive. A contribution of \$25,000 to the Assembly travel budget further demonstrated the interest of the University in the Assembly, and this, together with the very low daily rate charged, greatly aided Assembly finances.³

Thus the delegates were housed in dormitories on the University campus.

Accredited visitors were housed in Evanston homes. Hotels were

¹W. A. Visser 't Hooft, ed., The Evanston Report (New York: SCM Press, Ltd., 1955), p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Ibid., p. 16.

reserved for the press. General visitors were able to secure housing in nearby Chicago.¹

Other Evanston and Chicago groups aided. Garrett Biblical Institute, Seabury Western Theological Seminary and the First Methodist Church of Evanston, all placed their complete facilities at the disposal of the Assembly.²

II. THE SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The organizational structure of the Assembly was relatively simple. Basically, the Assembly consisted of four main parts: corporate worship, division into main theme groups, section groups and committee groups. For deliberations on the main theme, all participants except visitors, were divided into fifteen groups. For the sections, which were the philosophical studies, the Assembly was divided into six groups. For the committees, which were structural groups, the Assembly was divided into seven groups.³

The theme of the Assembly was "Jesus Christ, The Hope of the World." The sections discussed: Faith and Order, Evangelism, Social Questions, International Affairs, Intergroup Relations, and the Laity. The committees concerned: general policy, studies, ecumenical action, inter-church aid and refugees, information, finance, and international affairs.

The Assembly met for various purposes. To discuss the great issues

¹Paul Hutchinson, (ed.), "The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches," The Christian Century, Vol. LXXI No. 13, (March 31, 1954), p. 398.

²Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 16.

³Ibid., p. 11.

of Christian faith and message was a primary reason. This they did in a far more detailed way than Amsterdam would have dared. Further, they assessed and sought to enhance the work of the Assembly's divisions and departments for the future. Finally, they met to worship God, realizing that in this there was a great depth of unity.¹

A typical day at the Assembly followed this time schedule:

8:45 - 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship
 10:00 - 12:00 noon Plenary Session or Committee or Section meetings
 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Plenary Session or Committees or Discussion
 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. Plenary Session
 10:00 - 10:30 p.m. Evening Prayers²

The Worship

The opening service took place at the First Methodist Church. A colorful procession was viewed under television cameras in a nation wide telecast. The service proceeded with dignity and precision with Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Methodist, giving the message.³

Worship was an important event at the Assembly. It opened and closed each day. In the morning devotions, except when communion was to be held, the continuous text was the First Epistle of Peter. It was appropriate in that it was a message of encouragement, of hope and joy in the midst of suffering.⁴

¹Hutchinson, op. cit., p. 398.

²Ibid., "Program of the Assembly," p. 400.

³Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 17.

⁴Ibid., p. 12, and James Hastings Nichols, Evanston, An Interpretation (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1954), p. 73.

The Theme Presented

McGaw Memorial Hall, a large arched steel and concrete building on the University campus, housed the full sessions of the Assembly. The delegates took their places in the auditorium for the opening plenary session. As they faced the platform they viewed a large drape bearing the emblem of the Council in deep blue and white. Behind the official group at the long table, there stood a large structure built for the World Council's Presidium. Accredited visitors, observers, consultants, fraternal delegates, youth, staff and non-accredited visitors were all assigned places. Each received a small portable receiving set with headphones which made possible the reception of the speeches in the three official Assembly languages: English, French and German.¹

Dr. Marc Boegner declared the Assembly open. Two addresses were given on the theme, "Jesus Christ, The Hope of the World." Professor Edmund Schlink of the University of Heidelberg, Germany, spoke first.²

In speaking of the future of the world, he stated that one was faced with the New Testament announcement of the end of the world. In the New Testament, the calamities of the last days were not simply the result of human misdeeds or human frailty. "They were rather the activity of God Himself. . . ."³ The Church was not to seek to preserve the world, undisturbed, for then Christ would not be the hope of the world, but the end of all hope. Professor Schlink went on to say that "the name of Christ was

¹Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 19.

²Ibid., p. 19.

³Ibid., p. 20.

taken in vain if it was used as a slogan in this world's struggle for its own preservation."¹

Following Professor Schlink's address, Professor Robert L. Calhoun of Yale University, spoke to the Assembly. His message included these statements: God was the fundamental reality. He came into history in Jesus Christ who died on the cross and rose to be our hope. In America, a social gospel had prevailed more than Biblical and traditional doctrines. Distortion of Biblical doctrines was dangerous. God's will had been confused with American life. But in reality, death and suffering were all about in the world. Christ was the only Hope.²

Dr. Visser 't Hooft had predicted a year prior to the Assembly that the theme was a dangerous one. An easier one could have been found. Yet, Hope in Christ was the very essence of the Gospel and the Church had to make this rediscovery.³

The main theme, "Jesus Christ, The Hope of the World," was discussed by the Assembly. A fifty-one page statement was drawn up. However, because of the tremendously conflicting opinions, the report was not adopted, but sent on to the churches for study.⁴

It was really a failure for the Assembly to be unable to give the world a positive statement on the "Hope of the World." But, the disagreements were not without foundation. The report failed to treat the

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 20-21.

³W. A. Visser 't Hooft, "The Meaning of Evanston, 1954," The Christian Century, Vol. LXX No. 33, (August 19, 1953), p. 938.

⁴Orr, op. cit., p. 86.

present work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world, specific reference to "signs of hope," or an adequate treatment of the theme of creation and cosmic redemption. The relationship between the Christian's hope here and now and his ultimate hope was not dealt with. There was great difference of opinion over the presentation of "rival hopes," over the treatment of non-Christian religions, and the lukewarm handling of the second coming of Christ.¹

Perhaps the theme was too advanced at this stage. The Christian Century, speaking editorially, sounded a warning for the future:

Give the World Council about four more such theological or dogmatic main themes--say, the nature of Biblical authority in 1960, the nature of the Church in 1966, the nature of salvation in 1972, and the creedal basis of the Council's own being in 1978--and if the world itself hasn't blown up by that time the Council almost certainly will.²

The Festival of Faith

On the evening of the opening day, Soldier's Field in Chicago, Illinois, saw one hundred and twenty-five thousand Christians gathered to witness a festival of faith. At eight o'clock, the chorus led the crowd in song. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft spoke concerning the acts of God to which the Assembly would witness.

'Here we are,' he said, 'because God has taken the initiative, not because we have started a new movement. We are here because God has His plan for the world, not because we have a new blueprint for world order; we are here in order to respond to all that God has done and promised. It is therefore fitting that at the outset of this Assembly

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, op. cit., p. 70.

²Paul Hutchinson, (ed.), "Evanston Retrospect," The Christian Century, Vol. LXXI No. 38, (September 22, 1954), p. 1125.

we should focus our attention on the mighty works of God.'¹

The presidents of the World Council of Churches, in robes, filed onto the field and took places centrally on "a silver dais with sloping sides which faced the main entrance."² The people sang "All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name" while the official procession of participants filed toward the presidents and were seated.³

Dr. Marc Boegner led in an interrogation with the entire crowd responding:

'Who are you to have come here?'

'We are Christians.'

'What is it to be a Christian?'

'It is to believe in God the Father; in His only Son, our Lord, who is the hope of the world, and in the Holy Spirit.'

'From whence have you come?'

'From one hundred sixty-one member churches in forty-eight countries on five continents.'

'Why have you come?'

'We have come to worship God.'⁴

Here was the Church confessing its faith!

Then the festival began. Darkness filled the field. A cast of three thousand singers, dancers and narrators presented themselves.

Against a background of music and speech, the dancers in their wide robes then acted out the Biblical story of creation, of redemption in Christ and of the consummation of all things. The culmination came as all lay prostrate in sacrifice before God and afterwards grouped once

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

²Ibid., p. 22.

³Ibid.

⁴Orr, op. cit., p. 81.

more in the center with arms upraised. The Christian hope rang out in the great New Testament invocation to the coming of Christ: 'Even so come, Lord Jesus.'¹

The General Secretary's Statement

The next day, in general plenary session, the most notable event was the statement made by the General Secretary. Dr. Visser 't Hooft gave the real motivations of the ecumenical movement as repentance for the obscurity of the holiness, the apostolicity, and the unity of the true Church. The churches needed each other to demonstrate these things.²

Regarding the nature of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Visser 't Hooft gave this statement:

The World Council of Churches is essentially an instrument of the churches to assist them in their common task to manifest the true nature of the Church. It is an instrument and must therefore never be considered as an aim in itself. The important thing is not the World Council as an organization. What is important is that the churches should be the Church. It is therefore a sign of confused thinking to speak of the World Council itself as the World Church. And it is completely erroneous to suggest that the World Council is or has any ambition to become a super Church, that is, a center of administrative power. There is not a single church in the membership of the Council which desires this; there is not one which would tolerate this.³

On the other hand, he felt it should also be made plain that the churches were not self-contained organizational structures. They become part of the Universal Church, possessing the "charismata" (gifts) and a "koinonia" (fellowship).⁴

The Special Guests

Highlighting the Assembly was the appearance of two distinguished

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, op. cit., p. 22.

²Ibid., p. 25.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

guests. The first was the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower. Mr. Eisenhower addressed the Assembly making a plea for prayer in the fight for peace. The second was the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Dag Hammarskjold. Mr. Hammarskjold called for universal brotherhood, regardless of race, color, or creed.¹

The Holy Communion

An evening service of preparation for Holy Communion was conducted. Then, for four successive mornings with one additional service later, Holy Communion was conducted. Open communion was celebrated by the Methodist Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the Church of South India. The action of the Protestant Episcopal Church in opening its communion was a notable advance from previous Anglican exclusiveness. Only the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Greek Orthodox Church conducted a closed communion.²

These were the highlights of the general meetings. In between, came the hard work of the sections and committees.

III. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly Committees

The Committees formed the administrative core of the Assembly. They covered such areas as policy, studies, ecumenical action, interchurch aid and refugees, information, finance and international affairs. Previous to the Assembly, the Central Committee studied the Committees, as well as all

¹Ibid., pp. 39-40.

²Ibid., p. 13.

phases of the structure of the Assembly. They made concrete suggestions for improvement. They also formulated more definite aims. Thus, the Secretariate was given the guidance and direction for the operations in post-Evanston years.¹

The Officers

The Presidium was elected with as wide a representation as was possible. Geographical spread, numerical factors, as well as a recognition of both older and younger churches were considered. With these factors in mind, the Assembly placed in office six presidents and two honorary presidents. These men included: Rev. John Baillie, British Isles, Church of Scotland; Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri, South America, Methodist; Bishop Otto Dibelius, Europe, Evangelical Church in Germany; Metropolitan Juhanon, Asia, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar; Archbishop Michael, Eastern Orthodox, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America; and Rev. Henry Knox Sherril, North America, Protestant Episcopal Church. The two honorary presidents were Dr. John R. Mott and Bishop G. K. A. Bell. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft continued as General Secretary.²

The Delegates

There were one thousand two hundred and ninety-eight participants who came from one hundred and seventy-nine churches in fifty-four countries. Of these, five hundred and two delegates represented one hundred and thirty-two member churches in forty-two countries.³ The breakdown of the

¹Ibid., pp. 174-258.

²Ibid., p. 259.

³Ibid., p. 336.

participants is clearly seen in the following table:

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Laymen</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Delegates	383	44	75	502	
Accredited Visitors	328	111	60	499	
Consultants	93	15	37	145	
Youth Consultants	36	31	29	96	
Fraternal Delegates	23	3	5	31	
Observers	24		1	25	
	887	204	207	1298	¹

The Member Churches

Who were there? To briefly survey the delegates of one hundred and thirty-two churches would have been difficult. Only a crude classification using ecclesiastical, geographical, and racial distinction in combination was possible.²

The European Continent. These churches belonged to two denominational families, mainly Lutheran and Reformed (Presbyterian). Most of the protestant Germans and almost all of Scandinavia were Lutheran. The Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Hungary were Reformed. It was from the European churches that there came the greatest concentration of theological heavyweights in the Council. Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Anders Nygren, Yngve Brilioth and Edmund Schlink were among the notables.³

The Iron Curtain. About one dozen Protestants from behind the Iron Curtain came to Evanston. Dr. Joseph L. Hromadka, who was also present at Amsterdam, came from Czechoslovakia. Bishops Albert Bereczky and John

¹Ibid., p. 336.

²Nichols, op. cit., p. 30.

³Ibid.

Peters came from Hungary. These churches seemed more vital than the Church in the comfortable West. They gave more preparation to Evanston than the others. They had a great desire for Christian solidarity. The delegates from communist countries provided Christians with the opportunity to demonstrate solidarity in the face of a divided world.¹

The Minority Churches. Minority churches from predominantly Roman Catholic countries were present. From Austria, Belgium, Italy, France, Spain, Philippines, Mexico, and almost all of the South American countries—here the churches had grown under opposition to religious liberty from Rome. These churches were at the Assembly.²

The British Commonwealth. The State Church, the Church of England, was a strong force at the Assembly. This church was actually an anglo-catholic church. The Free Churches were also represented: Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Baptist.³

The American Churches. These churches were perhaps the most divided. The Baptist churches composed the largest block of American churches, one-third, and were the least interested in ecumenicity. The Methodists were the largest church represented and they were the host church. They were also liberal in their theology.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 32, and Paul Hutchinson, ed., "The Assembly and the Churches," The Christian Century, Vol. LXXI No. 38, (September 22, 1954), p. 1130.

²Nichols, op. cit., p. 35.

³Ibid., p. 37.

⁴Ibid., p. 38.

The Asians and the Africans. These younger churches were represented. The conspicuous role played by the delegates of the younger churches made Evanston distinctive over other ecumenical gatherings. Perhaps this was in keeping with the political nationalism of the day. The churches were small in Asia. Christians composed only two percent of the population of India, one percent of China, one-half percent of Japan, ten percent of Viet Nam, eight percent of Ceylon and four percent of Indonesia. Out of one thousand two hundred and thirty millions of people in East Asia, only about forty million were Christians. Yet, already, these young churches were beginning to send out missionaries. They were far more ecumenically minded than the older churches. Africa had twenty million Christians and was least affected by the ecumenical consciousness. In Africa, the foreign stamp was being kept on Christianity while Islam was growing with nationalism.¹

The Absent Churches

The Evangelicals. Who were not there? An absence that had become most noticeable was that of the American evangelicals. They had met together on a basis very different from that of the World Council. Dr. Paul P. Petticord, who later became president of the National Association of Evangelicals, accurately summed up the evangelical position. Spiritual unity was the natural result of a common theological basis of faith. This dogmatic basis was the foundation for fellowship and service. The theological basis was sourced in the Bible as the only final objective authority.

¹Ibid., pp. 40-43.

The evangelical experience of "Christ in you" as the experience of regeneration was insisted upon. In other words, it was a "doctrinal unity stimulating spiritual unity on the basis of the indwelling 'Christ in you.'"¹

To the evangelical, denominational distinctions were no great sin for they found no scriptural evidence that there was to be one organization. Rather, church history had shown that "some of the greatest denials of the unity which is love was to be found within ecclesiastical structures."² Organizations were often obstacles to unity. Rev. J. Marcellus Kik carefully stated the evangelical position:

An efficient and unified organization has been stressed as a means to greater growth and influence for the church. The Scriptures stress that increase of the body depends on a closer union with Christ. Human means are inadequate in the fight against the powers of darkness. Mere organization cannot convert the human soul and release it from the power of Satan. The church must depend on supernatural power and that can only be obtained from Christ. As far as the increase of the church is concerned the incorporation of various denominations into one corporate body will avail little or nothing. Mergers of denominations have not demonstrated that growth results. The great and primary effort should be to incorporate the membership into Christ. With the life of Christ flowing into the churches the increase will take care of itself. The church cannot have either life or growth if she does not have a vital union with Christ.³

Ecumenism for the evangelical was spiritual ecumenism.

The Roman, Orthodox, and Chinese. The Roman Catholics were not present. Most of the Orthodox churches were absent, although a few were

¹Paul P. Petticord, True Ecumenicity (Wheaton, Illinois: National Association of Evangelicals, n.d.), pp. 1-11.

²Ibid., pp. 1-11, and K. S. Latourette, The Emergence of a World Christian Community (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 85.

³J. Marcellus Kik, Ecumenism and the Evangelical (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 104.

represented. To the dismay of the Assembly, the Chinese delegation was not there. No word was received from them. At Amsterdam, four Chinese churches were represented: the Baptist Council, the Episcopal Church, the Congregational Church and the Church of Christ in China.¹

With the Protestants representing thirty percent of Christendom, and some of them missing, and the Roman Catholics representing forty-five percent of Christendom, and all of them missing, and the Orthodox representing twenty-five percent of Christendom, and most of them missing, the World Council represented less than half of Christianity.²

The Press and Staff

The press and broadcasting agents were more numerous than in any other church meeting ever held. Members of the press, religious and secular, and members of the broadcasters, radio and television, numbered six hundred and forty-six accredited persons. The breakdown was as follows: three hundred and twenty-two secular press; one hundred and ninety-five religious press; seventy-six foreign press; and fifty-three radio. "Two separate press rooms were organized, each completely equipped with teletype, typewriters, and special telephones. . . ."³ Daily press conferences took place.

The staff of the Assembly numbered over three hundred and seventy-six. These included members of the study staff, stewards and aids, interpreters and translators and others. Many of these were voluntary in

¹Nichols, op. cit., pp. 15, 23.

³Ibid., p. 29.

³Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, op. cit., p. 14.

their help.¹

IV. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ASSEMBLY

Faith and Order

It was a fact that the Church possessed a oneness in Christ in spite of the disunity of the churches. This unity was not simply a sentiment, but given by God as the Holy Spirit revealed the work of Christ. This report sought to make clear what was believed about this unity.²

Our Oneness in Christ. The unity of the Church, as conceived in the New Testament was not sociological, but had its essential reality in Christ Himself and in His indissoluble unity with His people.³ The Church was not divided in Christ for in Him there was an indestructible unity.

Christ is the one Lord who represents and gathers to Himself the many of redeemed humanity, and it is therefore He alone who makes the many to be one in the Church.⁴

There were several figures used in the New Testament to show the relation of Christ and His people:

1. Many members--one body, one Head. (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:22).
2. Church as bride--Christ as bridegroom. (Rev. 19:7).
3. The faithful as His people. (1 Peter 2:9).
4. Christ as the New Temple--people in true worship. (Jn. 2:19; Jn. 4:21).
5. People as living stones of one building. (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2: 20-22).
6. Christ the Vine--the Church as branches. (Jn. 15).
7. Christ the Shepherd--the Church as the flock. (Jn. 10).⁵

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²Ibid., p. 82.

³See 1 Cor. 12:12; Jn. 15:1; 1 Cor. 1:13; Eph. 1:10,22; 1 Cor. 6:15; Jn. 14:20.

⁴Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 83.

⁵Ibid.

In other words, the one life of the Church was derived from "the whole person and work of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. The Church's unity is grounded in His taking of our nature upon Himself,"¹ and its manifestation in His life and works, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly reign.

The Church has not realized the fulness of this unity. There has been discord from the beginning. Thus, in speaking of the unity of the Church on earth it must be conceived as "a growth from its unity, as given, to its unity, as fully manifested."³ It is and also must become, a growth from unity to unity.

For the earthly pilgrimage, the Church was given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers--a fellowship for the purpose of ministering. Though the Church belongs to the heavenly kingdom, it must discharge its duties to the world, but never conform to it. Since the Church belongs to Christ, it belongs to His mission, the redemption of a sinful and divided world.⁴

"Jesus Christ has given to His Church the gift of Himself and thereby the means of corporate life."⁵ This gift was a present possession. He was present, pouring out His life to all, in spite of the divisions. The churches were waiting to hear and obey the truth as revealed in the Word. Though all receive baptism and the eucharist, yet these have not fully united the churches. Though not understood in the same sense, they still demonstrated a unity in Christ.⁶

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 84.

⁴Ibid., p. 85.

⁵Ibid., p. 86.

⁶Ibid.

Our Disunity as Churches.

Only in the light of the oneness of the Church in Christ can we understand the difference between diversity and division in the Church, and their relation to sin. There is diversity which is not sinful but good because it reflects both the diversities of gifts of the Spirit in the one body and diversities of creation by the one creator. But when diversity disrupts the manifest unity of the body, then it changes its quality and becomes a sinful division. It is sinful because it obscures from men the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, inasmuch as the Gospel of reconciliation is denied in the very lives of those who proclaim it.¹

Divisions have often come and been perpetuated to a large degree by sincere concern for the Gospel and out of acts of obedience to the will of God. The results have frequently saved souls and built the Church. The schism between the East and the West in 1054 A.D. was the result of the feeling that the West had departed from the God-given structure and faith by unwarranted claims and unfounded doctrines. Likewise, the Reformation of 1517 was a reform of the faith and order of the Church in order to restore it to primitive purity. This took place outside the framework of the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglicans and Old Catholics sought reform within the ancient and historic episcopacy, yet they still divided. The Free Churches and Methodists rose in order to give free course to the word of salvation. But regardless of these motives, sin seems to have characterized the divisions.²

Was it not sin to deny the sole Lordship of Christ over the Church by insisting on "our Church," our theology, order, history, and nationality? Mercy and light were needed to know the truth about the different beliefs. The cross of Christ had to be placed in the midst of the

¹Ibid., p. 87.

²Ibid.

divisions for here divisions were dissolved. Here the Church had to die with Christ--die to her self-will and offer up those divisions which divide.¹

"It was certain that the perfect unity of the Church would not be totally achieved until God summed up all things in Christ."² Eschatologically, all church divisions were provisional.³

In view of the unity and disunity of the churches, several actions of faith were suggested for use by the churches:

1. Repent of divisions.
2. Look for errors in beliefs.
3. Act together in all matters possible.
4. Seek reunions.
5. Listen to one Lord through the scriptures and obey Him.
6. Study the influence of social and cultural differences on faith and order.
7. Love those disagreed with.
8. Seek one baptism and one eucharist.
9. Recognize other ministries as valid.
10. Bear witness together. A divided witness was a defective witness. Unity and mission are connected.
11. Pray for unity.
12. Results will follow.⁴

Orthodox Reaction

Archbishop Michael of the Orthodox church, on behalf of his church, protested the report of the section on Faith and Order. While the first section of the report on the New Testament Church was acceptable, the second and third parts, on the approach to union, were unacceptable to the Orthodox.⁵

¹Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 88.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 89-91.

⁵Ibid., p. 92.

His objections were multiplied. He felt the "Basis" was too narrow. All doctrine formulated by the ecumenical councils should be included. The Basis had to be in the foundation of "the total dogmatic faith of the early, undivided Church without subtraction or alternation."¹ The idea of essential and non-essential doctrines was unacceptable. Furthermore, he could not accept the fact that the Holy Spirit spoke only through the Bible. He insisted that

The Holy Spirit abides and witnesses through the totality of the Church's life and experience. The Bible is given to us within the context of Apostolic tradition in which in turn we possess the authentic interpretation and explication of the Word of God. Loyalty to Apostolic Tradition safeguards the reality and continuity of church unity.²

Therefore, the Episcopal Succession was needed to maintain unity. The separated communions should return to the faith of the ancient united and indivisible Church. He stated his position clearly thus:

. . . we are bound to declare our profound conviction that the Holy Orthodox Church alone has preserved in full and intact 'the faith once delivered unto the saints.'³

This statement caused great consternation on the part of many. However, Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill and Professor John Baillie publically declared that the statement came as no surprise and would not affect the Orthodox standing in the World Council of Churches. They agreed in so much. They must be allowed to express their dissent on certain points.⁴

¹Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 93.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 94.

⁴Hutchinson, "The Assembly and the Churches," op. cit., pp. 1129-1130.

Evangelism

The Evangelizing Church. The Church has a mission to those outside her life.

Jesus Christ is the Gospel we proclaim. He is also Himself the Evangelist. He is the Apostle of God (Heb. 3:1) sent to the world to redeem it. As the Father sent Him so He sends us. He calls us and we must obey. He sends us and we must go.¹

In our helplessness in all things, God became man and Christ became our Hope. Having shared in His grace, the Church evangelizes and thus participates in His life and ministry to the world. His ministry, by His life, His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, His heavenly intercession, was the defeat of the powers of death and evil and the will that none should perish. In and by this ministry the Church lives. He through the Church changed men's lives.²

The Evangelistic Dimension. Christians were in the world as the Church, never alone with Christ in isolation from the world. Christ came to save the world. "Without the Gospel the world is without sense, but without the world the Gospel is without reality."³

Evangelism is no specialized or separable or periodic activity, but is rather a dimension of the total activity of the Church. Everything the Church does is of evangelistic significance. Through all the aspects of its life the Church participates in Christ's mission to the world, both partaking of the Gospel and seeking to communicate it. Evangelism is the place where the Church discovers itself in its true depth and outreach.⁴

Evangelism has certain concerns. It desires to transform society,

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, op. cit., p. 98.

²Ibid., p. 99.

³Ibid., p. 100.

⁴Ibid.

bringing all things to obedience of Christ, and to bring people into the full life of the church. The underlying fact in these desires was the bringing of persons to Christ as Saviour and Lord that they might share in eternal life. Personal encounter with Christ was the heart of the matter. He was not just an example to follow. He is a living Christ. "For on His relationship to God in Christ depends the eternal destiny of every man."¹

Communicating the Gospel. Evangelism is God's work. We are simply His directed agents. Therefore, to communicate this Gospel, one must be possessed by the transforming power of Jesus Christ. The Church witnesses to it and must live by it. "If it stops with us, it begins to fade in us."² Furthermore, the Church must love its neighbors as they are, even as Christ loved the Church. The world must feel that the Church understands, cares and accepts them.³

Communication makes certain demands. First, there must be encounter with the world. Isolation and introversion must be ended. Second, to communicate, the Church must speak words that are intimately related to the problems of the individual in his world. To the worker it must be related to social conditions and aspirations. To the intellectual it must be a cogent and coherent view of life. Third, words must be embodied in works of service, compassion and identification. Fourth, to possess power to evangelize the Church must nourish its life on the Bible. It speaks to all and forms the common language of the Church, transcending division.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 101.

³Ibid.

²Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 102-103.

Exploring Frontiers. Evangelism had frontiers to explore. Some of them were:

The renewal of the inner life was necessary to evangelism. One must completely rely on the Spirit and His resources.

The laity stand at the outposts of the Kingdom. They are missionaries. They must be trained and guided. A witnessing laity must be employed.

Christian education must be continuous. "Every new generation requires the fresh presentation of the Gospel."¹

Chaplaincies to hospitals, prisoners, armed forces, industry, universities and schools must be carried on.

Parish experiments were to be conducted. That is, the Church must go where the people are. One cannot wait for them to come to the Church.

The media of mass-communication should be used. Through literature, books, cinema, radio, television, magazines and newspapers, Christianity can permeate the general consciousness and press for individual decision for Jesus Christ. The danger was that this media might secularize, vulgarize or dilute the Gospel into some easy alternative to facing God's demand for personal response.

A more realistic ministerial training was needed. It should include provision for service of theological students in industry, agriculture, social studies and other field work.²

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, op. cit., pp. 103-105.

²Ibid.

Non-Christian Faiths. The renaissance of non-Christian religion and the spread of new ideologies necessitated a new approach in our evangelistic task. In countries in Asia and Africa, religious revivals were reinforced by nationalism and were effecting social reform. It was not the truth of these systems that appealed as much as the determination to change the oppressive conditions of life. These religions faced the Christian not only as creeds but as foundations for universal hope. "Such hope is based on man's persistent desire to be master of his own destiny."¹ In contrast, the Gospel is not what man can do for himself, but what God can do for man.²

The Christian knows and believes that in Jesus Christ God has given to man the full and only-sufficient revelation of Himself. 'There is none other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.' The Christian will proclaim the Gospel as God's judgment upon all human quests and questionings. But in his approach to men of other faiths he will humbly acknowledge that God has 'left not Himself without witness.' Whenever he finds light he will not try to quench it but bear witness to Jesus Christ, the true light--'the light which lighteth every man.'³

The approach must not be controversy, but identification, along-sidedness, and insight. The whole truth of the Christian Gospel must be spoken and accompanied by the demonstration of its transforming power. It must be proclaimed in the context of power in action. The cross of Jesus Christ is the sole hope of mankind.⁴

Come, Lord Jesus.

The tragedy of the world is that it knows no judge, no lord of history. To the Church it is given to know that man is not condemned to an endless succession of meaningless nights and days, to never

¹Ibid., p. 106.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 107.

⁴Ibid.

completed toil, to uncomforted mourning or ever disillusioned hoping. It possesses, or rather is possessed by, the hope of a glorious fulfillment.¹

Social Questions

God has commanded that men should love Him and their neighbors.

This was the Christian responsibility both to God and society.

The Meaning of the Responsible Society. Amsterdam coined the term "The Responsible Society." Amsterdam also defined it. It was freedom to maintain justice and order with all authority subject to God. This was not an alternative system but the criterion by which all social orders were to be judged. It was also a guide for individual action. For the Christian, it was to apply in any social system, favorable or unfavorable.²

Social living was usually learned in small groups. "The most fundamental of these was the family." The section deplored the widespread disruption of family life. It called for the reuniting of families where children could find security and love and thus grow into responsible adulthood.³

The structure and function of the state was well defined by the Oxford Conference of 1937:

Since we believe in the Holy God as the source of justice, we do not consider the state as the ultimate source of law, but rather its guarantor. It is not the lord but the servant of justice. There can be for the Christian no ultimate authority but very God.⁴

The same is true regarding social justice in economic life. The state is

¹Ibid., p. 108.

²Ibid., p. 112.

³Ibid., p. 114.

⁴Ibid., p. 115.

not the source of social justice but the guardian and protector fighting against depression, inflation, unemployment, low wages, poor work conditions and sickness.¹

"True justice is dynamic and its forms must vary to meet changing needs."² Justice must be made sensitive by love to discover the needs and overcome the disadvantages. Justice requires the development of economic and political systems that are humane, curbing the arbitrary use of power and encouraging the responsible participation of citizens in government.³

Christians fall under all forms of government. Therefore, they must work for and participate in political affairs to the end that certain principles will be embodied by all governments. Certain principles of political justice were: First, every person should be protected against arbitrary arrest or other interference with elementary human rights. Second, every person should have the right to express his religious, moral, and political convictions. This was especially important for minority groups. Third, channels of political action must be developed by which the people can without recourse to violence change their governments. Fourth, forms of association within society which have their own foundations and principles should be respected, and not controlled in their inner life, by the state. These groups included such ones as the Church, families and universities.⁴

In other words, while "the state alone has the power and the authority under God to act as trustee for society as a whole," the Christian

¹Ibid., p. 116.

²Ibid., p. 115.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 115-116.

must act as a conscience for the state reminding all of God's purposes for a nation and His judgment upon the use of power.¹

The Church was faced with problems in economic life. Justice must prevail. In this concern, the section propounded the following moral implications on economics: First, the state should only do what private industry cannot properly do. State action should be decentralized, limited and adaptable. Second, efficient production was important as well as fair distribution. Laziness and waste were sins. Third, while the churches were critical of monopolistic practices and irresponsible business practices, they also stressed the value of the skilled executive, incentives, responsible initiative and hard work. These produced the wisdom of decentralized decisions and the wide distribution of power. Fourth, the worker must have a status in society which corresponded with his responsibility and human dignity. Fifth, better justice should be possessed for the farmers in matters of security and income. Farmers on the other hand must not exhaust the soil, exploit their workers or take advantage of the consumer.²

The Church recognized certain problems and actions needed. There was the problem of the rich man versus unlimited need. There was need for equity in the distribution of wealth and income. Assistance was needed for children, the old, the sick, the refugees, and the economically weak. The problems of the unions, both trade and professional, were present. Economic foreign policies of countries were also a trouble area. These

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, Ibid., p. 116. ²Ibid., p. 118.

things must be faced.¹

The Communist and Non-communist Tension.

The conflict between communists and non-communists affects the political and economic life of nearly every nation in the world, and creates divisions even within the Church regarding the right attitude toward communism.²

Christians would be able to meet the crisis only when they worked for social justice and political freedom for all. Christians must help to create the different conditions that allow systems to live side by side. Christians must bear witness against atheistic and self-righteous ideologies.³

The conflict of the Christian faith with Marxist ideology and totaliterian practice was indicated at Amsterdam. The section reaffirmed this position by citing the Amsterdam report. It also continued to realize that communism's growth was a judgment on social injustice in which the Church was involved.⁴

Communism had important consequences for all nations. For Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with their poverty, misery and new aspirations for freedom, communism had great appeal. To these countries there seemed to be no alternative that would bring social change quickly enough. So they took it, in spite of the accompanying totalitarianism. Some Christians felt that they could cooperate because communism was bringing material abundance and justice. But, the Council had one question:

¹Ibid., p. 119.

²Ibid., p. 120.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

Can communism be an effective instrument for these limited purposes or must we give warning that, where such social and economic methods are introduced, the total communist scheme will come to dominate the minds of men as well as their institutions?¹

Christians should seriously consider the effects communism had already produced. The tendency of democratic societies to lower civil liberties had been observed. The preoccupation with the real danger of subversion had led to suspicion on any unpopular opinion or association. Enemies of human freedom had risen.²

In spite of these things, the Church must love those on both sides of the different ideologies. The overemphasis on the military defense against communism had caused a failure to see that reforms were an important response. There was a danger of succumbing to an anti-communist hysteria and the acceptance of a self-righteous assurance concerning the political and social systems of the West. On the other hand, many had accepted false promises of the communists and completely overlooked the threat. The Church must stand together over the political barriers.³

Economically Underdeveloped. The peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America were characterized by the urge to national self-determination, politically and economically. They had awakened to fundamental human rights and justice and were in revolt against enslavement, politically, economically, religiously and socially.⁴

The section developed a plan for responsible development of these countries: First, develop political institutions to accomplish reforms and

¹Ibid., p. 121.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 122.

⁴Ibid., p. 123.

preserve rights. Second, land reform and rural development must abolish absentee landlordism and unjust forms of land tenure and privilege. Third, industrial resources should be developed to raise the standard of living. Fourth, since population was too dense in relation to the resources, further study must be given to redistribution of population, family planning and birth control. Fifth, independence must not obscure the fact of interdependence of the nations. Those who give aid should do so to bring social and spiritual health. To aid only by the criterion of anti-communism, is self-defeating in that it serves reactionaries.¹

The real dangers in the world were stated as complacency, hopelessness and lack of imagination. The Church, guided by the Lord of heaven and earth, had a duty to reform and seek justice. The Church was not called to shoulder the burden of the world, but it must do all it can.²

International Affairs

"Social and political systems are in conflict."³ Contributing to this conflict were opposing ideologies, rival power blocks, the arms race, and the conscription of science and hydrogen weapons.⁴

Deeply and persistently man longs for peace. He no longer finds any glamour in war; he has tasted the fruit of its insanity and found it bitter and poisonous. His ideals are mocked, his liberty curtailed, his possessions destroyed, and his future undermined by total war even as its high sounding goals have eluded his grasp. He is sick of it and wants to be at peace.⁵

Peace for the Christian was more than the absence of war. It was the

¹Ibid., pp. 124-125.

²Ibid., p. 126.

³Ibid., p. 131.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., pp. 131-132.

presence of freedom, justice, truth and love. This was not easily to be obtained. War was the consequence of generations ignorant of and rebelling against God in a greed and insatiable lust for power. The problem was basically spiritual and defied economic or political solution. Men's hearts had to be changed. This was the evangelistic challenge.¹

It was an age of fear. True peace could not be built on fear. Nuclear weapons have been developed to guarantee peace against would-be aggressors. Lofty objectives have been advanced to justify the possibility of war. The Church must not let anything conceal the truth that war is inherently evil.²

Christians had to study fresh approaches to peace considering pacifism and justifiable military action as two of the views in Christendom. They also must study out the psychological, social, political and economic causes of war. Christians must call their governments to patience in negotiation and disarmament. But this was not enough.³

An international order of truth and peace would require: (a) under effective international inspection and control and in such a way that no state would have cause to fear that its security was endangered, the elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and all other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the reduction of all armaments to a minimum; (b) the development and acceptance of methods for peaceful change to rectify existing injustices.⁴

The nations were at an impasse over disarmament. The section called for a pledge from the nations that they would refrain from nuclear threats or any other means of force to maintain territorial integrity or the political independence of a state. This was the first step toward resolving the

¹Ibid., p. 132.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 133.

⁴Ibid.

impasse. If the pledge were broken, the United Nations should then take collective action limited to the necessities of international security.¹

Living Together in a Divided World. The Assembly believed that international order could come only through the reconciliation that Christ made possible. Because the Church possessed the Gospel of reconciliation, it could not believe that war was inevitable. Therefore, the first responsibility of Christians was to "live and work for the reconciliation of men to God and, therefore, as individuals and nations, to one another." Co-existence was not enough. Christians could not use it in an attempt to disguise the vast differences between society rooted in Christ and society that repudiated the Christian revelation. Co-existence had to be an integrated fellowship.²

Speaking to the problem of totalitarianism, the section said:

We stand against submission to, engulfment by, or appeasement of, totalitarian tyranny and aggression. We also stand against the exploitation of any people by economic monopoly or political imperialism. In the world community we must stand for the freedom of all people to know the truth which makes men free and for the basic civil liberties of all people to struggle for a higher freedom.³

Yet with the deep differences, it could not mean that people could not live together in a divided world. If such a condition were to be possible, certain minimum conditions had to be adhered to: a conviction that people could live together, at least for a period of years; renounce coercion as an instrument of policy; end injustices that would lead to war; respect the pledged word; continued negotiation; and a willingness to

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 135.

³Ibid.

submit questions to an impartial international organization and to abide by its decisions.¹

What the Nations Owe to One Another. "The world community has become interdependent." Old colonialism and imperialism were dying out with the realization that peoples have "the legitimate right of self-determination." There had to be a partnership and sharing between nations, each making a contribution and each learning from the other.²

The United Nations and World Community. The United Nations had made contributions to order and justice. As a forum of world public opinion many issues had been clarified. The weaknesses of the organization were also evident. Very little progress had been made toward world disarmament or an international police force. Deadlocks were frequent. "While the United Nations stands and grows, the international crisis deepens." The United Nations must continue to grow by becoming more comprehensive in membership, by fostering more loyalty to the Charter. The Charter might be revised to increase its powers. The organization must continue to recognize the sovereign equality of states, small or great.³

Toward an International Ethos. There was an obvious lack of a common foundation of moral principles among the nations. The Assembly tentatively advanced the following international ethos:

1. All power carries responsibility and all nations are trustees of

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, Ibid., p. 136.

²Ibid., p. 137.

³Ibid., p. 139.

- power to be used for the common good.
2. All nations are subject to moral law which should be lived by, developed and enforced.
 3. All nations should honor their pledged word.
 4. No nation in an international dispute has the right to be the sole judge of its case and to use war to advance its policies. Negotiation or arbitration should be used.
 5. All nations are morally obligated to insure universal security and must support measures to deny victory to an aggressor.
 6. All nations should recognize and safeguard the inherent dignity, worth and essential rights of the human person, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.
 7. Recognize the right of every other nation to live by and proclaim its own political and social beliefs, provided no coercion, threat, infiltration or deception is used.
 8. Share scientific and technical skills and help victims of disaster.
 9. Develop cordial relations with each other.¹

The international sphere was a field of obedience to Jesus Christ. It fell within the range of His sovereignty and moral law. The Church must manifest the Kingdom of God among men. "The Church must seek to be the kind of community which God wishes the world to become." The Church was "a redemptive suffering fellowship" in the world, rising above national barriers to a true ecumenicity. "It must carry into the turmoil of international relations the real possibility of the reconciliation of all races, nationalities and classes in the love of Christ."²

This was an essential part of evangelism. Words were not enough. The Church's life and service had to contribute to justice and peace.³

Intergroup Relations

The State of the World. The world was restless, filled with racial and ethnic tensions. The desire of millions was for status and recognition,

¹Ibid., p. 142.

²Ibid., p. 143.

³Ibid.

something to live and work for, and for a fuller share of the fruits of the earth. The struggle of disadvantaged peoples for emancipation has begun in the face of hatreds, jealousies and suspicions. Deep racial prejudices, rooted in the sinful heart of man were resisting these.¹

The Hope of the World. Man was seeking some new ground of hope. Some fallacious solutions to the world's racial problems had been advanced. Some believed the answer to be in the economic and political reordering of society; or in the pursuit and use of knowledge; or in ridding oneself of dependence on some greater being, trusting rather in humanism; or in the power of a race, class, or nation.²

The Christian hope for unity is in Jesus Christ. "Our Lord is concerned with all the just hopes of men but in Himself He offers the hope that transcends them all."³ He revealed God as Father and died for all men "reconciling them to God and to each other by His cross." "From every race and nation a new people of God was created, in which the power of the Spirit overcomes racial pride and fear."⁴ His was a work of reconciliation.

The Calling of the Church.

This is the calling of the Church with regard to race, to witness within itself to the Kingship of Christ and the unity of His people, in Him transcending all diversity. Jesus Christ in His incarnation and redemptive action restores this unity which from the beginning was God's design.⁵

Segregation had prevailed in the churches. Officially, such churches

¹Ibid., p. 152.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 153.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

affirmed that physical separation in the Church because of race was a denial of spiritual unity and the brotherhood of man. Yet segregation persisted in the same churches being justified on other grounds of culture, residential patterns or that the time was not yet ripe for so many of the church members to accept it. They actually made use of the unregenerated reasons of the world.¹

The Church is called upon, therefore, to set aside such excuses and to declare God's will both in words and deeds. 'Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.' We believe it to be the will of God that such proof in word and deed now be given.²

Repentance was needed, not simply for disunity and offenses, but also for the separation from God and the feeble grasp of the truth of the Word, from which disunity springs.

Racial and ethnic fears, hates and prejudice are more than social problems with whose existence we must reckon; they are sins against God and His commandments that the gospel alone can cure.³

The Church could not approve of any laws that discriminate on the grounds of race, even with regard to intermarriage.

While it can find in the Bible no clear justification or condemnation of intermarriage, but only a discussion of the duties of the faithful in marriage with partners of other religions, it cannot approve any law against racial or ethnic intermarriage, for Christian marriage involves primarily a union of two individuals before God which goes beyond the jurisdiction of the state or of culture.⁴

The section also recognized the need to warn young people of the richness and consequences of such marriage.

¹Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 155.

²Ibid., p. 154.

⁴Ibid., p. 157.

It was a great challenge for the Church to be the answer to the disunity of the nations. The Church was the creation of God to meet the needs of a restless and a changing world. The Christ of the Church was the only Hope.¹

The Laity

The Ministry of the Laity. It was the Amsterdam Assembly that first affirmed the need for a spiritually intelligent and active laity to win the world for Christ. Since Amsterdam, much thinking and activity had been accomplished.²

The clergy and the laity belong together in the Church, if the Church is to do her job in the world. This was a rediscovery of the true nature of the Church as the people of God. The phrase, "the ministry of the laity" expresses the privilege of the whole Church to share in Christ's ministry to the world. All Christians were to be ministers of His salvation using the particular gift of the Spirit that one had received.³

Therefore in daily living and work the laity are not mere fragments of the church . . . scattered. . . . They are the Church's representatives, no matter where they are. It is the laity who draw together work and worship; it is they who bridge the gulf between the Church and the world, and it is they who manifest in word and action the Lordship of Christ over the world. . . . This and not some new order or organization, is the ministry of the laity. They are called to it because they belong to the Church. . . .⁴

The whole Church was called to the Christian vocation--a life of faith, obedience, service and worship.

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, Ibid., p. 158.

²Ibid., p. 160.

³Ibid., p. 161.

⁴Ibid.

Christian Faith and Daily Work. Was there any relevance between Christian faith and daily work? Many had felt that there was a great gulf between the Church and the work-a-day life. There were reasons why this gulf seemed to exist. The parish, where one worked, lived and worshipped had disappeared with industrialization. The clergy now had little contact with parishioners at work. People no longer worshipped with their fellow workers. It was also evident that separation between the Church and the world had placed activities outside the Church that were once a part of its influence. Laymen often failed to see any relation between them, and thus departmentalized, accepting secular viewpoints while retaining opposing Christian viewpoints. Also, a factor was the false evaluations of work that made academic or highly skilled work more desirable than menial work. In some lands, highly educated Christians would refuse other forms of work that were below their level. This was a defective sense of the true dignity of all work. On the other hand, though work was God's ordinance for man, some places idolized it, making it the whole of life, forgetting God. Finally, some false views of work had divided the Church from the working world. Work was a field for evangelism as well as a job in which one could silently bear witness by the quality of one's workmanship.¹

The Christian Understanding of Work. The Christian view of work could bridge the gulf between the Church and the life of the world. The Christian philosophy was very simple. First, work was designed for the

¹Ibid., pp. 162-63.

meeting of human needs. It can be satisfying as well as drudgery. All work must be done as unto Him, not simply for the seeking of success. This is not to say that a just recompense was not needed. Second, all honest work was a service to society. Selfish aims in work were a violation of this. The Church was to show forth Christ by rendering service to one's neighbors, just and unjust. Third, creative values should be practiced. Achievement was satisfying, not to glorify man but God.¹

The section stated this philosophy at work in the following words:

God is not only the Creator of the world, He is also its redeemer. The Church of Christ is the sphere of God's redemptive work, the new creation which is destined to renew the old. Every member of the Church, and therefore every layman, is called by God to witness to the reality of this new creation, that is to the redemptive work of Christ, in all His work, and words and life; this is the meaning of Christian vocation in secular affairs. Every situation in daily life provides an opportunity to respond to this call of God. In this way the Church through the laity becomes the leaven in the lump, the constant sign at the center of the world's affairs of the divine mercy and admonition.²

Effective Lay Ministry. The ministry of the laity must be made explicit. The real battles of the faith today are being fought in factories, offices, farms, political parties, governmental agencies, homes, press, radio, television and between nations. Some had felt that the Church should enter these areas. The fact was that the Church was already there through the laity. They had not yet been effective. Therefore, the Church should stand by the laity in their work and in their struggles.³

To meet these needs, the clergy must consider certain problems. The Church was internally occupied to the neglect of its vocation to the

¹Ibid., p. 164.

²Ibid., p. 165.

³Ibid., p. 168.

world. Christians who enter politics should be considered a gain and not a loss to the Church. There must also be a change in the atmosphere of the Church. The Church was viewed as an "old fashioned, middle-class culture, now radically changed in society but surviving in the Church."¹ There was also the tendency to choose the leaders of the Church from the white-collar workers thus discouraging young industrial workers. Finally, two standards of Christian living were often seen between clergy and laity. Clergy were supposed to live above reproach while for the laity a lower standard was tolerated. But,

. . . on clergy and laity alike God lays the demand for total commitment to Him. The ministry of the laity should mean nothing less than this total commitment of all man's time, deeds and possessions.²

In order to carefully effect the total ministry of the Church on the behalf of the world, certain equipment was needed. First, laymen needed instruction in basic Christian teaching. Second, theology was not for the clergy alone. It must be accessible to laymen and be made relevant to life's experiences. Third, the clergy needs a better acquaintance with working society by study and experience in order to be of help to the laity. Fourth, the home should become a place where work and occupation is a sphere of Christian vocation. Fifth, emphasis on the ministry of the laity meant mutual care by the laity for encouragement and strength. Christians of the same profession or occupations should have the opportunity to meet together for this purpose.³

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, Ibid., pp. 168-169.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 169-170.

The Church was sent into the world as a ministering community. Christ died for the whole world and the Church and is the bearer of this hope to the world. Its outgoing ministry must be through evangelism and work in the world. In a world of fear,

. . . the Church must not become an escape for those who do not dare to look such a world in the face. The Church cannot offer men security in this world, but because she preaches the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, she brings hope to men. It is for this reason that Christians can never abandon the world.¹

The Message

The message of the Evanston Assembly was one of great beauty. It expressed one dominate theme--Jesus Christ, the hope of the world. Turning from this hope has brought tragedy throughout history. Upon examination of the Christian hope, which hope is common to all believers, the Church finds unity. In finding this unity, separation from each other becomes intolerable. Christ is the only sufficiency. In this hope they rejoiced.²

For the full text of this message, see Appendix B.

V. SUMMARY

The History

August 15 to 31, 1954, at Evanston, Illinois, in the United States of America was the date and location of the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Here delegates gathered on the campus of Northwestern University to worship and study. The theme of the Assembly was "Jesus Christ--The Hope of the World."

¹Ibid., p. 170.

²Ibid., pp. 1-3.

The general meetings saw many highlights. The great "Festival of Faith" held at Soldier's Field in Chicago was viewed by one hundred and twenty-five thousand. The General Secretary's statement that the Council was not and had no intention of becoming a World Church was significant. The visit of President Eisenhower of the United States and Mr. Dag Hammarskjold of the United Nations was rewarding. Communion was also a high point of the general meetings with five churches celebrating.

The Committees formed the administrative core of the Assembly. They covered such areas as policy, studies, ecumenical action, interchurch aid and refugees, information, finance and international affairs.

Six presidents were chosen to lead the Council. They were Rev. John Baillie, Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri, Bishop Otto Dibelius, Metropolitan Juhanon, Archbishop Michael and Rev. Henry Knox Sherrill. The two honorary presidents were Dr. John R. Mott and Bishop G. K. A. Bell. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft continued as general secretary.

There were one thousand two hundred and ninety-eight participants who came from one hundred and seventy-nine churches in fifty-four countries. Of these, five hundred and two delegates represented one hundred and thirty-two churches in forty-two countries.

The Philosophy

Philosophically, the Council spoke more plainly than ever before. The following is a synopsis of its feeling.

The Church was one in Christ by virtue of His redemptive and indestructive unity with His people. The Church had not fully realized this unity but was continuing to grow from unity to unity.

The Church had a mission to those outside her life. Having shared the grace of Christ, the Church must then participate in His life and ministry to the world. To communicate the Gospel, there must be an encounter with the world. The laity stand at the outposts of the Kingdom. Only a spiritually active and intelligent laity will win the world for Christ. The ministry of the Church to the world is every Christian's privilege and obligation. Where the layman goes, there goes the Church. The clergy must seek to train the laity and make the Gospel relevant to the workaday world.

Evanston also spoke to social questions. They reaffirmed the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society. It was the freedom to maintain justice and order with all authority subject to God. Christians in obedience to the command to love one's neighbor as oneself, must seek political and social justice in the world, regardless of the form of government one found himself under.

Internationally, the world was in conflict. Man deeply and persistently longs for peace. International order can only come through the reconciliation that Christ made possible. Christians must live and work for the reconciliation of men to God and therefore as individuals and nations, to one another.

Racial and ethnic tensions were prevalent. They were rooted in the sinful heart of man. Tragically, segregation existed in the Church. The Council called the Church to repentance.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRD ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES - NEW DELHI, 1961

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THE THIRD ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES - NEW DELHI, 1961

I. THE SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY

New Delhi, India, is the proposed site of the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The Council plans to hold the Assembly in the capital city of India from November 18 to December 5, 1961. The general theme of the Assembly will be "Jesus Christ: The Light of the World."¹

At least three significant things are anticipated. First, at the opening session, two world bodies plan to unite. The International Missionary Council plans to become part of the World Council. The missionary movement has been in association with the Council since the latter's inception. If this union is consummated, it will bring the third of the great movements that started with Edinburgh, 1910, into the World Council of Churches.²

Second, at present, the "Basis" of the constitution is simply a recognition of Jesus Christ as both God and Saviour, without any objective reference. An attempt is planned to include the Bible in the "Basis" as the ground of authority or at least, an authority.³

¹Jesus Christ, The Light of the World (Assembly Bulletin 2, 1960), p. 1.

²Ibid.

³W. L. Emmerson, "Milestones to Unity," Signs of the Times, Volume 87, Number 12, December 1960, pp. 11, 25.

Third, a new approach to American Evangelicals is planned. The absence of the Evangelical in the ecumenical fellowship has been noticed. Invitations will be sent to such groups as the Adventists, Pentecostals and others, requesting that they send at least some observers to New Delhi.¹

II. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ASSEMBLY

According to the brochure, Jesus Christ, The Light of the World, recently released by the World Council of Churches, certain plans are already being executed to determine the size of the Assembly. The Council claims one hundred seventy-eight member churches in over fifty countries. These, they say, will send six hundred and twenty-five delegates. Men, women, laity and ministers will be represented. Others also plan to be present. Observers, advisors, youth participants, fraternal delegates, invited guests, press, wives, and the Assembly staff will swell the total number of participants to about fifteen hundred.²

III. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ASSEMBLY

Three main sections plan to deal heavily with the themes of Unity, Witness, and Service. The Assembly also plans to consider theology, evangelism, missions, social action, lay witness, the service of women and youth, international affairs and mutual help and aid for mankind. The findings of these sections most likely will be given in a unified report. All work will be done with the desire to guide the work of the World

¹Ibid. ²Jesus Christ, The Light of the World, op. cit., p. 1.

Council of Churches for the future.¹

¹Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the history and philosophy of the World Council of Churches.

Ecumenicity is one of the most live theological subjects of the day. Yet, there has been a critical shortage of objective unbiased investigations on the part of evangelicals. This writer, as an evangelical, attempted to investigate the subject as free from presuppositions as possible, and to endeavor to examine the subject on its own merits. From this approach, certain conclusions were reached, both positive and negative.

The history and philosophy of the World Council of Churches will now be summarized according to subject matter.

The History of the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches stems directly through five previous conferences. The World Missionary Conference of 1910 was the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. As a result of the ecumenical longings of this meeting, there followed two conferences on Faith and Order in 1927 and 1937, and two conferences on Life and Work in 1925 and 1937. Faith and Order concerned theology and polity, while Life and Work dealt more with service. However, because of the closeness of spirit behind these two groups, as well as the duplication of personnel, a merger was desired. In

1939, the merger was completed. A draft constitution was drawn up and a provisional World Council of Churches was born. Due to the war years the First Assembly had to be postponed for almost ten years. In 1948, at Amsterdam, the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches was held. Six years later, in 1954, the Second Assembly was held at Evanston, Illinois. Evanston showed much advance over Amsterdam in the depth with which the problems were discussed. In 1961, the Third Assembly plans to meet in New Delhi.

The Philosophy of the World Council of Churches

Perhaps the one over-all philosophy that has undergirded the entire structure of the World Council thinking is the position, that in all fields of human endeavor, whether sociological, theological or in matters of Church polity, under the sovereignty of God, ecumenicity must be brought to fruition, however gradual the process might be. This forms the depth of meaning behind all World Council activities. However, on the surface, the diverse nature of many of the subjects makes it advisable to summarize them under several headings.

The Basis. The one integrating factor was the "Basis" found in the constitution of the Council. "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship which accepts our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." Upon this Basis, which was both Trinitarian and Christocentric, all member churches had to subscribe.

The View of Unity. The Council seeks unity. The type of unity remains to be defined as there are many views within the group. However,

there seems to be a definite condemnation of denominations as divisional. Therefore, they are sin. The Council favors the organic union of denominations.

The group itself is only a council of churches and not a world church. It can become whatever the churches wish it to become. However, officially, the World Council is not, and furthermore, it has no intention or desire to become a world church with a centrally administered hierarchy.

The nature of the unity sought did not appear to be motivated by the desire of men for ecclesiastical power. The motive was soteriological. That is, the redemptive work of Christ brought reconciliation, between God and man, and man with man. If Christians were divided, it was a denial of the very message of reconciliation that they preached. Thus, for the Church to be the Church, the possessor and conveyor of reconciliation, it must be unified.

Further reasons for seeking this unity were the desire to obey Christ's longing for the oneness of His followers and the desire to be a forceful undivided witness before a pagan world.

The Theology. Although the only official theological position of the Council is the statement of "Basis," the official records bear very clear witness to the general theology of the group. Recurring throughout the section reports were such words as: Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, died and was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven and gave the Holy Spirit to dwell in the Church. Such things as the forgiveness of sins, the present possession of eternal life, Christ's second coming, His judgment, and the impending doom, were all affirmed. Such statements at

least, indicated a trend.

The Sociological Position. The social upheaval of the day was sourced in man's refusal to accept the sovereignty of God. God comes before the State or any earthly community. The extremes of the crisis were found in two competing systems, capitalism and communism. The Council clearly went on record as rejecting the ideologies of both laissez-faire capitalism and atheistic Marxian communism. Whatever system the Church found itself under, it was to seek justice, economic and political.

War was condemned, regardless of the reasons, as being immoral and sinful. The Council called all nations to adhere to the "rule of law" in international affairs.

The Council also recognized the problems of race relations. It established the fact that in Christ there is no segregation on the basis of race. In Him, there is an integrated fellowship of all peoples of all races.

The Evangelism. The Church has a ministry to those outside her life. Having shared in the grace of Christ, His ministry to the world must also be shared. To communicate the Gospel, there must be an encounter with the world. The laymen make that encounter. They stand at the outposts of the Kingdom. Only a spiritually active and intelligent laity will win the world for Christ. Where the laymen go, there goes the Church. Only the laity can make the Gospel relevant to the work-a-day world.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The History

The history of the World Council of Churches was developmental in character. The definite progression seemed to indicate divine leadership.

The Philosophy

The Basis. The Basis of the Assembly appeared inadequate in that there was no use of the Bible as the objective reference. It was however, the only basis upon which all churches could have possibly been drawn together.

The View of Unity. Due to the Catholic-Evangelical division, the World Council probably will never become a World Church.

This writer questions the Council's position that denominational diversities are sin and should be abandoned.

The motive for the ecumenical movement seems to be a correct one. The redemptive reconciliation of Christ does make all Christians one.

The reasons the Council gave for seeking unity were obedience to Christ's commands, and the strength of a united witness. The reason of forcefulness appeared inadequate. It is not "by might or by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Power does not necessarily rest in greatness. Organic union does not necessarily lead to or indicate spiritual unity.

The Theology. The Council is predominantly orthodox in theology. It is also heavily influenced by the neo-orthodox position.

The Sociological Position. This writer feels that the Council is

correct in failing to identify itself or Christianity with any social system. Any society that chokes out Christianity or stands in the place of God, is condemned.

The condemnation of war and of segregation by race appears to be Biblically a correct position. However, this writer wishes to continue to withhold his judgment regarding the proper solution to the many problems that are involved in this condemnation.

The Evangelism. The World Council is evangelistic and missionary minded. This writer feels that the Council is correct in its complete reliance upon the laity to evangelize the world.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

THE MESSAGE OF THE ASSEMBLY

AMSTERDAM

The World Council of Churches, meeting at Amsterdam, sends this message of greeting to all who are in Christ, and to all who are willing to hear.

We bless God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gathers together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad. He has brought us here together at Amsterdam. We are one in acknowledging Him as our God and Saviour. We are divided from one another not only in matters of faith, order and tradition, but also by pride of nation, class and race. But Christ has made us His own, and He is not divided. In seeking Him we find one another. Here at Amsterdam we have committed ourselves afresh to Him, and have covenanted with one another in constituting this World Council of Churches. We intend to stay together. We call upon Christian congregations everywhere to endorse and fulfil this covenant in their relations one with another. In thankfulness to God we commit the future to Him.

When we look to Christ, we see the world as it is--His world, to which He came and for which He died. It is filled both with great hopes and also with disillusionment and despair. Some nations are rejoicing in new freedom and power, some are bitter because freedom is denied them, some are paralysed by division, and everywhere there is an undertone of fear. There are millions who are hungry, millions who have no home, no country and no hope. Over all mankind hangs the peril of total war. We have to accept God's judgment upon us for our share in the world's guilt. Often we have tried to serve God and mammon, put other loyalties before loyalty to Christ, confused the Gospel with our own economic or national or racial interests, and feared war more than we have hated it. As we have talked with each other here, we have begun to understand how our separation has prevented us from receiving correction from one another in Christ. And because we lacked this correction, the world has often heard from us not the Word of God but the words of men.

But there is a word of God for our world. It is that the world is in the hands of the living God, Whose will for it is wholly good; that in Christ Jesus, His incarnate Word, Who lived and died and rose from the dead, God has broken the power of evil once for all, and opened for everyone the gate into freedom and joy in the Holy Spirit; that the final judgment on all human history and on every human deed is the judgment of the merciful Christ; and that the end of history will be the triumph of His Kingdom, where alone we shall understand how much God has loved the world. This is God's unchanging

word to the world. Millions of our fellow-men have never heard it. As we are met here from many lands, we pray God to stir up His whole Church to make this Gospel known to the whole world, and to call on all men to believe in Christ, to live in His love and to hope for His coming.

Our coming together to form a World Council will be vain unless Christians and Christian congregations everywhere commit themselves to the Lord of the Church in a new effort to seek together, where they live, to be His witnesses and servants among their neighbours. We have to remind ourselves and all men that God has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble and meek. We have to learn afresh together to speak boldly in Christ's name both to those in power and to the people, to oppose terror, cruelty and race discrimination, to stand by the outcast, the prisoner and the refugee. We have to make of the Church in every place a voice for those who have no voice, and a home where every man will be at home. We have to learn afresh together what is the duty of the Christian man or woman in industry, in agriculture, in politics, in the professions and in the home. We have to ask God to teach us together to say 'No' and to say 'Yes' in truth. 'No', to all that flouts the love of Christ, to every system, every programme and every person that treats any man as though he were an irresponsible thing or a means of profit, to the defenders of injustice in the name of order, to those who sow the seeds of war or urge war as inevitable; 'Yes', to all that conforms to the love of Christ, to all who seek for justice, to the peacemakers, to all who hope, fight and suffer for the cause of man, to all who--even without knowing it--look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It is not in man's power to banish sin and death from the earth, to create the unity of the Holy Catholic Church, to conquer the hosts of Satan. But it is within the power of God. He has given us at Easter the certainty that His purpose will be accomplished. But, by our acts of obedience and faith, we can on earth set up signs which point to the coming victory. Till the day of that victory our lives are hid with Christ in God, and no earthly disillusion or distress or power of hell can separate us from Him. As those who wait in confidence and joy for their deliverance, let us give ourselves to those tasks which lie to our hands, and so set up signs that men may see.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.¹

¹Visser 't Hooft, The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, op. cit., pp. 9-11.

APPENDIX B

THE MESSAGE OF THE ASSEMBLY

EVANSTON

A Message from the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches:

To all our fellow Christians, and to our fellow men everywhere, we send greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. We affirm our faith in Jesus Christ as the hope of the world, and desire to share that faith with all men. May God forgive us that by our sin we have often hidden this hope from the world.

In the ferment of our time there are both hopes and fears. It is indeed good to hope for freedom, justice and peace, and it is God's will that we should have these things. But He has made us for a higher end. He has made us for Himself, that we might know and love Him, worship and serve Him. Nothing other than God can ever satisfy the heart of man. Forgetting this, man becomes his own enemy. He seeks justice but creates oppression. He wants peace, but drifts towards war. His very mastery of nature threatens him with ruin. Whether he acknowledges it or not, he stands under the judgment of God and in the shadow of death.

Here where we stand, Jesus Christ stood with us. He came to us, true God and true Man, to seek and to save. Though we were the enemies of God, Christ died for us. We crucified Him, but God raised Him from the dead. He is risen. He has overcome the powers of sin and death. A new life has begun. And in His risen and ascended power, He has sent forth into the world a new community, bound together by His Spirit, sharing His divine life, and commissioned to make Him known throughout the world. He will come again as Judge and King to bring all things to their consummation. Then we shall see Him as He is and know as we are known. Together with the whole creation we wait for this with eager hope, knowing that God is faithful and that even now He holds all things in His hand.

This is the hope of God's people in every age, and we commend it afresh today to all who will listen. To accept it is to turn from our ways to God's way. It is to live as forgiven sinners, as children growing in His love. It is to have our citizenship in that Kingdom which all man's sin is impotent to destroy, that realm of love and joy and peace which lies about all men, though unseen. It is to enter with Christ into the suffering and despair of men, sharing with them the great secret of that Kingdom which they do not expect. It is to know that whatever men may do, Jesus reigns and shall reign.

With this assurance we can face the powers of evil and the threat of death with a good courage. Delivered from fear we are made free to love. For beyond the judgment of men and the judgment of history lies the judgment of the King who died for all men, and who will judge us according to what we have done to the least of His brethren. Thus our Christian hope directs us towards our neighbour. It constrains us to pray daily, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and to act as we pray in every area of life. It begets a life of believing prayer and expectant action, looking to Jesus and pressing forward to the day of His return in glory.

Now we would speak through our member churches directly to each congregation. Six years ago our churches entered into a covenant to form this Council, and affirmed their intention to stay together. We thank God for His blessing on our work and fellowship during these six years. We enter now upon a second stage. To stay together is not enough. We must go forward. As we learn more of our unity in Christ, it becomes the more intolerable that we should be divided. We therefore ask you: Is your church seriously considering its relation to other churches in the light of our Lord's prayer that we may be sanctified in the truth and that we may all be one? Is your congregation, in fellowship with sister congregations around you, doing all it can do to ensure that your neighbours shall hear the voice of the one Shepherd calling all men into the one flock?

The forces that separate men from one another are strong. At our meeting here we have missed the presence of Chinese churches which were with us at Amsterdam. There are other lands and churches unrepresented in our Council, and we long ardently for their fellowship. But we are thankful that, separated as we are by the deepest political divisions of our time, here at Evanston we are united in Christ. And we rejoice also that, in the bond of prayer and a common hope, we maintain communion with our Christian brethren everywhere.

It is from within this communion that we have to speak about the fear and distrust which at present divide our world. Only at the Cross of Christ, where men know themselves as forgiven sinners, can they be made one. It is there that Christians must pray daily for their enemies. It is there that we must seek deliverance from self-righteousness, impatience and fear. And those who know that Christ is risen should have the courage to expect new power to break through every human barrier.

It is not enough that Christians should seek peace for themselves. They must seek justice for others. Great masses of people in many parts of the world are hungry for bread, and are compelled to live in conditions which mock their human worth. Does your church speak and act against such injustice? Millions of men and women are suffering segregation and discrimination on the ground of race. Is your church willing to declare, as this Assembly has declared, that

this is contrary to the will of God and to act on that declaration? Do you pray regularly for those who suffer unjust discrimination on grounds of race, religion or political conviction?

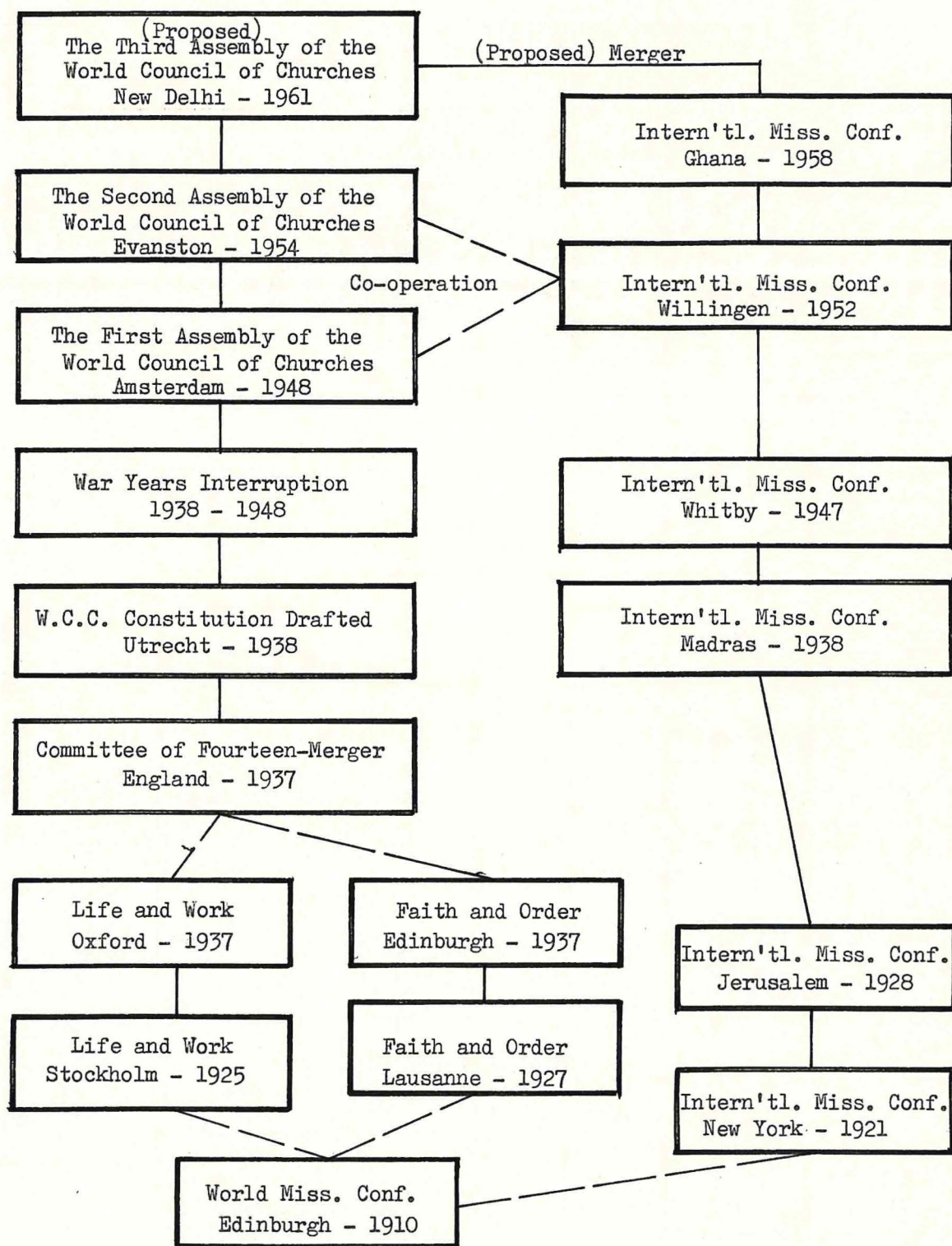
The Church of Christ is today a world-wide fellowship, yet there are countless people to whom He is unknown. How much do you care about this? Does your congregation live for itself, or for the world around it and beyond it? Does its common life, and does the daily work of its members in the world, affirm the Lordship of Christ or deny it?

God does not leave any of us to stand alone. In every place He has gathered us together to be His family, in which His gifts and His forgiveness are received. Do you forgive one another as Christ forgave you? Is your congregation a true family of God, where every man can find a home and know that God loves him without limit?

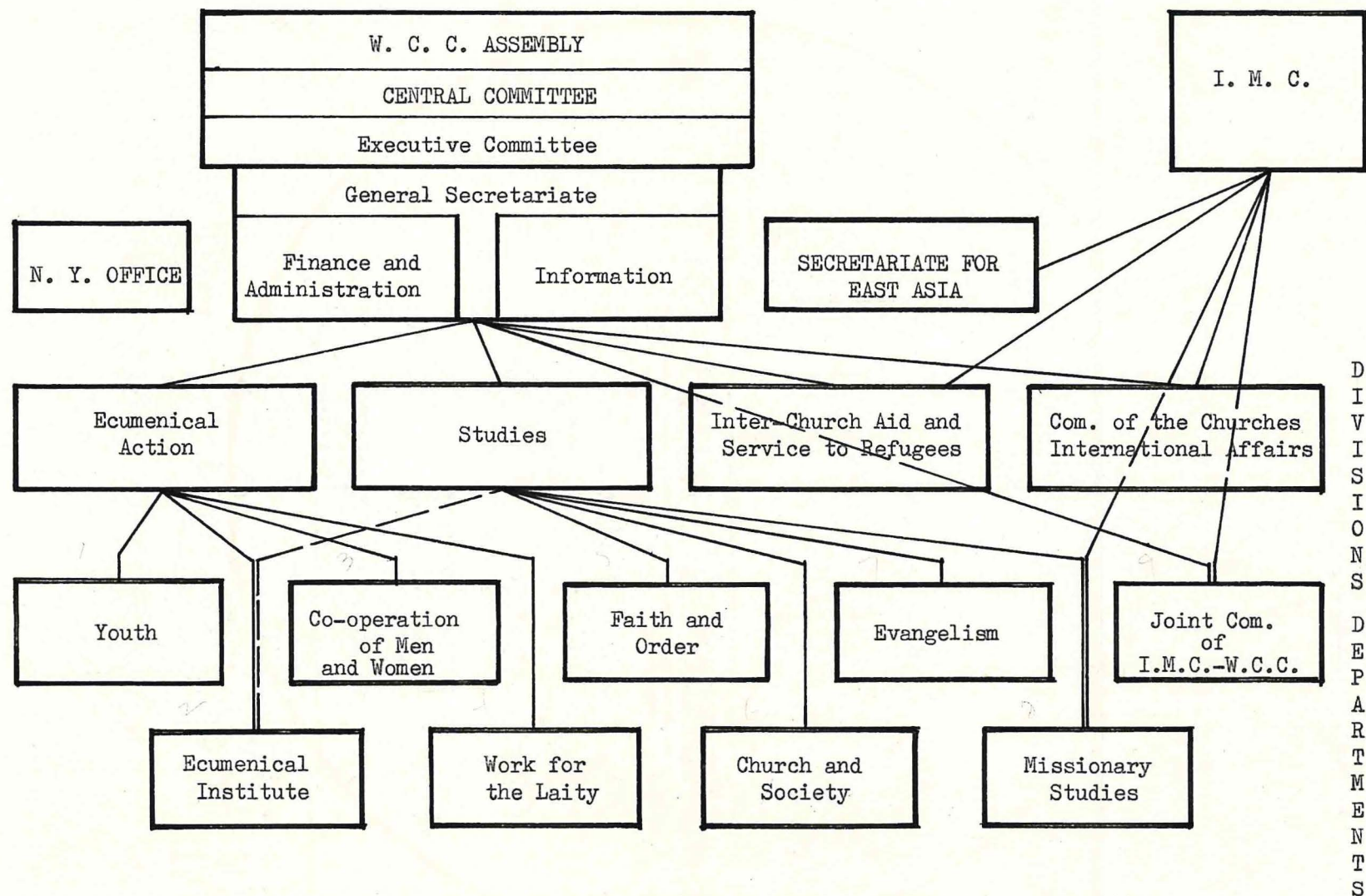
We are not sufficient for these things. But Christ is sufficient. We do not know what is coming to us. But we know Who is coming. It is He who meets us every day and who will meet us at the end--Jesus Christ.

Therefore we say to you: Rejoice in hope.¹

¹Visser 't Hooft, The Evanston Report, op. cit., pp. 1-3.



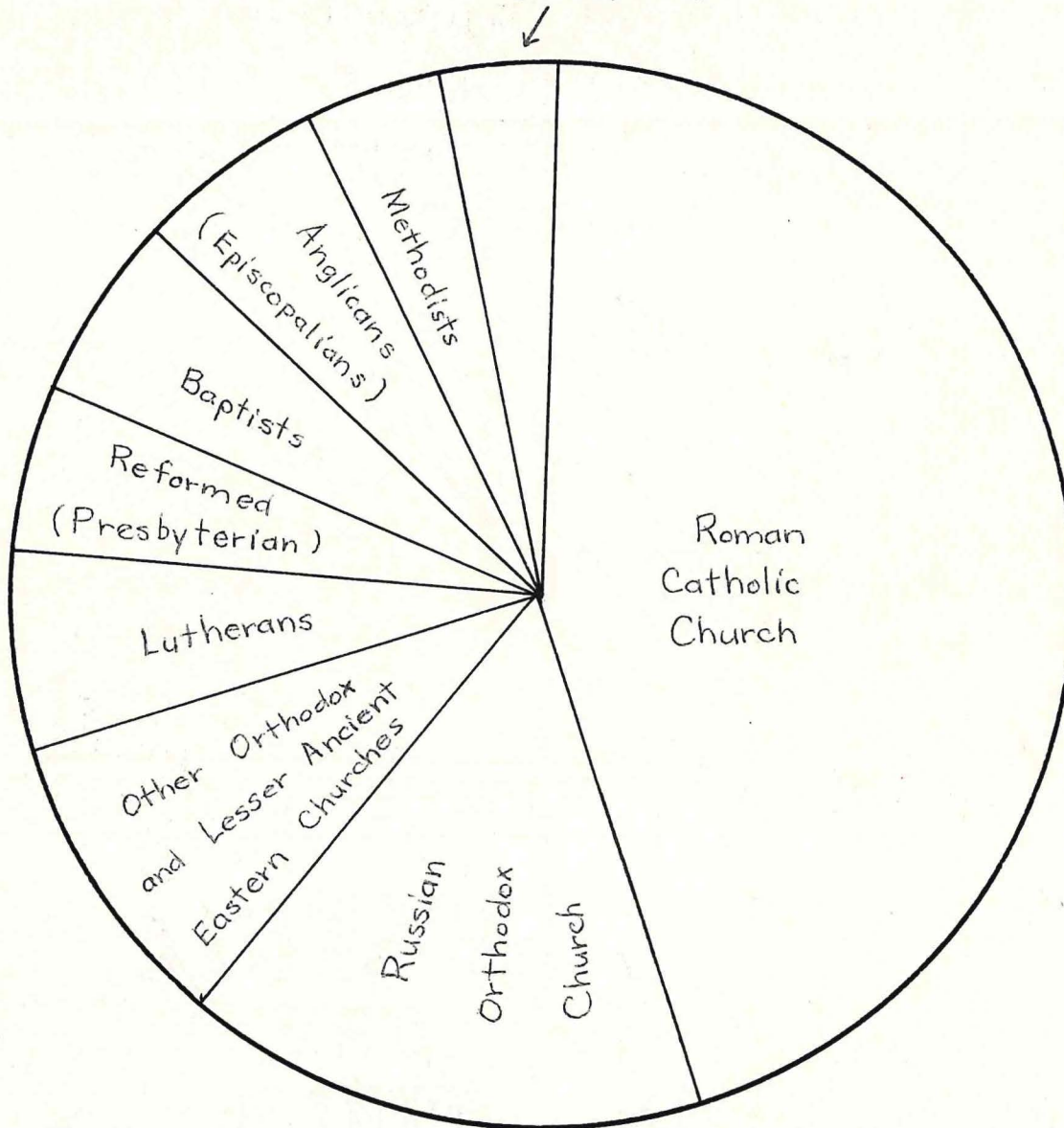
APPENDIX C - CHART OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT THAT LED
TO THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



APPENDIX D - ORGANIZATION CHART OF WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN ASSOCIATION

WITH THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

OTHER PROTESTANT CHURCHES
(Congregationalists, Disciples
and Christians, Evangelical
United Brethren, Evangelical
Reformed, Salvation Army,
Quakers, etc.)



APPENDIX E - THE MAJOR CHRISTIAN BODIES

ESTIMATED CONSTITUENCY