

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1955

The Historical Development of the World Council of Churches with Special Reference to American Lutheran Participation

Ralph Underwager

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_underwagerr@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Underwager, Ralph, "The Historical Development of the World Council of Churches with Special Reference to American Lutheran Participation" (1955). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 464.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/464>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO AMERICAN LUTHERAN PARTICIPATION

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Ralph Underwager

June 1955

Approved by:

RWT

Advisor

Phil. Schroeder

Reader

In
Grateful Acknowledgment
to

Professor Philip J. Schroeder for
his interest in reading this thesis;

Dr. Lewis W. Spitz, for his unselfish
surrender of time to help bring this paper
to completion, for his advice and encourage-
ment; and

To other friends who helped and
encouraged the writer.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT	1
II. BRIEF REVIEW OF THE ECUMENICAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.	10
III. THE VOLUNTARY MOVEMENTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	15
IV. THE YOUTH MOVEMENTS	28
V. THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL.	42
VI. LIFE AND WORK AND FAITH AND ORDER	60
VII. THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	106

CHAPTER I

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

This is a quest into the historical development of the World Council of Churches as an expression of the faith, life, and witness of the churches of our time. The historical perspective includes the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a whole, but particular emphasis will fall on the years since 1910, the date of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. Major movements, the men that guided them, and significant historical realities, with special attention given to the extent of American Lutheran participation, will form the major part of this inquiry.

In order properly to evaluate the World Council, it is necessary first to examine the term "ecumenical" and the "ecumenical movement," for the World Council is the ultimate expression of that force thus described. A wit has said that the word "ecumenical" is "phonetically execrable and psychologically questionable, but etymologically incontestable, theologically respectable, and logically inevitable."¹

The Rev. Leonard Hodgson describes it as follows:

For the meaning of the word "ecumenical" we need not go beyond the point when the Greek word oikoumene had come to mean the inhabited world. It had come to mean this

¹ N. V. Hope, One Christ, One World, One Church (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1953), p. 1.

in the first centuries of our era, and when in the year 451, the bishops of the Christian Church met in council at Chalcedon, they opened their report with the words, "The holy great ecumenical synod," meaning by ecumenical, world-wide.²

This makes it clear that the word has a long and honorable history in Christian circles. Dr. Elton Trueblood remarks, "It is a perfectly good word, meaning roughly the same as catholic, but without the controversial connotations of that well known word."³ In the Formula of Concord, 1588, for the first time the three ancient creeds are described as universal or ecumenical. In this meaning of universal or catholic it is also used to designate those early councils of the Christian Church which are accepted by the whole Christian Church. The Roman Church recognizes as "ecumenical" other councils, including the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and the Vatican Council (1869-1870) which were held under their auspices and attended only by their representatives. The title of "Ecumenical Patriarch" is assumed by the Patriarch of Constantinople due to his peculiar power and primacy among the churches of the Near East.

The modern usage of the term, however, has become attached to something quite different and removed from the earlier usage. In popular parlance and usage it has become

² L. Hodgson, The Ecumenical Movement (Sewanee: University Press, 1951), p. 5.

³ E. Trueblood, Signs of Hope (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950), p. 35.

identified with that ephemeral movement which has culminated in the World Council of Churches, so that today when one uses "ecumenical" it is nearly synonymous with the World Council and its life and work. This usage may be traced through its development, beginning with the Interdenominational Missionary Conference which convened in New York in 1900 and took as its name "The Ecumenical Missionary Conference" because "the plan of campaign which it proposes covers the whole area of the inhabited globe."⁴ In 1919 a meeting of the World Alliance for the Promotion of International Friendship through the Churches was held at Oud Wassenaer, the Hague, Holland, at which Dr. Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala and Primate of Sweden, proposed the holding of an ecumenical council representing Christendom in a spiritual way.⁵

The organization which resulted from this proposal, and which forms one of the major forces in the formation of the World Council, was named in English "The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work." This was translated into French as Conseil Oecumenique du Christianisme Pratique and into German as Oekumenischer Rat für Praktisches Christentum. From its usage in connection with this "Life and Work" movement, the word spread in English, as well as French and

⁴ Hope, op. cit., p. 12

⁵ G. K. A. Bell, Documents on Christian Unity (London: SCM Press, 1924), pp. 372-75.

German, until "it has come to stay as a convenient term to mean 'international' in the sphere of church relations."⁶

The word did not gain really widespread usage and recognition, however, until 1937. In this year the same organization named above met in Oxford, England (its first meeting was in Stockholm in 1925 in what has been described as the first ecumenical conference of the Churches of Christendom since the Reformation) in the Conference on Church Community and State. The report of one of the sections of this conference made the statement that "the Christian Church is becoming truly ecumenical. . . . The Churches are realizing anew that the Church is one. They are ecumenical in so far as they attempt to realize the Una Sancta, the fellowship of Christians who acknowledge one Lord."⁷ From this point its usage spread swiftly until the present time.

The word has thus been appropriated to designate that glut of conferences, commissions, councils, interdenominational boards and committees, cooperative ventures, organizational and federal union plans which has resulted in the World Council. It has been asked whether this usage of the word is proper since the so-called ecumenical movement does

⁶ Hodgson, op. cit., p. 5.

⁷ J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference (Official Report) (Chicago and New York: Willett, Clark and Co., 1937), pp. 152-3.

not include large segments of the Christian Church, such as the Roman Church, some large fundamental bodies, and many Lutheran groups. Is it fair to designate those churches which belong to the World Council "ecumenical" and those which do not belong are left in some sort of limbo reserved for the "non-ecumenical"? The advocates of ecumenicism reply that the door is always open. Those churches which refuse to participate in the movement because of confessional principles can always become part and parcel of the movement when they perceive "the error of their way and be able to come in."⁸ In the meantime the "ecumenicists" justify their designation as such on the grounds that it is the intent and purpose of the movement to become truly "ecumenical," that is, eventually to embrace all of Christendom in one fellowship.

Being realistic, it is clear that words change their meaning in living situations, so that today we may properly use the term "ecumenical" to designate that force which "may properly be described as that movement among Christians and Christian groups throughout the world which seeks to articulate, enhance, and apply the consciousness of the deeply-rooted fellowship which they enjoy in Jesus Christ, their common Saviour and Lord."⁹ Henceforth we shall use

⁸ Hodgson, op. cit., p. 6.

⁹ Hope, op. cit., p. 13.

"ecumenical" to express that movement.

The importance of this ecumenical movement for the Christian Church ought not be underestimated. It seeks to express, after a fashion, the unity of the Church, while it recognizes the two-fold character of that unity. One is the given unity of which God alone is the author, vivified in the Una Sancta. The other is the unity which members of the Una Sancta attempt to express in their common life of worship and service. In our present situation, we may call it the sought-for unity, that attempt to fulfill Jesus' prayer, "that they may be one." The message of the first assembly of the World Council (Amsterdam, 1948) reads:

We bless God, our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gathers together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad. . . . We are one in acknowledging Him as God and Saviour. We are divided one from 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 all Christian congregations everywhere to endorse and fulfill this covenant in their relations one with another. In thankfulness to God we commit the future to Him.¹⁰

One of America's foremost historians, Dr. Wilhelm Fauck, recently stated, "The ecumenical movement is the most

¹⁰ W. A. Visser't Hooft, editor, The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Report) (London: SCM Press, 1949), p. 9.

significant development in American Protestantism in the last fifty years."¹¹ This may be seen from the ferment and agitation for union of churches in this generation which may be traced directly to the effects of the ecumenical movement, for its avowed purpose is that of furthering unity. One of the earliest of ecumenical pronouncements, that of the Committee on the Plan and Scope of the Proposed Conference (Faith and Order) of the Protestant Episcopal Church is as follows:

The definite purpose of considering those things in which we differ, in the hope that a better understanding of divergent views of faith and order will result in a deepened desire for re-union and in official action on the part of the separated communions themselves.¹²

This desire for unity has continued to gain momentum throughout the years as the ecumenical movement gained strength.

Mr. O. S. Tomkins, writing in the *Ecumenical Review* in 1952 can say:

By entering into this relationship with each other (World Council) we have already willed the death of our denominations. . . . The essence of denominationism is to suppose the sufficiency of denominations; the essence of our covenant with each other is to deny that denominations are enough. The peril of the World Council is that it might encourage the permanency of the units upon which it rests.¹³

Due to these repeated pronouncements concerning unity and the

¹¹ Statement by Dr. Wilhelm Pauck, in personal interview with author.

¹² The Ecumenical Review, Vol. IV (April, 1952) 234.

¹³ The Ecumenical Review, Vol. II (October, 1952) 20.

overwhelming emphasis placed upon it, it is safe to draw the conclusion that the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is to unite all churches into one colossal, world-wide organization, so that "the view persists, despite all disclaimers by its committees and officers, that the World Council's primary, even exclusive raison d'être should be ecclesiastical unification."¹⁴ This view has given rise to the thought that the World Council already forms this super-church. This it most emphatically denies, pointing to the clear passages concerning its authority in the constitution approved and adopted at Amsterdam.

The World Council shall offer counsel and provide opportunity of united action in matters of common interest. It may take action on behalf of constituent churches in such matters as one or more of them may commit to it. . . . It shall have authority to call regional and world conferences on specific subjects as occasion may require. 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.¹⁵

As to the exact nature of the World Council, the future alone will tell. It is evident at this time that the ecumenical movement which has led to its formation has had a telling effect upon the churches of the twentieth century. In order to understand and properly evaluate both the movement and the effect, the historical study of the development is an essential arrow in the analyzer's quiver. To that end we shall

¹⁴ Anglican Theological Review, Vol. 36 (October, 1954), 249

¹⁵ Visser't Hooft, op. cit., pp. 197-201.

trace the aegis of the World Council along four major streams. After a brief examination of the history of the Church from the time of the Reformation in view of ecumenicism, we shall take up the voluntary movements of the nineteenth century, the youth movements, the International Missionary Council, and the Life and Work and Faith and Order. As the pinnacle of these forces appears the World Council of Churches formed shortly before the Second World War, existing only in the form of a Provisional committee for ten years, and formally organized in 1948 at Amsterdam. Throughout we shall attempt to trace the extent of the participation of American Lutheran bodies and their attitude towards ecumenicism.

CHAPTER II

BRIEF REVIEW OF THE ECUMENICAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The background for the ecumenical movement is the denominational state of Christendom. If the Church were one, there would be no need for any thing such as an ecumenical movement. Since, however, there are faithful members of the Una Sancta scattered about in a maze of organizational entities, an effort to bring them into outward fellowship can and does exist.

The event of Pentecost is generally regarded as the birthday of the Church.

On Pentecost . . . there came upon the group in Jerusalem . . . what they called the Holy Spirit. It was that occasion to which a large proportion of later Christians looked back as the birthday of the Christian Church.¹

With this event the disciples of Christ were sent into the world with the message of the Incarnate Christ whom they had known and believed. Almost from the first there became evident differences in practice and, in some instances, belief. Paul was forced to confront Peter with the question of circumcision at the first synodical meeting of the Church in Jerusalem. A battle was early begun with the Gnostics and Docetizers. The great Nestorian and Arian controversies

¹ K. Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper and Bros., 1953), p. 59.

marred the unity of the Church in the post-Apostolic era.

With the conversion of Constantine and the establishment of Christianity as the state religion an organization began to develop. In disputes over the control of this visible organization many divisions developed. Throughout, however, there was a conscious drive to maintain the unity of the Church. After the split of the Eastern and Western traditions, the Church found expression in these two organizations from the sixth to the sixteenth century.

With the explosive tinder of corruption and false teaching within the Church of the sixteenth century only a spark was needed to begin a reform. Instead of a spark God sent a forest fire in the person of His prophet, Martin Luther, who, convinced he was under God's guidance, undertook the Herculean task of cleaning the Augean stables of Rome. The forces then unleashed have resulted in the denominational scene of modern Christianity. While it would be easy to lay the responsibility for this state at either Luther's or Leo's feet, other forces such as nationalism, the renaissance, the New Learning, industrial and commercial expansion, the rise of the middle class, and the new explorations and discoveries must be considered. It is enough for the purposes of this survey to merely admit that out of the sixteenth century arose the spirit of mytosis which reigned in the church for the next centuries.

The reformers themselves had an ecumenical understanding

of the nature of the Church. Luther explains it as follows in the Large Catechism:

But the meaning and substance of the clause is: I believe that there is upon the earth a small, holy flock, a holy assembly of our saints under one head, Christ. They are called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, one mind, and one understanding. They possess many gifts, but are one in love and without sect or division. Of this assembly I am also part, and a sharer and owner of its blessings, through the Holy Spirit. He gave me membership by virtue of having heard and still hearing God's Word.²

This oneness is conceived of by Luther as being largely a spiritual one not limited by organizational loyalties.

Is this not a cruel error, when the unity of the Christian Church, separated by Christ Himself from all material and temporal cities and places, and transferred to spiritual realms is included by these preachers of dreams in material communities, which must of necessity be bound to localities and places? How is it possible, or whose reason can grasp it, that spiritual unity and material unity should be one and the same?³

Calvin, while emphasizing more the idea of the visible Church, still spoke of it as essentially one in his Institutes. The churches which stemmed from the Calvinist reformation continued and increased this emphasis on the visible nature of the Church as may be seen from the Baptist Confession of 1646.

The church is a company of visible saints, called and separated from the world by the Word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the Gospel; being baptized into that faith. . . . And all His servants are to lead this life in this walled

² M. Luther, Large Catechism, translated by Dr. Lenker (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1953), pp. 123-4.

³ M. Luther, "The Papacy at Rome," Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1943), I, 350.

sheepfold and watered garden, to supply each other's wants inward and outward.⁴

Throughout the time of the Reformation there were repeated efforts made to establish the unity of the various groups. As such might be classed the Augsburg Interim, the Wittenberg Concord, the Marburg Colloquy, the correspondence between Melancthon and Bucer, the efforts of Beza, Cranmer and A' Lasco, the Zurich Consensus, the Bohemian Confession, the Consensus of Sendomir, and the work of David Paeus. However, by 1618 it is evident that the scholastic defense of doctrine has solidified into two confessional positions. The Calvinistic tradition is by far the more irenic and yet at the same time the more productive of divisive elements. For two centuries the idea of expressing the unity of the Church in a single organization is largely suppressed in the polemic age of orthodoxy and the practical age of pietism.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries little was done to promote the reality of an ecumenical movement. With the opening of the nineteenth century, however, there comes to life a new spirit evidenced in the Evangelical Awakening. This produces a variety of Bible Societies, Mission Societies. It is in this age that the glorious age of Christian missions begins, destined to continue to the present day. It is significant that while the churches

⁴ O. Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 350-51.

were relatively inactive in the mission fields there was little impetus to ecumenicity. When the Churches began to present to the heathen the Gospel, a necessary part of which is the unity of the Body of Christ, it soon became evident that there was a glaring contradiction between doctrine and practice as the missionaries competed, sometimes violently, for the souls of the poor natives. This gave early authority to the cry, "Unite!" In the hot, boiling climates of the great mission fields, the equally warm passion for ecumenicity was born. This led to a series of missionary meetings and finally to Edinburgh, 1910. This conference may be regarded as the delivery room of that booming baby of the modern world--the ecumenical movement--while the womb may be found in the mission fields, and the fetus in the nexus of the great nineteenth century societies for the evangelization of the world. To these movements we shall briefly turn our attention before moving to Edinburgh, 1910.

CHAPTER III

THE VOLUNTARY MOVEMENTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

That curious kettle of fish,
That mixed grill called ecumenicism!
(Anon.)

Perhaps nowhere does the variegated character of the ecumenical movement become more apparent than during the nineteenth century. The almost incredible melange of movements, the prodigious amounts of energy expended, the myriad miles on steamer, horseback, and foot, the blood, sweat, and tears that moistened the soil of the world in the gigantic endeavor to Christianize the world almost belie description. The Evangelical Awakening set into motion a yeasty ferment that bubbled over the whole world. Into a culture typified by Montesquieu's remark upon his return from England, "No such thing as religion there and the subject if mentioned in society excites nothing but laughter,"¹ burst the energy of Christian zeal.

The Evangelical Awakening has as its goal the bringing of the Gospel to all parts of the world. This passion was to call into existence hundreds of mission and Bible societies, all with the spirit crystallized in the slogan of the

¹ J. T. McNeill, Modern Christian Movements (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 75.

Student Volunteer Movement, "The evangelization of the world in this generation."² There had been sporadic mission work done before the Evangelical Awakening though, and two of these deserve notice. Under the auspices of the Church of England the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was founded in 1699 by Dr. Thomas Bray, the Anglican commissioner for Maryland. Its purposes were (1) the education of the poor, (2) the care of the church in the British colonies in America, (3) the printing and circulation of books of sound Christian principles.³ Two years later the same men associated in the above formed another society. A charter was obtained from King William III for a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1701. The charter delineates the purposes of the organization as (1) the care and instruction of British settlers in the colonies, (2) the conversion of natives, and (3) the conversion of negro slaves.⁴ The list of achievements piled up by these two groups is long and impressive, and it contributed greatly to the Evangelical Awakening.

The modern missionary movement really began in the year 1792 with the publication by the "consecrated cobbler,"

² J. R. Mott, Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott, Vols. 1-6 (New York: Association Press, 1946), I, 18.

³ W. Allen and E. McLean, Two Hundred Years: The History of the S. P. C. K. (London: SPCK, 1898), pp. 13-45.

⁴ G. F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S. P. G., 1701-1901. Vols. I-II. (Westminster: SFG, 1901), pp. 9-36.

William Carey, of his epochal book, An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.⁵ Carey also formed the Baptist Missionary Society at a meeting in Kettering, England, in October, 1798.⁶ Under the blessing of this fledgling group Carey went to India where he pioneered in evangelizing India until his death in 1834 at the age of seventy-three. The London Missionary Society was founded in 1795 by the cooperative efforts of Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Methodists. This juxtaposition of denominations moved David Bogue, one of its founders, to rejoice:

A blessed spectacle--Christians of different denominations, although differing in points of church government, united in forming a society for propagating the Gospel among the heathen. This is a new thing in the Christian Church.⁷

From this point on the missionary societies multiplied at a rapid rate. What were the motives for their conception?

They are perhaps best expressed in a stanza of John

Montgomery's hymn which reads as follows:

The heathen perish day by day,
Thousands on thousands pass away;
O, Christians to their rescue fly,⁸
Preach Jesus to them ere they die.

⁵ R. Rouse, "William Carey's Pleasing Dream," International Review of Missions, Vol. LXXII (April, 1949), 181-92.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ N. V. Hope, One Christ, One World, One Church. (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1953), p. 20.

⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

As a complement to the missionary societies, indeed almost indispensable to their work, arose the Bible Societies. The most notable of these are the British and Foreign Bible Society founded in 1804 and its child, the American Bible Society, founded in 1816. The object of these Bible societies may be seen in the constitution of the American Bible Society.

This society shall be known by the name of the American Bible Society, of which the sole object shall be to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures throughout the United States and their territories . . . shall also extend its influence to other countries, whether Christian, Mohammedan or pagan.⁹

Through the activities of these bodies Christianity as an organized religion spread throughout the world, creating a world Christian community, the first prerequisite for a world church. This leads William Temple to remark:

As though in preparation . . . God has been building up a Christian fellowship which now extends into every nation. . . . It is the result of the great missionary enterprise of the last 150 years. . . . Almost incidentally the great world fellowship has arisen; it is the great new fact of our era.¹⁰

In this world fellowship the first ecumenical impulses were to come from the missionaries who had created it.

From the standpoint of ecumenical unity the most important development of the nineteenth century was the Evangelical Alliance. This body was called into life amid

⁹ H. O. Dwight, The Centennial History of the American Bible Society (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916), p. 24.

¹⁰ W. Temple, The Church Looks Forward (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944), p. 2.

the smoke and fog of London in August, 1846. This Alliance was made up of individuals and not Churches. There was no official representation from any of the churches. However, it was the first organization to appear on the world scene with the specific and avowed purpose of promoting the cause of Christian unity. This may be seen in the resolution adopted at its first meeting, which reads:

That the members of this conference are deeply convinced of the desirableness of forming a confederation on the basis of the great evangelical principles held in common by them which may afford opportunity to members of the Church of Christ of cultivating brotherly love, enjoying Christian intercourse, and promoting such objects as they may hereafter agree to prosecute together, and they thereby proceed to form such a confederation, under the name of the Evangelical Alliance.¹¹

After this auspicious beginning the Evangelical Alliance served to keep the idea of Christian unity before the Churches but it soon devoted its energies to securing religious liberty for persecuted minorities and its activities became largely political.

This Alliance is noteworthy for another reason, however. It brings us into contact with the most controversial figure of American Lutheranism of the nineteenth century--Samuel S. Schmucker. It was Schmucker, founder of the Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary and leader of the General Synod, who was

¹¹ J. W. Ewing, Goodly Fellowship (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1946), pp. 16-17.

mostly responsible for the Evangelical Alliance. Indeed, he is termed "the Father of the Evangelical Alliance."¹² He is the first ecumenicist to arise from the ranks of American Lutheranism, perhaps even giving impetus to the ecumenical spirit on the Continent, for before attending the London meeting he spent six months on the Continent talking to various leaders there and spreading the idea of unity.¹³

Dr. Schmucker sought to "Americanize" the Lutheran church in this country, advocating union with the Reformed bodies. It is during his life that the Rubicon is crossed as far as American Lutheranism and the ecumenical movement is concerned. Those bodies which followed his liberal lead are the ones which have continued to participate in the drive to union. The confessional, orthodox groups that resisted his endeavors are to this day the bodies that have remained aloof from the ecumenicism of the day.

Schmucker was the leading figure in the negotiations which culminated in the formation of the General Synod in 1820, composed of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the New York Ministerium, the synods of North Carolina, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, and Tennessee.¹⁴ He saved it from

¹² F. E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 179.

¹³ A. R. Wentz, History of the Gettysburg Seminary (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1926), pp. 160-61.

¹⁴ P. Anstadt, The Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker (York, Pa.: Anstadt and Sons, 1896), pp. 121-27.

dissolution in 1823 when the Maryland Synod withdrew. Throughout his life his course was to encourage union on any basis. His influence may be seen in a resolution passed by the Pennsylvania Synod in 1822.

Resolved, that a committee be appointed by this synod to deliberate in the fear of God on the propriety of a proposition for a general union of our church in this country with the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and also on the possibility of carrying this resolution into effect.¹⁵

The high mark of Schmucker's activity was between the years 1820-1850. During this time many negotiations were carried on with the various denominations. The General Synod entered into the work of the American Bible Society, the Foreign and Home Mission Board and other mission societies. As it did, fellowship with non-Lutheran bodies increased. Intercommunion was widely practiced until in 1841 the Synod of South Carolina could publish a liturgy containing this invitation:

In the name of Jesus Christ, I say to all who sincerely love Him, ye are welcome to this feast of love.¹⁶

In 1838 Schmucker's first printed appeal for unity appeared containing his plan for the desired union entitled The Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches with a Plan for Catholic Action on Apostolic Principles.¹⁷ He now devoted his

¹⁵ S. S. Schmucker, Lutheran Church in America (Philadelphia: E. W. Miller, 1852), p. 223.

¹⁶ C. P. Krauth, "The Relations of the Lutheran Church to the Denominations Around Us," Free Lutheran Diet in America (Philadelphia: J. F. Smith, 1878), p. 45.

¹⁷ W. W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Bros., 1930), p. 269.

energy to the realization of his ecumenical dream, maneuvering to bring all Lutheran bodies in the United States into affiliation with general Protestantism. His program for union consisted of agreement on twelve "fundamental" articles based on those doctrines which he thought were held by all Protestants. He culled these twelve articles directly from the various confessional writings of the denominations, i. e., one from the Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles, one from the Augsburg Confession, etc.¹⁸

To further this goal the General Synod cooperated especially with the American Home Missionary Society from which many of the infant Lutheran congregations were receiving aid. The congregations of the Augustana Synod were under the wing of the American Home Missionary Society for several decades. Following is a request from Lutherans in Illinois to the Society for support:

We the undersigned members of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Galesburg and Knoxville . . . most humbly apply to your Christian benevolence for aid in supporting our minister. . . . Our churches were organized by your missionary, Rev. L. P. Esbjorn. . . . We humbly request \$200 for the same time from your benevolent institution. (Dated Dec. 29, 1852.)¹⁹

This is typical of the conditions on the frontier which led

¹⁸ Wentz, op. cit., pp. 144-48.

¹⁹ C. Bergendoff, "Reports to the American Home Missionary Society, 1849-1856," Augustana Historical Society Publications (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Historical Society), V, 56.

many infant Lutheran groups to seek succor and aid from this and other essentially Reformed institutions.

Dr. Schmucker and his followers, Dr. B. Kurtz, editor of the Lutheran Observer, and Dr. S. Sprecher, may well have succeeded in uniting Lutheranism and the Reformed churches had it not been for the tidal wave of German and Scandinavian immigration that washed over the country from 1830 until well after the Civil War. This brought a large number of conservative Lutherans to America who most stringently resisted any attempt to force union. The outstanding leader of this group was Dr. C. F. W. Walther, who wrote in the first issue of Der Lutheraner, September 7, 1844, as follows:

Dieses gewisz von vielen empfundene Bedürfnisz, und die Überzeugung, dasz es unsere Pflicht sei . . . den Beweis dafür zu liefern, dasz diese Kirche [the true Lutherans] nicht in der Reihe der Christlichen Sekten stehe, und nicht eine neue sondern die alte wahre Kirche Jesu Christi auf Erden sei. . . . Unser Blatt soll ferner . . . die in Schwange gehenden falschen, verführerischen Lehren zu entdecken, zu widerlegen und davor zu warnen, und in sonderheit diejenigen zu entlarven, die sich fälschlich lutherisch nennen, unter diesem Namen Irrglauben, Unglauben, und Schwärmerei verbreiten und daher die übelsten Vorurtheile gegen unsere Kirche in den Gliedern anderer Parteien erwecken.²⁰

This paper, Der Lutheraner, served as the official organ of the more conservative Lutherans over against those whom they termed "false" Lutherans, until 1847 when it became the official paper of the newly organized Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. This paper and

²⁰ Der Lutheraner (September 7, 1844), I, 1.

The Lutheran Observer, voice of the "Americanizing" Lutherans waged a fierce polemic battle for many years. The confessional Lutherans were termed "bigots" and the Lutheran Observer said, "They err in declining to enter into intimate ecclesiastical union with the American Lutheran Church and its General Synod."²¹

Soon the forces of confessionalism were the stronger and the ecumenical idea was meeting defeat. Dr. A. R. Wentz describes the situation of the mid 1850's as follows:

In der lutherischen Kirche verlief die Erweckung des Konfessionellen Bewusstseins völlig parallel mit dem der anderen Kirchen. Eins der ersten Zeugnisse dafür finden wir in dem Bereich der praktischen Wohltätigkeit. In dem fünften Jahrzehnt des Jahrhunderts begannen die Lutheraner sich loszusagen von der Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Kirchen und organisierten ihre eigenen Wirkungsfelder.²²

The battle was joined in Schmucker's own backyard when Dr. C. P. Krauth became professor at Gettysburg in 1850 and there spoke for the confessional cause. Schmucker's last shot was the "Definite Platform" of 1855. This document, again to be a basis for union, claimed to find several errors in the Augsburg Confession. It was Schmucker's greatest error for its total effect was to stimulate confessionalism. Dr. Spaeth writes:

The principal effect of the Definite Platform was to

²¹ W. H. T. Dau, editor, Ebenezer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), p. 110.

²² A. R. Wentz, "Die lutherische Kirche im religiösen Leben Amerika," Das Erbe Martin Luthers (Leipzig: Dörfflung und Frencke, 1928), p. 175.

open the eyes even of the indifferent and undecided ones, and to cause them to reflect and to realize the ultimate designs of the men at the head of the General Synod. A storm of indignation burst against the perpetrators of this attack on the venerable Augustana.²³

In spite of the rising tide of confessionalism, Schmucker remained steadfast in his irenic desires until his death, and his dreams and hopes were perpetuated in the continued acquiescence of the General Synod to unitive movements.

The confessional strength within the General Synod was not content with this and in 1867 left and formed the General Council, a bit more conservative in its outlook. This body continued until it reunited with the General Synod to form the United Lutheran Church in 1918.

During the nineteenth century Lutherans in America participated in the ecumenical movement only to the extent to which they ignored their confessions. Those holding to them refused to be entangled, while those who had a lesser regard for the confessions eagerly joined with other denominations to work for unity.

An interesting development in nineteenth-century America was the rise of the Disciples of Christ, a denomination that did not start out to be a denomination but rather to unite the churches. It was begun by Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander. Its chief contribution to the ecumenical movement has been its vociferous propagandizing for unity

²³ F. Bente, American Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919), II, 101.

and its unstinting financial support of any unitive effort. Their platform is that "nothing is essential to the union of Christians but the Apostle's teaching and testimony."²⁴ After the death of the Campbells the work was carried on by Peter Ainslie, one of the foremost ecumenicists of the twentieth century.

During the nineteenth century two other movements arose which have great meaning for the ecumenical movement. These are the Young Mens' Christian Association and its counterpart in the weaker sex, the Young Women's Christian Association. Due to their importance these shall be treated in a later chapter.

The nineteenth century saw a tremendous growth in interest in unifying the churches, largely due to the voluntary movements which were created. Their purpose actually was not ecumenical, but rather missionary. Their result was ecumenical though. Although each had some specific goal of its own--missionary work or social reform--they inadvertently contributed to the idea of one united Church. They helped create an ethereal atmosphere of oneness, a sense of consanguinity among Christians of differing denominations. This growing sense of unity cast an illuminating ray into the

²⁴ A. Campbell, The Christian System (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., n. d.), p. 87.

dawning of the twentieth century as described by Dr. Rouse:

The day of the modern ecumenical movement was dawning. Already its great features--the International Missionary Council, the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, Faith and Order, Life and Work--can be discerned on the horizon. The focusing point of the ideas and aspirations which made the new ecumenical movement possible was the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910. . . . Since 1910 the shutters have been flung back and light pours into all corners of the room. There is a 'thousand times more aspiration, a thousand times more accomplishment.'²⁵

²⁵ R. Rouse and Stephan C. Neill, editors, A History of the Ecumenical Movement (London: SPCK, 1954), p. 345.

CHAPTER IV

THE YOUTH MOVEMENTS

"I sincerely hope your plan may be as successful in execution, as it is just and generous in conception."¹ With these words President Abraham Lincoln gave his approval to a suggested program of the Y. M. C. A. to succor the soldiers in the Civil War. From its first infant steps on American shores in 1851 in the short space of eleven years, the Y. M. C. A. had earned the praises of presidents and shoemakers alike.

The significance of the Y. M. C. A. for the ecumenical movement is hard to overemphasize. It is axiomatic as to which gave it the greatest strength--the missionary or youth movements. Due to this factor a separate chapter was deemed necessary to deal solely with the youth movements. It must be borne in mind, however, that the youth movement is inextricably connected with the other trends of the time. For example, the Missionary Council and the Student Volunteer Movement are constantly intertwining and interlacing, each sustaining the other in the drive for union.

Both Dr. J. R. Mott and Dr. J. H. Oldham insist that the

¹ C. H. Hopkins, History of the Y. M. C. A. in North America (New York: Association Press, 1951), p. 93.

real story behind the growth of the international missionary cooperation and the resultant ecumenical movement is not the preceding missionary conferences but the development of the youth movements.² That such a view can be held by two men in the front rank of the army of union thrusts the youth movements into a prominent position. Thus the formation of the Y. M. C. A., the forerunner and progenitor of all youth organizations in the ecumenical movement becomes an important ecumenical milestone.

Although there were forgotten groups of young people already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Y. M. C. A. is the first internationally successful group. The prime mover in the formation of the Y. M. C. A. was George Williams, a farm boy from Somerset. Cast into the maelstrom of London's mercantile life in 1841, Williams sought some way to preserve his evangelical faith. This he found in organizing a band of twelve young clerks in their loft over a London dry goods store on June 6, 1844. The movement spread like oil on the sea and in 1894 when Williams was knighted by Queen Victoria there were over five thousand associations in twenty-four countries with more than half a million members.³

² W. R. Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 81.

³ Hopkins, op. cit., p. 6.

The first American associations with their program of social reform and Bible study were organized in 1851. Its program was clearly pietistic with much stress laid upon clean living.

Not a few Christian young men . . . have resolved in God's strength to accomplish these objects, viz: The improvement of the spiritual and mental condition of the commercial young men by the efforts of the society, in the sphere of their daily calling, by devotional meetings, Biblical instruction, mutual improvement classes and the diffusion of Christian literature.⁴

From the very beginning the Association allied itself with the churches, indeed, it took on an ecclesiastical air itself, conducting worship services, Bible classes, sending missionaries to foreign lands and domestic slums. It insisted upon membership in a Trinitarian church as a prerequisite for membership in the Association. The Portland Basis which formally expressed the requirement was adopted by the American groups in 1899. It reads almost as a creed.

Resolved: That as these organizations bear the name of Christian, and profess to be engaged directly in the Saviour's service, so it is clearly their duty to maintain the control and management of their affairs in the hands of those who profess to love and publicly avow their faith in Jesus the redeemer as divine, and who testify their faith by becoming and remaining members of churches held to be evangelical. . . . And we hold those churches to be evangelical, which, maintaining the Holy Scriptures, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (the only-begotten of the Father, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and who was made sin for us, though knowing no sin, bearing our sins in

⁴ L. L. Doggett, History of the Boston YMCA (New York: Association Press, 1901), Appendix I.

His own body on the tree) as the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved from everlasting punishment.⁵

This, of course, immediately associated the body with evangelical protestants, breathing their theological and ethical atmosphere. It became a mirror of Protestantism, but also injected something new--interdenominationalism. Ministers of all churches delivered lectures and presided at prayer meetings. Relief work among the down-and-outers of the slums, rehabilitation work, welcoming immigrants, enlisted the aid of all the churches through this one body. In many American cities this was the first evidence of interdenominationalism seen. Beginning in 1857 the Y. M. C. A. sponsored nation-wide revivals in which clergymen of all denominations were to be seen on the same platform exhorting people to leave their sinful ways and join the churches and the Y. M. C. A.⁶ In the first issue of the Quarterly Reporter in 1851 the Knoxville correspondent wrote:

Since the establishment of the Association sectarian and denominational zeal seems to have been merged into a pure, warmhearted love for one another, as fellow disciples, and this spirit has been carried into our various churches, producing a very pleasant and cordial Christian esteem and affection in each toward all.⁷

The first annual report of the Brooklyn Association said that its corresponding secretary had:

⁵ Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 365-66.

⁶ Ibid., p. 47.

⁷ Ibid.

. . . already opened, and shall hereafter extensively maintain, fraternal correspondence with these brethren of many climes. In thus receiving and transmitting intelligence of the progress and success of the cause, and in taking sweet counsel together, we may mutually help to strengthen and enlarge this catholic fellowship of oneness in Christ.⁸

The New York State Convention of 1866 approved as the primary object of the Y. M. C. A. "the binding together of Christian young men of all denominations and the leading to the Saviour of those who are ignorant of Him."⁹

It is clear from this that the Y. M. C. A. was actually a semi-ecclesiastical organization with its specified goal the ecumenical idea of uniting the churches. This is demonstrated even more clearly by the resolution of the world convention of 1869.

In theory and practice the Young Men's Christian Association recognizes the essential unity of the Church of Christ, and is bound to extend the hand of fellowship, love, and sympathy to all who, in accordance with the Gospel, honor the Head, and who love the Lord Jesus, whatever their ecclesiastical name, or the peculiarities of their denominational polity. The shibboleths of sects, the rules of Church order and discipline, the minor differences in creeds . . . must be ignored by us.¹⁰

In accordance with the above policy the Y. M. C. A. early took up work among the German immigrants. This naturally brought them into contact with the Lutheran Churches. In this instance the Lutherans held fast and refused to cooperate.

⁸ Ibid., p. 72.

⁹ Ibid., p. 180.

¹⁰ L. L. Doggett, Life of Robert McBurney (Cleveland: F. M. Barton, 1902), p. 98.

with the "Y" almost without exception holding that the ministry was to be the sole agent of preaching the word.¹¹

In the words of Sam Small, a Y. M. C. A. railroad evangelist, the Association with its

Congregational Plymouth Rock roadbed, Episcopalian continuous rails, Presbyterian through tickets, Baptist water in the boiler, Methodist fire in the engine, and coaches for Christians of every name¹²

continued merrily along until it struck a low point in its life during the mid-thirties of the twentieth century. During the war years, however, it regained some of its prestige doing work among the prisoners.¹³ There was a flare of interest in the Y. M. C. A. as an ecumenical possibility during the early years of the twentieth century as expressed by a Boston pastor.

Its threefold program might well offer the basis for a new and more comprehensive creed, and its secretarial force has already become, unconsciously, a new type of clergy. The Association has developed its own forms of religious instruction and its own types of religious service. All that is needed apparently is to give the Association formal liberty to act on its own, some declaration of independence which would launch it on its way as a free agent in a wider world.¹⁴

In spite of its decline and eclipse by other bodies, the Y. M. C. A. has contributed and continues to contribute to

¹¹ Hopkins, op. cit., p. 222.

¹² Monthly Bulletin of the YMCA, Vol. XIII (March, 1886), p. 13.

¹³ E. R. Berg, Behind Barbed Wires (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1944), p. 84.

¹⁴ Hopkins, op. cit., p. 529.

the one-world idea and the world Church approach. In later post-war years it seems to be slipping under the control of the World Council, which largely dominates its thinking and approach and much of its program through interlocking boards and committees.

We may briefly examine the history of the Young Women's Christian Association which began as the female counterpart to the Y. M. C. A. when women entered the business and professional world. Although Williams had advocated founding a ladies' association, he was a bit premature. Miss Emma Roberts founded a prayer group in England in 1855. This led to the formation of the Y. W. C. A.¹⁵ Although there are no recorded minutes of any meeting in which a resolution was passed to form such a group (ladies being notoriously poor parliamentarians), somewhere around 1856 the group began to function. The World Young Women's Christian Association was formed in 1894. Its work was to a great degree parallel to the Y. M. C. A., and its spirit was much the same.

Several very important youth movements grew out of the Y. M. C. A., the first of which was the American Interseminary Alliance (now the Interseminary Movements in the United States), to be followed in short order by the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions and the Worlds' Student

¹⁵ E. Wilson, Fifty Years of Association Work among Young Women (New York: YWCA, 1916), pp. 9-12.

Christian Federation. Dr. Mott terms these movements "practice games in weaving together the nations and the communions."¹⁶ This was perhaps their greatest contribution to the ecumenical movement--the implantation of young men with the ecumenical idea and training them to effectively propound it."

The first of these--the Interseminary Alliance--derived from a Princeton seminary student's concern for foreign missions. Robert Mateer, meeting great indifference to missions in his own school and others as he travelled about for the Y. M. C. A., resolved to remedy the defect. His efforts led to the formation of the Alliance for Foreign Missions in 1880.¹⁷ The meeting held in New Brunswick, New Jersey, was the largest student religious meeting ever held up to that time. This meeting shaped the entire course of succeeding youth conferences, orientating them around missions and the outreach of the Gospel. It was described as:

The first national meeting of students, whether from colleges or seminaries, centering wholly upon the home and foreign missionary obligations of the Church and of the schools and colleges.¹⁸

The only Lutheran representative at this conference was Luther Kuhlman, student at Gettysburg, the General Synod seminary. This Lutheran body entered wholeheartedly into

¹⁶ Hogg, op. cit., p. 81

¹⁷ Mission Review of the World, III, 131-33, 135-38, 358.

¹⁸ W. R. Hogg, Sixty-five Years in the Seminaries: A History of the Interseminary Movement (New York: Interseminary Movement, 1945), p. 15.

the Interseminary Alliance and at the second meeting in 1881 it sent four delegates from three seminaries.¹⁹ By 1884 all the seminaries of the General Synod were in this Alliance. In 1895 the Alliance was disbanded as such, but immediately reconstituted as the theological commission of the Y. M. C. A. By this time in addition to the General Council, the General Synod and the Augustana Synod seminaries had joined the group.²⁰ Robert Wilder, a Student Volunteer pioneer, became the first president of the reorganized band which is regarded as the forerunner of the Student Volunteer Movement.

Under the urging of the Y. M. C. A. Dwight Moody consented to hold a summer Bible Camp in 1886.²¹ Two hundred and fifty-one students attended. For two weeks all was quiet and regular. R. Wilder then called a secret night meeting of those interested in foreign missions. Twenty-one responded. They laid their plans and at a dramatic, fiery meeting inspired the entire conference so that a fever pitch was kept for the remaining two weeks. Over one hundred students from various denominations signed a pledge stating that they would enter foreign missions.²²

¹⁹ W. E. Hull, "American Interseminary Alliance," Lutheran Quarterly, XVI, 549-53.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ C. P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements (New York: Association Press, 1934), pp. 225-27.

²² J. R. Mott, The Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott, Vol. 1-6 (New York: Association Press, 1947), I, 7-17.

By 1888 three thousand young men and women had signed the pledge. By 1891 over five hundred had sailed, and this was just the beginning. The stated aim of the movement was this:

To enroll volunteers in the colleges and seminaries in numbers sufficient to meet all the demands made upon it by the foreign missionary agencies on this continent.²³

This it succeeded in doing. Volunteers from all schools beat upon the doors of their respective mission societies, and from there beat upon the hearts of the heathen with the Gospel. This surge of interest was largely responsible for the forming of the Foreign Missionary Society to coordinate the mission work of the denominations. Thus once again the idea of cooperation and union spread throughout the denominations.

The most prominent leader among the students was John R. Mott, of whom it has been said that if the World Council is the work of any one man, it is he. Mott described his own life thus:

Most of my life has been spent in helping to plant and develop four world-wide Christian movements, three of which are truly ecumenical in the sense that they are world wide and also have their doors open to all Christians who acknowledge the deity of Jesus Christ and bow down to Him as Lord.²⁴

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Mott, op. cit., VI, 439.

Mott won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946 as a result of his ecumenical labors, having presided over one hundred and two international ecclesiastical gatherings.²⁵ No other ecumenical leader has piled up the achievements to come close to matching Mott. While he has been very active in the church scene, his theology leaves something to be desired for the conservative mind, as, for instance, he accepts the validity of non-Christian religions inasmuch as each contains some measure of truth.²⁶

With Mott at its helm the Student Volunteer Movement branched out and created new groups throughout the world. This led to the formation of the World Student Christian Federation in 1895. The spirit of this group also was one of "Unite!" In it the young men who were to become ecumenical leaders received their training and inspiration. To mention only a few: Dr. Cavert, Dr. Visser't Hooft, Dr. Koo, Miss Rousso, Dr. Latourette, Archbishop Temple, and many others.²⁷ In fact, almost every ecumenical leader went through the student movement ranks before gaining prominence. Tislington Tatlow, himself a product of the student groups, can write, "The Student Movement is not only a thrilling

²⁵ Ibid., Appendix, p. 604.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 310-21.

²⁷ G. M. Fischer, John R. Mott Architect of Cooperation and Unity (New York: Association Press, 1952), pp. 80-104.

story but also a vivid illustration of the way in which the student movements fostered ecumenicism."²⁸

The Lutheran Churches of America have taken a great interest in these student movements and have been active in most of them. The General Synod and General Council as we have already seen were in the Interseminary Alliance. The Augustana Synod joined in the Student Volunteer Movement in 1898 and sent four delegates to the conventions, while the General Synod and General Council sent two each, and the Lutheran Free Church one.²⁹ They have continued to be active in them until the present. The National Lutheran Council through its Lutheran Student Association holds six seats on the executive council of the United Student Christian Council, the organization which has taken over all the youth movements at the instigation of the World Council.³⁰ When the Evangelical Lutheran Church was formed in 1917, the merging bodies accepted this statement of the Hauge Synod, which was also affiliated with the student groups:

We do not regard it as cooperation or unionism to participate in such movements, which, while they are indubitably of a religious nature, but embrace the whole Christian Church as, for example, the ecumenical missionary conference, Student Volunteer movement, and the World's Student Christian Federation, and the

²⁸ T. Tatlow, The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Britain and Ireland (London, SCM Press, 1933), p. 133.

²⁹ The Student Missionary Appeal (New York: SVMFM, 1898), pp. 541-46.

³⁰ P. Rossmann, Ecumenical Student Workbook (New York: The United Student Christian Council, 1949), p. 108.

Laymen's Missionary Movements. We consider these religious movements more in the nature of practical enterprises than activities of a purely churchly character.³¹

The effect that this affiliation has had upon Lutheran youths may be seen from the answers given to a questionnaire circulated at the ecumenical youth conference in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1949, asking about intercommunion. One Lutheran student answered, "I have taken Roman Catholic and many different Protestant communions while I was in the army. If we could do it there, why can't we here?" Another ventured, "There could be a composite service for all without breaking the faith."³²

The conservative Lutheran bodies opposed these student movements vigorously, characterizing them as unionistic bodies and anathema to the true Christian.³³ The Synodical Conference organized its own youth program partly to compete with the student movements of the ecumenical bent.

The youth movements of the world have now been taken over by the World Council and are directed by a commission of that body which arranges world-wide conferences, such as that at Oslo, 1947, and Kottyan, Travancore, India, 1952-3,

³¹ J. A. O. Preus, Jr., What Stands Between (n. p.: 1949), p. 21.

³² Rossmann, op. cit., p. 28.

³³ Preus, op. cit., pp. 20-22.

which advocate reunion of Christendom.³⁴ Regional and sectional conferences are also held, such as that at Lawrence, in which the student is consciously propagandized with ecumenicity by materials from the World Council which tell the student

one stimulating proposal is that the ecumenical movement is a new reformation, . . . greater than the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Understanding the revolutionary nature of the ecumenical movement requires a deeper more mature understanding of what is meant by 'Christ as revelation of God and as Head of the Church and the Lordship of Christ.' . . . The world churchmanship that the SCM must develop will combine practical, specific, and general churchmanship. The aim of the churchmanship program must be the development of loyal but dissatisfied denominationalists.³⁵

This then was the scene at the dawn of the twentieth century. There was a general ferment in the churches for union of evangelical protestantism. Through the efforts of the mission and Bible societies a world Christian community had been created. Through the efforts of the student movements a generation of able, qualified young men and women had been trained in the ecumenical idea. The spirit was there. The talent was ready. The machinery had been set up. The phantasma of oneness was becoming more tangible. It needed but the cataclysmic events of the twentieth century, the technological advances in communication, and the shaping of theology in an ecumenical mold to set in motion the juggernaut of ecumenicity.

³⁴ P. Potter, "Youth and the Evanston Assembly," Ecumenical Review (January, 1955), VII, 107.

³⁵ Rossmann, passim.

CHAPTER V

THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

Archbishop Brilioth observed in the opening sermon at the Faith and Order Conference, Lund, 1952, "The ecumenical development is hardly to be understood without the background of the missionary enterprise."¹ In the opinion of K. S. Latourette "the ecumenical movement is in large part the outgrowth of the missionary movement. . . . Edinburgh, 1910, summed up and focused much of the previous century's movement for uniting Christians. . . . The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910, was the birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement."²

Edinburgh, 1910, while largely an outgrowth of previous international meetings of missionaries itself, marked a decisive change and opened a new era. It was a turning point in the history of the ecumenical movement, opening up the modern period.

Edinburgh, 1910, has become a landmark. Increasingly, historians are recording that judgment. As a result of Edinburgh's far-reaching influence, it has also become customary to speak of 1910 as the beginning of the modern missionary cooperation, indeed, of the ecumenical movement itself. . . . Edinburgh, 1910, was

¹ Y. Brilioth, "Sermon," The Ecumenical Review, (October, 1952), V, 40.

² R. Rouse and Stephan C. Neill, editors, A History of the Ecumenical Movement (London: SPCK, 1954), pp. 353-63.

neither an end nor a beginning. It was both. . . . It incorporated no single element that had not, in some form, been tried in previous missionary gatherings. Indeed, Edinburgh may best be described as a lens--a lens catching diffused beams of light from a century's attempts at missionary cooperation, focussing them, and projecting them for the future in a unified, meaningful, and determinative pattern.³

Edinburgh assumes importance beyond its functions as a conference in that it marks the first venture into cooperative work of the various mission societies and Bible societies and youth movements which we have seen arise in the nineteenth century. It is immediately clear that this process was evolutionary, yet as nearly as one can select a definite point at which a catalyst solidified the diverse elements into a new structure, Edinburgh is that moment. The old becomes the new.

The earliest proposal for a missionary gathering had been made by the precocious William Carey in 1806, a startling proposal for his time.⁴ The year 1854 did see a missionary conference of an interdenominational nature in New York, and later the same year in London. In 1860 a similar conference was convoked in Liverpool, and in London in 1878 and 1888. The climax was reached in 1900 with the "Ecumenical Missionary Conference in New York" attended by missionaries

³W. R. Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 98.

⁴R. Rouse, "William Carey's Pleasing Dream," International Review of Missions (April 1949), LXXII, 181.

from forty-eight countries.⁵ In a preliminary meeting the fervor which the idea of such a conference evoked is seen in an address by Rev. Gracey:

An ecumenical conference! the very word ought to furnish inspiration. . . . I trust we shall get an increased solidarity of the Christian forces in the world. . . . What tasks there are for a united Christendom! If ever there was a period in human history when men ought to be impressed with the times and the task, it seems to me it is now.⁶

The more than two thousand delegates, not representing any official board, but merely there as interested individuals, joyously convened and happily went home with the thought singing in their hearts that they had "hastened the day when we shall become one."⁷

The Lutherans were heavily represented at this conference, demonstrating an avid interest in the idea of ecumenicity, for many of them had come from their foreign mission posts merely to be there. There were men and women from the General Synod, the United Synod, South, the General Council, the Hauge Synod, the Lutheran Free Church, and the United Danish Lutheran Church in America. Their number totaled twenty-five, among them many of those who were to become ecumenical leaders in their synods, such as Rev. E. J. Wol, Rev. F. H. Knubel, and Rev. G. Scholl.⁸ They do not

⁵ Ecumenical Missionary Conference (Official Report) (New York: American Tract Society, 1900), pp. 19-23.

⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 394-418.

seem to have had much influence on the conference, for they collectively spoke only four times and then only to give a factual survey of their mission base.

This conference in New York made no provision for a further gathering. It seems though that the thought of a decennial series of conferences was well implanted by then. This led to action on the part of W. H. Grant of the United States Foreign Missionary Society in a letter to the China Inland Mission in London suggesting a missionary conference in 1910.⁹ This was definitely settled in the Scottish Conference at Edinburgh in 1907.

J. R. Mott and J. H. Oldham, then youngsters in the Student Volunteer Movement, met at Liverpool, and there in a private tete-a-tete drew up a program for the conference which Mott submitted to the American commission on the conference.¹⁰ It was accepted en toto. This made the SVM the most powerful influence in making the conference a meeting of official representatives rather than a conference of individuals as New York had been. While this smacks somewhat of the "smoky room" atmosphere of political conventions, it is nothing unusual in ecumenical negotiations.

⁹ Hogg, op. cit., p. 102.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 106. (It was Oldham who largely influenced Mott to change his mind concerning the conference and throw his power behind the scheme to make it an officially representative gathering. Mott had favored a meeting of a few leaders of the denominations in a power conclave.)

J. H. Oldham, SVM official, was placed in charge of the committee on arrangements for the conference, and at his direction study groups and commissions prepared papers before the conference convened for presentation at the conference. This was a new departure. It was Oldham who received and nourished the suggestion for a continuation committee and saw it through the conference floor fight, the most important feature of the meeting. Even though he was recording secretary and rose only to give official announcements, the first time he did so Oldham received a tremendous ovation from the delegates, for

. . . those that knew were aware that more than any other, the spirit that was in this very unobtrusive exterior had been at the back of that great conference, not merely in respect of its organization and its methods, but also of its ideals, its aspirations, its hopes.¹¹

The conference, which was notable also for the fact that for the first time native leaders from the missionary churches were in evidence, considered eight topics. 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

¹¹ W. H. T. Gairdner, Echoes from Edinburgh (New York: Revell Co., 1910), p. 36.

preparation of missionaries, (6) the home base of missions, (7) missions and governments, and (8) cooperation and the promotion of unity.

These reports are of special interest to the ecumenical movement. The first section brought an awareness of the world-wide nature of the Christian community, and the second made clear that the "white man's burden" was to be dropped and indigenous native churches encouraged to become self-sustaining. The last commission to report, that on cooperation and unity, demonstrated by its very title the ecumenical character of the report. It marks the first time a conscious effort is made to bring the subject of cooperation and unity into the actual conference proceedings. It was on this commission that the only American Lutheran to serve on a commission, Prof. H. Jacobs of the Philadelphia Seminary, was placed. The commission reported:

When the attempt is made to take this broad view of the relation of Christianity to the non-Christian world, it is seen that the Church is facing its task with scattered forces and divided ranks. . . . The Holy Spirit seems to be impressing men everywhere . . . of the necessity for union to enable the Church to fulfill her mission.¹²

When the commission turned to the survey of thought as to how to accomplish the sought-for unity, they concluded:

We find two divergent . . . ideals. Those who take the one view lay the chief emphasis on the things that

¹² World Missionary Conference, 1910, I-IX (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier; n. d.), VIII, 8-10.

are common to all Christians. . . . Those who take this view incline towards the formation of a type of federation of Christian churches in which the federated bodies would retain full liberty . . . in . . . doctrine and polity. . . . The other view . . . lays emphasis upon the duty of the Church in the West to transmit to the Church newly planted . . . as rich and full and complete an interpretation of Christianity as possible. . . . The great contribution which each body of Western Christians can make is that it should express . . . those aspects of the divine truth to which . . . it has been called to bear witness.¹³

This commission also moved the formation of a Continuation Committee, which was to insure the success of the struggle to secure international and interdenominational cooperation.

The task of this Continuation Committee would be primarily

to confer with societies and boards as to the best method of working towards the formation of such a permanent International Missiary Committee as is suggested by the Commissions of the conference.¹⁴

The resolution further provided that if such a council should be formed the Continuation Committee was to transfer all its power to the new Council. This resolution, although it proposed a totally new concept in the field of church relations, was accepted unanimously by the conference. This was the climactic moment. The conference was not yet over, but on the longest day of the year, June 21, the delegates had taken the longest step yet seen towards organic union and the ecumenical goal. This was the outstanding new factor at

¹³ Ibid., pp. 133-37.

¹⁴ Mott, op. cit., V, 46-49.

Edinburgh--the increasingly open desire for inclusiveness that had heretofore been subdued.

As at the New York Conference in 1900, the Lutheran bodies in America were at Edinburgh, though not as great in number. The General Synod, the General Council, the United Synod, South, and the Lutheran Free Church were at Edinburgh.¹⁵ Their reactions to the conference were generally favorable, though tinged with a note of caution. Rev. L. Wolf, the General Synod delegate wrote:

With representatives from the historic Lutheran Church from the continent of Europe . . . and the world, with a feeble numerical representation from America . . . Lutherans in their slow way felt it good to be there. . . . As it was frequently stated, the dominant note of the conference was the desire for more unity and closer cooperation among all protestant denominations. But we cannot forget that even federation and cooperation have their dangers. The truth may be held lightly and so indifferently that men may be willing for the sake of unity to sacrifice essential convictions and historic positions.¹⁶

The Lutheran Herald voiced more conservative views in speaking of the conference saying, "We cannot fraternize with those who teach, mixed with the truth, all manner of false doctrine."¹⁷ Lehre und Wehre, the official organ of the conservative Missouri Synod editorialized over the initials "F. B.":

Unionismus scheinen die Lutheraner vom Generalkonzil in dieser kirchlichen Gemeinschaft mit den Sekten nicht zu

¹⁵ World, op. cit., IX, 55.

¹⁶ L. B. Wolf, "Edinburgh," Lutheran Quarterly, Vol. 41, pp. 173-74.

¹⁷ Lutheran Herald, Vol. 5, pp. 582-3.

erblicken. [The General Council's representatives, Drach and Horn, had written an article in their official paper which is now referred to] Werden die Leser des Lutheran dies nicht dahin verstehen, dass man in der Mission mit dem Sekten gemeinsame Sache machen dürfe nicht?¹⁸

In the following year the editors of Lehre und Wehre again criticized the conference on three grounds as follows:

Die dort zum Ausdruck gekommene Anerkennung Roms als eine Schwesterkirche als eine von dem lauterem Evangelium abgewichenen Kirche, als eines Freundes anstatt als eines Feindes der evangelischen Wahrheit und als eines echten Zweiges der Christlichen Kirche als einer Verkörperung des Antichristen. . . . Das bei dieser Konferenz gemachte Kompromisz mit der zerstückelnden und zerstörenden Bibelkritik. . . . Das Verschweigen bei dieser Konferenz von dem Dasein und dem Werk des Satans.¹⁹

It was the divergence of views represented in the above statements and the attitude that allowed others to enter into these conferences and cooperative ventures that characterized the Lutheran community in America during the formative years of the ecumenical movement. It has actually been one of the greatest reasons preventing the Lutherans from establishing fellowship, for as long as one group holds this course of action to be unionism, and the other group holds it to be "good witnessing," ne'er the twain shall meet.

The Continuation Committee, that factor which gave the Edinburgh conference its determinative nature, immediately requested its chairman, John R. Mott, to give full time for

¹⁸ Lehre und Wehre, Vol. 56, p. 373.

¹⁹ Ibid., Vol. 57, pp. 375-6.

two years to the task of educating the churches to cooperate. This he undertook by conducting a grand tour through the world holding missionary conferences in almost every land. In these two years he presided over every meeting, establishing some sort of record. Particularly fruitful were the conferences in Asia, 1912-1913, which gave rise to the South India Union plan, finally consummated in 1947. Throughout these conferences are sprinkled the names of Lutheran missionaries, the most prominent of whom was Rev. J. Aberly, destined to become a leader in the India national conference, and the young R. B. Manikam, native Lutheran of the Tamil Synod (a General Synod mission) who was to become leader of the IMC and WCC Council in India for fifteen years. Here in the mission fields for the first time a representative of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America takes part in the ecumenical movement, Rev. Erik Sovik.²⁰

The Continuation Committee also undertook the publication of the International Review of Missions. Oldham served as its first editor. This publication proposed "to further the serious study of the science of missions."²¹ It had a vast influence on the missionary community and through it on the ecumenical movement.

The Continuation Committee encouraged and midwifed the

²⁰ The Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia. (n. p.: New York, 1913), p. 316.

²¹ International Review of Missions (January, 1912), I, 1.

birth of National Christian Council to further cooperation in most of the countries of the home base. Such groups were the Conference of Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland,²² the General Swedish Missionary Conference,²³ and the Danish Missions Council.²⁴

Eleven years elapsed between the proclamation of intent to form an International Missionary Council and its materialization. During the war the Continuation Committee dissolved. However, at a sort of impromptu meeting at Crans in 1920 the former personnel of the Continuation Committee renewed the demand for such a Council. This proposal was received by the churches and those agreeing formed the International Missionary Council at Lake Mohonk, New York, in October, 1921.²⁵ Mott was elected chairman of the newly formed Council.²⁶ With this event interdenominational cooperation moves into a new era.

It should be understood that the International

²² Conference of the Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland Held at Hayes, Swanwick, Darbyshire, June, 1912 (London: CMSGBI, 1912), pp. 3-6.

²³ L. Lohndahl, "Missionary Cooperation in Sweden," International Review of Missions (June, 1951), XL, 421.

²⁴ C. H. Fahs and H. E. Davis, Conspectus of Cooperative Missionary Enterprises (New York: IMC, 1935), p. 34.

²⁵ Hogg, op. cit., pp. 195-99.

²⁶ G. J. Slosser, Christian Unity, Its History and Its Challenge (New York: IMC, 1929), p. 56.

Missionary Council was an agency designed only to further cooperation in the practical work of the missions. While it encouraged unity, it shied away from any manner of doctrinal statements. At a meeting in Oxford, 1923, at which Germans were present for the first time since the war, the following statement was adopted in an attempt to solve the problem of cooperation in the face of doctrinal disunity:

The International Missionary Council has never sought, nor is it its function, to work out a body of doctrinal opinions of its own. The only doctrinal opinions in the council are those which the members bring with them from the churches and missionary boards to which they belong. . . . It would be entirely out of harmony with the spirit of our movement to press for such cooperation in work as would be felt to compromise doctrinal principles or strain consciences.²⁷

The Council has at intervals called conferences to conduct its non-doctrinal work and produced doctrinal papers. Although disclaiming doctrinal aspirations, it soon became evident that it is impossible to carry on the work of the Kingdom without basing it on doctrine and, if only by inference, expressing doctrinal views. This may be seen from the message of the Jerusalem Conference, 1928, to the churches of the world. William Paton, general secretary of the Council, summed up the Jerusalem Conference in this

²⁷ Ibid., p. 257.

manner :

First was the unity given to the meeting by the grace of God in its consideration of the Christian Message; this was the foundation of all else that followed.²⁸

The theology in the Message reflects very strongly the American Social Gospel, as may be seen from these excerpts:

God offers His power to men that they may be fellow workers with Him . . . for the coming of His Kingdom in its fullness (on the earth). . . . We find in Christ an inexhaustible source of power. . . . We believe that through it men and societies and nations that have lost their moral nerve will be quickened unto life. . . . The end of Christian missions is nothing less than the production of Christ-like character in individuals, societies, and nations. . . . We believe in a Christ-like world. . . . Amid the clashes of industrial strife the Gospel summons men to work together as brothers in providing for the human family the economic basis of a good life.²⁹

This emphasis did not meet with complete acceptance. The Germans showed a decided antipathy towards it. Prof. Heim of Tübingen writing in the Das Evangelische Deutschland says quite frankly that German Christians are adopting an attitude of detached criticism, and that this is just another instance to illustrate that the Anglo-Saxons want to rule the world even in world-church relations.³⁰ In spite of this criticism the Council and the various National Councils went ahead with the program of social reform.

²⁸ The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, Vol. I-VIII (New York: IMC, 1928), VIII, 8-9.

²⁹ Ibid., I, 401-14.

³⁰ Christian Century, Vol. 44, p. 868.

The conservative American Lutheran reaction to this is expostulated by Dr. W. Arndt thus:

Is there really a big gap between the Jewish Zealots of the first century of our era . . . and these modern promoters who engage the wisdom and talent of the day and think that by employing them they will be enabled to level the wall of Satan's fortress?³¹

Dr. H. F. Knubel, president of the United Lutheran Church, who attended the Jerusalem Conference as the only American Lutheran delegate, seemed to give a half-hearted "yea" to the program of activism when he wrote

The unity of the church must be revealed and fostered through Christian unity in fundamental relations of life and work. The primary unities within the Church itself must be fostered and strengthened.³²

The Jerusalem Message also gives the impression that the Conference recognized some validity in the non-Christian religions and finds truth in them, which militates against the conservative view that Christ alone is the Way.

We rejoice to think that just because in Jesus Christ the light that lighteth every man shone forth in its full splendor, we find rays of that same light where He is unknown or even rejected. We welcome every noble quality in non-Christian persons as further proof that the Father who sent His Son into the world has nowhere left Himself without witness.³³

Between Jerusalem, 1928, and Madras, 1938, a variety of developments took place which directly affected the Council. The most important of these for American Protestants was the

³¹ Concordia Theological Monthly (March, 1933), IV, 174.

³² F. H. Knubel, Church Unity (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1936), p. 87.

³³ Jerusalem, op. cit., I, 412.

Laymen's Foreign Missionary Inquiry. Professor W. Hocking, who had been at Jerusalem one of the strongest advocates for activism, headed a group of fifteen laymen who made an investigation of overseas missions. Their report caused a great furor in the membership of the Council, evoking a reaction towards a more orthodox position, for the report was extremely liberal.

None of the Lutheran bodies in America accepted the report, still they continued their membership in the Council with the exception of the Synodical Conference constituents. By 1938 the other Lutheran groups had joined the Council or were cooperating with it. The Synodical Conference, terming the Council "a group organized for cooperative mission work without regard for doctrinal unity,"³⁴ remained separate. The Lutherans in the Council felt "ready to cooperate with Christians in other denominations in the practical tasks of the Kingdom, but . . . have no thought of yielding their identity or diluting their convictions."³⁵ In most cases the Lutheran mission churches joined their respective National Councils sponsored by the Council and "bore witness to their distinctive understanding of the Gospel."³⁶

³⁴ J. A. O. Preus, Jr., What Stands Between? (n.p., 1949), p. 21.

³⁵ A. R. Wentz, "Lutheran Church and the Modern Ecumenical Movement," World Lutheranism of Today (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyelses Bokförlag, 1950), p. 396.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 398.

When the Madras meeting convened in 1938, the Council was more cautious due to the sense of impending disaster. This perhaps accounts for the change in climate, for Madras is much more evangelical and fundamental than Jerusalem. The Christian Message confirms this.

We know that there is One who, unlike ourselves, is not defeated and cannot know defeat. In the wonder of Christ's revelation we see God not as a remote and careless deity sufficient to Himself, but as a Father with love for mankind, His children. . . . We who have looked at Christ . . . torn with suffering on a cross on which only His love has placed Him . . . ³⁷

The Message also spoke out sharply on the matter of unity.

This unity of spirit has made us realize how deeply our outward divisions are hindering the extension of the Kingdom of God and are indeed stultifying our message of the love of God. ³⁸

During the same year as the Madras Conference, 1938, the World Council of Churches first saw the light of day at Utrecht. When World War II began, the International Missionary Council soon surrendered its functions to the provisional committee of the as yet unorganized World Council and worked through the World Council's department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees. ³⁹

The International Missionary Council is soon expected to merge with the World Council as the majority of ecumenists feels that this is the course to follow. Dr. R. B.

³⁷ The Madras Series, Vols. 1-7 (New York: IMC, 1939), VII, 169.

³⁸ International Review of Missions, LXII, 129.

³⁹ C. Leber, "Evanston and the Ecumenical Mission," Ecumenical Review, VI, 374.

Manikam, secretary in East Asia for both the Missionary Council and the World Council wrote:

If you and we are to demonstrate effectively Mission in unity and unity in Mission, then our immediate objective should be to integrate as fully as possible the work of the IMC with that of the WCC, leaving the matter of an organizational integration for study.⁴⁰

It is certain that in due time the combination will take place and the Missionary Council will cease to exist as a separate entity.

The role which the Missionary Council played in the ecumenical development is an immense one. It brought together for the first time many of the churches which were to become powerful forces in the unitive surge. It brought the younger native leaders into the Christian community as equals. It set the climate for ecumenicity. The Bangkok Conference put it, "they have opened the way for the ecumenical movement in the younger churches. . . . They have enabled the younger churches to take their place in the wider fellowship of the Church Universal."⁴¹ The Missionary Council created a brotherhood which "could do for that [ecumenical] movement what the missionary societies did for their separated churches in the last

⁴⁰ R. B. Manikam, "Some Concerns of Younger Churchmen," Ecumenical Review, VI, 291.

⁴¹ The Christian Prospect in Eastern Asia (New York: IMC, 1950), p. 120.

century."⁴² The genius of the Missionary Council was cooperation. The attitude of the Lutherans toward the Council, at least those who were in it, may be summed up in the words of the historian of the Augustana Synod:

Participating in the ecumenical movement of our day, the Home Missionary Conference, the International Missionary Council, and the World Council does not imply any deviation from our historical faith, rather an acceptance of the opportunity to bear witness to the truth once delivered to the saints and to seek that unity of faith in the bond of peace for which Christ prayed, 'that they may be one.'⁴³

Regardless of one's theological estimation of the Council, its impact upon the Christian world cannot be denied, but must be given credence and credit.

⁴² N. Goodall, editor, Willengen Meeting: Missions under the Cross (New York: Friendship Press, 1953), p. 188.

⁴³ O. N. Olson, editor. A Century of Life and Grace (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1948), p. 158.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE AND WORK, FAITH AND ORDER

Concurrent with the period of the International Missionary Council, coming later by a few years, two other movements blossomed which have contributed most directly to the World Council of Churches. They are the Life and Work and the Faith and Order Movements. These two combined in 1937 to propose the formation of the World Council which was actualized at Utrecht in 1938, when a joint committee of the two bodies met and drew up the provisional constitution of the World Council which was submitted to the churches. This meeting also inaugurated the Provisional Committee of the World Council, supposedly to exist for a short time until the constitution could be ratified, but which conducted the affairs of the World Council until 1948, a period of ten years. The two assemblages were the direct antecedents of the World Council so their character is the most direct influence in the fashioning of the World Council.

The Life and Work Movement is that force which has attempted to unify the churches on the basis of purely practical considerations without regard to doctrinal principles. Its earliest beginnings may be said to arise in a series of informal conferences held between German and English clerics in a venture to alleviate the rising

bitterness between their lands and peoples.¹ Another progenitor was the World Alliance for the Promotion of International Friendship through the Churches embodied in 1914 chiefly through American initiative. This Alliance, in spite of the war, was active enough to organize national committees in most of the belligerent nations during the war. At the close of World War I the Alliance held a meeting at Oud Wassanaer, the Hague, Holland, September-October, 1919. At this meeting Archbishop N. Söderblom, Lutheran Primate of Sweden, suggested the calling of an "ecumenical conference representing Christendom in a spiritual way," consisting not of volunteers but of official representatives of the churches "to consider urgent practical tasks before the Church at this time" be undertaken.²

Söderblom had been busy for years before this to get such a council underway. He had contacted Church leaders throughout the world, including Eastern Orthodox, broaching the subject to them.³ The World Alliance was a pet project of his by which he had hoped to influence political action during the war and peace negotiations. Acting upon this latest proposal, the 1919 meeting appointed a small committee

¹ R. Rouse and Stephan C. Neill, editors, A History of the Ecumenical Movement (New York: Association Press, 1954), pp. 508-13.

² N. V. Hope, One Christ, One World, One Church (Philadelphia: Church Historical Society, 1953), p. 45.

³ Rouse, op. cit., pp. 527-30.

(three, including Söderblom) to decide further plans and to call the conference. This committee met in Paris in 1919 and appointed Dr. F. Lynch, secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, "a committee of one with full power to take practical action."⁴ In this manner the Federal Council became directly responsible for the inception of the Life and Work Movement.

Dr. Lynch called a preliminary conference in Geneva, 1920. The American delegation, by far the largest, was composed of those nominated by the Federal Council.⁵ After much discussion, plans for a conference were adopted, but they did not specify which churches should be invited, nor on what basis. The committee, dominated by two Federal Council leaders, MacFarland and Lynch, was empowered to invite whomsoever it willed. From its beginnings then, the Federal Council has exerted a formative influence on this ecumenical factor--Life and Work. In view of this, it is not surprising that it is this segment of the ecumenical movement which has proved most distasteful to the conservative bodies.⁶

⁴ Hope, op. cit., p. 45.

⁵ J. A. Hutchinson, We Are Not Divided (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1941), p. 233.

⁶ Generally speaking, the program of Life and Work has been such as to prevent many bodies from participating. Its emphasis upon a non-doctrinal position has smacked of the spirit of union at any price on the basis of the least common denominator. Conversely, it has served to bring some bodies into contact with ecumenicism that might not otherwise have been in evidence, as for example, the Greek Orthodox, who through Life and Work were drawn into the ecumenical stream.

The first Universal Conference on Life and Work (later to become the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work) convened in Stockholm, August 19-30, 1925. Keller defines the work of the gathering as being "the translation of problems purely sociological into theological questions and problems of conscience."⁷ In his opening address MacFarland said:

It is to be clearly understood at the outset that any agency that may be appointed shall not deal with questions of creed or ecclesiastical organization, but that it shall strictly limit itself to the class of subjects under consideration at the conference, namely, the Life and Work of the Church of Christ, and in particular the assertion and application of Christian principles to those problems, international, economic, social, civic, with which the future of civilization is so vitally concerned.⁸

So this conference, called on the 1,600th anniversary of the Council of Nicea, got under way. After some discussion and dissension, it was decided to repeat the Nicene Creed at the beginning and the close of the conference as a concession to the Eastern delegates.⁹

Of the hundred bodies represented, many thought that some ought not be there, such as the Unitarians, of whom the Danish leader, Skovgaard-Petersen, said:

⁷ A. Keller, Karl Barth and Christian Unity (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), p. 271.

⁸ C. S. MacFarland, Steps Toward the World Council (London and Edinburgh: Revell Co., 1938), p. 91.

⁹ E. Gordon, An Ecclesiastical Octopus (Boston: Fellowship Press, 1948), p. 99.

One cannot have Christian fellowship with people who deny the essentials of the Christian truth. . . . The world needs Christian morals, but morals are powerless and rootless unless borne up by the Christian life, and the Christian life is a life in Christ as divine Saviour and Lord.¹⁰

Despite the intention of the conference to deal without the upsetting thing of doctrine (Its motto was "Doctrine divides; service unites."¹¹) it soon became evident that "for the performance of common practical tasks there is also necessary a certain minimum of universally accepted doctrine."¹² The Lutherans from America, seven in number, four from the United Lutheran Church and three from the Augustana Synod, placed their view before the conference in an address by President Brandelle of the Augustana Synod.

Unity of purpose and action will be difficult to achieve unless the outstanding lines, at least, of the divine plan of salvation be embodied in a few paragraphs and put on paper so that all may know whether we intend to go to heaven on our own plan or on that set forth by Jesus Himself. . . . If we can agree in the main on what has just been said, one would think the time ripe for an attempt at lifting social, industrial, and international matters to a higher plane.¹³

However, with this Lutheran exception all of the American delegates together with the British strongly urged a radical "social Gospel" social reform program. The continental men

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ International Missionary Review, LXI, 325.

¹² Keller, op. cit., p. 281.

¹³ A. R. Wentz, "Lutheran Churches and the Modern Ecumenical Movement," World Lutheranism of Today (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyelses Bokförlag, 1950), p. 396.

disagreed very emphatically, creating visible tensions. The contrast between these two views has been summed up in two verses. The American-British view:

Rise up, O men of God!
His Kingdom tarries long:
Ring in the day of Brotherhood
And end the night of wrong.

The continental-German Lutheran view:

Sit down, O men of God!
His Kingdom He will bring
Whenever it may please His grace;
You cannot do a thing.¹⁴

Due to this factor, the Archbishop of Finland protested against the conference and refused to send delegates. He commented:

The suffering is great in our times, but the real cause of it is the increasing apostasy from God. For this cause, God's judgment weighs upon men. This world conference cannot issue a reprieve from these judgments. . . . The Gospel cannot bring in a general rehabilitation of social conditions simply because the majority of men reject Christ.¹⁵

The dominant figure at this conference was Söderblom. It was his conference all the way, in fact, he was the conference. Although a Lutheran bishop, he was largely disowned by the Lutherans on this side of the Atlantic. During a visit to America in 1923 to visit the Augustana Synod leaders

¹⁴ Hope, op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁵ Gordon, op. cit., p. 99.

he urged a world Christian political order. This evoked caustic comments from the Lutheran press. The Norwegian Lutheran Church editorialized, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and termed Söderblom "a theological tight-rope walker leading men into the mush of rationalism."¹⁶ The Ohio Synod depicted him as "the greatest errorist among Lutherans. . . . The Church of God has been injured rather than strengthened by his visit."¹⁷ Outstanding leader though he was, looming exceptionally large on the ecumenical scene, he was without honor in his own denomination.

The commissions which reported on the conference's six points, such as war, industrial relations, social and moral problems (marriage, divorce, alcoholism), were well prepared and went at their task with high resolve, yet none of their reports were adopted. They are available now in the rare volume by Bell on the conference. Their controversial nature as well as their ambiguity proscribed any subscription to them. They were described as follows in a European paper:

The sentences are carefully filed at the edges, polished, smoothed with sandpaper, and oiled with a Biblical text. The task was to say nothing while at the same time saying much.¹⁸ This was resolved in a most satisfactory manner.

The United Lutheran Church delegates reported dissatisfaction

¹⁶ T. Graebner, "What Is Unionism?" Concordia Theological Monthly, II, 325.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 326.

¹⁸ Gordon, op. cit., p. 100.

with the conference at their convention in 1926, voicing dismay that the conference and the message did not set forth "new and wiser ways of applying Christ's teachings to the problems which confront all nations."¹⁹ This would indicate that by and large the conference rejected the activism of the Federal Council.

The Message based its call to unity on the contention that Christians must unite or perish, advocating what appears to be a benevolent international socialized state.

The world is too strong for a divided Church . . . because

His followers have so imperfectly represented Him to mankind. . . . We contend for the full and free development of the human personality. In the name of the Gospel we have affirmed that industry should not be based solely on the desire for profit, but that it should be conducted for the benefit of the community . . . [moral problems] cannot be solved by the individual alone, but that the community must accept responsibility for them. . . . The Church must not contend for the rights of the individual as such.²⁰

The Message also recognized the validity of non-Christian religions and pleaded for their help in overcoming the darkness and bringing light to the world.²¹ The conservatives naturally regarded this as an emasculated Christianity,

¹⁹ Minutes, 1926, pp. 50-62.

²⁰ C. Brent, Understanding, (New York: Longmans, 1925), pp. 53-8.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 58-60.

indeed, as a perversion of the truth.

While some American Lutherans agreed with the thought that only in unity lay the power to overcome the evil in the world as the Savannah Resolution of the United Lutheran Church demonstrates:

The forces of evil in the social order are not only deeply entrenched but highly organized. . . . These things warn us that this is a time when Christian men and Christian groups should draw together, if only for the resistance of evils which, if unchecked and unopposed, will involve our whole social structure in destruction;²²

other Lutherans refused to heed this approach and insisted:

As long as we remain Lutherans, insist on every jot and tittle of God's truth, our Church shall survive. Fidelity to the truth does not kill or weaken a church but gives it enduring strength. . . . When they tell us that unless we join the union host, we shall lose out, we answer in the words of Luther: 'No, dear Sir, none of that peace and unity for me through which God's word is lost.'²³

Those Lutherans who felt the need for unity still insisted on doctrinal unity before organic union though. They would not allow the idea broached by Shailer Matthews, dean of the Divinity school at Chicago University, "The way for Christians to get together is to work together," to stampede them into union. The Savannah Resolution delineates this also.

We recognize, moreover, a widespread tendency among Christian groups to dilute the Christian message in an effort to make it acceptable. . . . The Lutheran

²² Doctrinal Declarations (n. p.: n. d.), pp. 58-59.

²³ T. Engelder, "Reunion of Christendom," Concordia Theological Monthly, XIV, 605.

Church should unite to reject them and to claim in their stead the Gospel for which it has always stood.²⁴

Dr. W. H. Greever, editor of the American Lutheran Survey, and later a delegate to the Faith and Order Conference, wrote:

No part of the Lutheran Church can consistently practice unionism without disloyalty to the truth which it professes and without unfaithfulness to the tasks which are specifically its own.²⁵

Confessional Lutheranism makes its position clear in these words:

Confessional Lutheranism insists on the proposition that all the doctrines of the Lutheran Confessions, being taken from the Scripture, are absolutely binding, binding all Lutherans, binding all Christians. We do not feel at liberty to dispense ourselves from confessing any of these truths. . . . A Lutheran by conviction would rather sacrifice his life three times over than consent to a union which provides for the sacrifice of one or more Lutheran teachings.²⁶

The most important single thing done at Stockholm was the appointment of a Continuation Committee, whose principal duty was to further cooperation and unity among the churches by consulting with them and encouraging them.²⁷ The Committee met year by year and in 1930 was given more formal and permanent organization as the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. At this time also a separate American

²⁴ Doctrinal Declarations, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

²⁵ Theological Monthly, VI, 322.

²⁶ Engelder, op. cit., p. 840.

²⁷ G. K. A. Bell, editor, The Stockholm Conference, 1925. (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp. 707-8.

Commission for Life and Work was set up, taking it out of the hands of the Federal Council which had been highly suspect. Its office became one of the most potent forces in dispensing ecumenical propoganda and pushing the idea of union into the fore.

Due to the growing international tensions, the Committee meeting at Fano, Denmark, in 1934, resolved to hold the next Life and Work Conference at Oxford in 1937 to deal with the theme, "Church, Community, and State." J. H. Oldham was at this meeting, though in what capacity is uncertain. He was pressured to take charge of the Oxford conference, and in spite of his heavy commitments to the International Missionary Council he accepted.²⁸ This secured the fate of the conference, for Oldham, more than any other, had inspired confidence in the diverse elements of the ecumenical movement. It was he who decided what questions the conference would treat and who saw to it that there would not be a repeat performance of Stockholm, 1925. He is the main cog in imposing a more theological bent upon the second conference.

Due to the fact that both Life and Work and Faith and Order held their second conferences in England in 1937 consecutively, we shall regard these conferences as one unit and turn now to the Faith and Order Movement.

²⁸ W. R. Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 284.

The World Missionary Conference had repercussions in other spheres than that of missionary strategy and life and work.²⁹ It was at Edinburgh 1910 that young Bishop Brent of the Protestant Episcopal Church received the inspiration to stump for the formation of a body to discuss theological questions as opposed to the de-emphasis of doctrine in the ecumenical movement up to that time. He says of his experience there:

. . . I was converted. I learned that something was working that was not of men in that conference; that was the Spirit of God, preparing a new era in the history of Christianity.³⁰

At the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal body that same year, chiefly through Brent's initiative, a commission was appointed, of which Brent was chairman, to summon a world-wide conference on matters of Faith and Order. Others, notably the Disciples of Christ and the Congregationalists took similar action in their conventions a little later that year.³¹ The Eastern Orthodox General Synod took independent action to the same effect also that year, 1910.³²

The projected conference was to be open to

. . . representatives of all Christian bodies throughout

²⁹ Bell, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

³⁰ A. C. Zabriskie, Bishop Brent Crusader for Christian Unity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948), p. 145.

³¹ P. Ainslie, "The Rapprochement of the Churches," Christian Century, Vol. 44, pp. 1099-1101.

³² Ibid.

the world which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, for the consideration of questions pertaining to the Faith and Order of the Church of Christ.³³

Here for the first time appears the phrase which was to become the credal basis for inclusion in the World Council and which is generally regarded as descriptive of those churches which belong to the ecumenical movement. It was evidently taken from the Paris basis for membership in the Y. M. C. A., adopted in 1855 as a liberalizing continental provision.³⁴

The joint commission of the Protestant Episcopal, the Disciples, and the Congregationalists was very active in approaching almost every denomination in the seventeen years intervening between the original call and the first conference at Lausanne in 1927. Most of the denominations responded by forming commissions to cooperate with the above initiatory group. Throughout this time those two stalwart ecumenicists, Bishops Manning and Brent, both of the Protestant Episcopal Church, spearheaded the drive for the conference, keeping alive the ecumenical dream. These two are the greatest factors in the birth of the Faith and Order Movement.

In 1911 the Report of the Committee on Plan and Scope of the Proposed Conference issued the following statement of purpose:

³³ Hope, op. cit., p. 35.

³⁴ C. H. Hopkins, The History of the Y. M. C. A. in North America (New York: Association Press, 1951), pp. 77-80.

The definite purpose of considering those things in which we differ, in the hope that a better understanding of divergent views of faith and order will result in a deepened desire for reunion and in official action on the part of the separated communions themselves.³⁵

In keeping with this purpose a preliminary meeting of the various commissions appointed by the churches, seventy in all, convened in Geneva in 1920. A continuation committee was appointed and given authority to call the proposed conference. Brent, chairman of this group, also led the convocation to decide upon Lausanne and the year 1927 in a second preliminary conference in Stockholm in 1925.³⁶

Both Brent and Manning approached the Roman Catholic Church hoping to persuade her to join the Faith and Order group. Benedict XV told the following to Manning in a personal interview:

As successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ has no greater desire than that there should be one fold and one shepherd. I earnestly desire and pray that those who take part in the conference may by the grace of God see the light and reunite with the visible head of the Church.³⁷

Although further overtures were made, this pretty well ended the vision of sitting at the conference table with the Cardinals.

The executive committee of the United Lutheran Church met at the Astor Hotel in New York in February of 1925 and

³⁵ Ecumenical Review, IV, 235.

³⁶ L. Hodgson, "The Task of the Third World Conference on Faith and Order," Ecumenical Review, V, 13.

³⁷ New York Times, January 31, 1927, p. 8.

voted to join the Faith and Order movement after preliminary steps had been taken in their conventions of 1922 and 1924.³⁸ They had received an invitation every year up to that point. Rev. F. Knubel, president of the body, explained the delay in acceptance, saying:

We were waiting to see what the tendency of the World Conference on Faith and Order would be before we entered it. We had been led to think that it was very largely an Episcopal movement, but we are now convinced that it is a serious and helpful attempt at the unification of Christendom. It is on that basis that the United Lutheran Church has decided to bear its part of the responsibility.³⁹

Earlier in the first years of the movement the Augustana Synod and the General Council had flatly rejected the first overtures saying that they doubted the propriety of those who would link matters of faith with those of order and that they would have to learn to speak with their Lutheran brethren before attempting outside mesalliances.⁴⁰ However, in 1925 the Augustana Synod reversed its previous decision and along with the Norwegian Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Free Church decided to enter the Faith and Order movement.⁴¹

The first delegate to arrive at the Lausanne Conference was Miss Lucy Gardner, an octogenarian Quaker who had not

³⁸ Minutes, 1922, pp. 88-90; 1924, pp. 533-34.

³⁹ New York Times, February 13, 1925, p. 8.

⁴⁰ C. Bergendoff, What Lutherans Are Thinking (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1947), pp. 368-70.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 370-73.

missed a religious conference in the last twenty-five years.⁴²
 After her came 434 other delegates representing 127 churches.
 Among them were seventy Lutherans. In discussing such themes
 as the nature of the Church, delegates became quite heated.
 Several times it appeared as if the Eastern Orthodox men
 would leave, but they remained, suffering and silent.

Dr. Adolf Keller wrote from the conference reporting for
 the British Weekly:

The subject of the nature of the Church is offering
 great difficulties. Great care was taken, especially
 by Anglicans . . . to avoid statements which would ex-
 clude a later union with Rome. Bishop Manning expressed
 great regret that the Roman Catholic Church did not
 feel able to accept an invitation. . . . The Roman
 Catholic Church has probably never heard more friendly
 words from such a mixed gathering . . . than was the
 case from this conference.⁴³

During the last days of the conference there was a
 super-charged debate on the report of the commission on the
 unity of the Church which had actually suggested a platform
 for organic union in six points. This was not accepted but
 referred to the Continuation Committee for further study.
 The remaining reports were accepted but only one unanimously,
 for the Orthodox delegates voted only on the report concern-
 ing the Scriptures. The refusal of the conference to accept
 the report on unity led to bitter attacks by the rabid

⁴² New York Times, August 1, 1927, p. 5.

⁴³ Christian Century, Vol. 44, p. 1127.

ecumenicists, who described the conference as living in sixteenth century scholasticism, as being composed of "safe" men, and that the real question for the Church to unite on was practical work and that doctrinal discussions such as that at Lausanne should cease.⁴⁴

During the course of the conference the United Lutheran Church delegates brought about fifty-three of the seventy Lutherans in attendance together for an informal caucus, in the course of which there was revealed:

. . . a Lutheran strength and consciousness that we saw eye to eye in laboring for the real unity of the Church in the common spirit of our common heritage of the Reformation.⁴⁵

A second caucus was held which drafted a Lutheran statement to the conference which read in part:

We members of this conference who belong to the Evangelical Lutheran communion desire to lay before the conference the following declaration: Our participation in this conference proves more deeply than any statement could do, how deeply we feel the need for unity among Christians. . . . We feel it our sacred duty to labor for the unity of the Church. . . . Of course, according to our Confessions it is not necessary to the unity of the Church that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies should be everywhere alike, but this unity consists in agreement concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. . . . It is proposed that a small commission be appointed to examine and set forth points of agreement and differences in doctrine.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Christian Century, Vol. 44, p. 1127.

⁴⁵ Minutes, 1928, pp. 77-81.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

In this conference the American Lutherans first exerted themselves in an apparently conscious effort to influence the course of the ecumenical movement, strongly and publicly asserting their distinctive witness and insisting upon the primacy of doctrine and truth. From this point on it may be said that the American Lutherans came into their own in this field of Faith and Order. It certainly seems to be more to their liking, at least it elicits more open response.

The concluding statement adopted by the conference points out an often overlooked fact concerning the ecumenical movement--it is only as effective as the delegates spread its influence among the churches.

What we did . . . will crumble into dust unless the representatives at Lausanne bring home to their several churches the duty and responsibility of studying their reports. . . . The Conference should be repeated in every main ecclesiastical assembly as well as in each separate congregation.⁴⁷

The delegates did study the reports at home and the reactions varied from Dr. Norwood's succinct reply, "The Lausanne conference is a miserable failure," to that of Bishop Manning:

In the first place it accepted a broader meaning of unity than a mere dead uniformity, recognizing that there must be freedom and validity for more than we are accustomed to and that there must be in the new

⁴⁷ H. N. Bate, editor, Faith and Order: Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne (Garden City and New York: Doubleday-Doran Co., 1928), p. 474.

united Church room for every true spiritual experience.⁴⁸

The American Lutheran response, dealing with the idea of denominationalism as a "sin" reads:

We believe that much damage is done to the cause of Christian unity by that undiscerning spirit which sees in the present divided state of the Church the one cause of the slow coming of the Kingdom of God on the earth. There are other causes. . . . We believe that the movement for union should proceed along lines which recognize ecclesiastical order, and we deprecate any impatience which would force the issue without regard for the development of the Church as a whole.⁴⁹

At any rate the delegates had kept their faith and adjourned in good order to their homes and denominations. They had discussed their differences, and the wide divergences had become apparent. The men whose blood ran hot for union chafed at the bit placed in their mouths by these theological verities while the conservatives tugged at the reins to slow down the runaway unionites.

The Continuation committee of Faith and Order procured offices in Geneva along with the rest of the ecumenical boards and commissions making it handy for those men who held positions on several of them. Due to the depression there was no meeting of this continuation committee until 1935. They then decided to have their next conference in 1937 subsequent to the Life and Work conference. This would

⁴⁸ New York Times, October 3, 1927, p. 26.

⁴⁹ Wentz, op. cit., p. 403.

constitute a saving for the delegates for by far the majority of the personnel of both movements was identical.

In this manner the two conferences coalesced in their plans to provide opportunity to promote the cause of the World Council. Life and Work met first in July, 1937, at Oxford. They were to deal with five topics concerning the interplay and relation of the Church, Community, and State.⁵⁰ Although the conference was again dominated by American and English churchmen with 300 of the 425 delegates from these two countries (There were no Germans present due to the prohibition of the Nazi regime) the social activism emphasis was subdued, perhaps due to the impending sense of disaster. Oxford differed from Stockholm in that the theological basis was strongly declared. Hutchinson points out that for the men at Oxford God was not imminent, but an absolute and transcendent being above and beyond man, and sin as an alienation of man from the Absolute God was dwelt upon.⁵¹ The body largely discarded the prepared materials submitted by the commissions and drew up nearly fresh reports.⁵² While the social emphasis was not as much in evidence, it was not completely dormant, which led an American Federal

⁵⁰ Rouse, op. cit., p. 590.

⁵¹ Hutchinson, op. cit., pp. 252-53.

⁵² Rouse, op. cit., p. 590.

Council leader to confess:

The American view is so permeated with the relativism of modern agnosticism as to be almost unintelligible to the Christians of the continent.⁵³

The continental view was expressed by Emil Brunner:

Nothing is achieved by demanding that people love one another or by setting up a social program. The Christian Church has no right to lay down any kind of social program because it is not its business to establish any kind of system.⁵⁴

The message to the churches from Oxford manifests the deepened theological nature of the conference as over against Stockholm. It closes with a note of optimistic encouragement.

The world is troubled and anxious and full of pain and fear. We are anxious, yet we do not despair. Our hope is anchored in the Living God. The Church can be of good cheer: It hears the Lord saying, 'I have overcome the world.'⁵⁵

Lutherans from the United States were almost non-existent at Oxford. The Augustana Synod had one representative, and the United Lutheran Church had sent an unofficial observer. The main interest of Luther's American children seems to have centered on the Faith and Order conference in Edinburgh.

This conference convened in August, very shortly after

⁵³ Gordon, op. cit., p. 104.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ H. S. Leiper, World Chaos or World Christianity (Chicago: Willet, Clark and Co., 1937), p. 70.

the close of the Oxford gathering. The delegates from Oxford came armed with a resolution passed by that conference that read in part:

That with a view to facilitating the more effective action of the Christian Church in the modern world, the movements known as Life and Work and Faith and Order should be more closely related in a body representative of the Church and caring for the interests of each movement. [The resolution goes on at length to outline the nature and structure of the proposed unified body.]⁵⁶

This resolution had its genesis in an informal, unofficial meeting of ten men in the home of Dr. J. R. Stenenson, invited there by Archbishop Temple in 1935 while he was visiting America. This group made itself a self-styled "consultative committee" to both movements and drew up the resolution to submit to both conferences. The Oxford body accepted this resolution en toto and appointed the seven man committee created by it to meet with a like committee from Faith and Order if they also adopted the resolution.

Before giving attention to the Oxford resolution, however, the Faith and Order conference undertook its own work on the four subjects it had been called to consider: the doctrines of Grace, the Word of God, the ministry and the sacraments, and the Church's unity in life and worship. There was much discussion but little meeting of the minds.

⁵⁶ L. Hodgson, editor, The Second World Conference on Faith and Order (New York: Macmillan Co., 1938), p. 273.

The committee on worship decided that:

We find that the obstacles most difficult to overcome consist of elements of faith and order combined, as when some form of Church government or worship is considered part of the faith.⁵⁷

Dr. E. S. Jones, a member of the Commission, proposed his own scheme for union, proposing a credal basis "as simple and yet as profound as Christ made it," and that would be "sufficiently definite to hold the essentials and sufficiently indefinite to give us freedom for marginal differences."⁵⁸

The American Lutherans, of whom there were ten, five from the Augustana Synod, three from the United Lutheran Church, and two from the Norwegian Lutheran Church,⁵⁹ in this section held out until the following paragraph was inserted in the report:

Some of the churches represented in the conference hold that Scripture is not only the supreme but sole standard and source of Christian faith; they reject any suggestion of the equivalence of Scripture and tradition and any implication that the Ancient Creeds contain a sufficient interpretation of the Scriptural faith. Some of these churches regard certain later confessions as possessing an importance and authority at least equal to that of the Ancient Creeds.⁶⁰

This insertion was to express the faith of the Lutherans and their distinctive witness.

⁵⁷ New York Times, August 15, 1937, p. 31.

⁵⁸ International Missionary Review, LX, 328.

⁵⁹ A. R. Wentz, "The Edinburgh Conference," Lutheran Church Quarterly, X, 343.

⁶⁰ Wentz, "Lutheran Church in the Modern Ecumenical Movement," p. 405.

The Lutherans at Edinburgh were particularly delighted with the statement of the first commission on grace. Here it seems the Lutheran members of the commission were able to dominate the scene and they reported to the conference that the commission recorded "complete unanimity" and asserted that "there is in connection with the subject committed to our section no ground for maintaining the division between the churches."⁶¹ Their report read in part:

When we speak of God's grace, we think of God Himself as revealed in His Son Jesus Christ. . . . Some churches set great value on the expression sola gratia, others avoid it. . . . We can all join in the following statement: Our salvation is the gift of God and the fruit of His grace.⁶²

This report was the one which evoked the least discussion of all. Either the delegates were all agreed or they did not have sufficient interest to examine it thoroughly.

As one of its final acts, when the proposal to establish the World Council was brought before it, the Edinburgh Conference appointed a special committee to study the matter. This committee reported that it favored adoption. The Conference accepted this but then insisted that any plan produced by the fourteen man joint committee should be submitted to the Continuation Committee of Faith and Order before final approval, and that approval would be given only if there were

⁶¹ Wentz, "Edinburgh Conference," p. 347.

⁶² Hodgson, op. cit., p. 227.

guarantees that the work of the Faith and Order movement should be conducted in accordance with its traditional principles, namely, the principle that participation be limited to those churches willing to accept "our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." With this the conference adjourned to await the developments which led to the World Council of Churches.

CHAPTER VII

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The above discussion will have made it clear that the World Council of Churches owes its existence largely to the two movements described. We have brought the narrative to the point of the establishment of the joint committee to work out the formation of the World Council. This "Constituent Committee," as the fourteen delegates from the two movements dubbed it, drafted a number of the officers and leaders from these two branches of the ecumenical movement to settle a number of the difficult questions surrounding such a venture. This group, composed of seventy-five heroes of ecumenicism, met at Utrecht in May, 1938, under the chairmanship of Archbishop Temple. A draft constitution was drawn up to be submitted to the churches after it had been approved by the Continuation Committee of Faith and Order. It was remitted to the churches in September, 1938. A Provisional committee was elected to carry out the work of the Council until its actualization, hoped for 1941. This Provisional Committee met in Paris in January, 1939, and appointed W. A. Visser't Hooft to be "General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in process of formation," with two associates,

Dr. W. Paton in London, and Dr. H. Leiper in New York.¹

American Lutherans were represented on the Provisional Committee by Dr. A. R. Wentz of the United Lutheran Church.²

Of their part in the Utrecht Conference, Dr. Wentz writes:

The American Lutherans who went to Utrecht . . . pled long and earnestly for a strictly churchly character of the proposed World Council and of all its parts. The plea was not granted neither was it ignored. The proposed constitution adopted by the majority at Utrecht allocated seats . . . chiefly by territorial regions, but this was specifically called 'provisional' and not final. . . . The door was not strictly closed on the confessions, and at least this minimum of concession to the desires of the Lutheran Churches could be welcomed by the Lutherans.³

During the coming years the American Lutherans were to continue this fight for confessional representation and were to finally win in Amsterdam, 1948. They fundamentally changed the character of the World Council by their insistence on this point.

In the meantime the churches were ratifying the constitution at a rather rapid rate. By June 12, 1939, it had been approved by thirty-seven churches.⁴ Among these first churches to accept the new organization was the United Lutheran Church, thus becoming the first American Lutheran body to do so.⁵

The Provisional Committee, having acquired offices in Geneva

¹ L. Hodgson, The Ecumenical Movement (Sewanee: University Press, 1951), p. 34.

² International Missionary Review, LXI, 325.

³ A. R. Wentz, "Lutheran Churches and the Modern Ecumenical Movement," World Lutheranism of Today (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1950), p. 407.

⁴ New York Times, June 12, 1939, p. 19.

⁵ Ibid.

to accommodate its staff, began to assemble the activities of the various bodies into a single, unified administration.

The war intervened and the plans for forming the World Council had to wait. The full responsibility of performing the functions of the World Council fell upon the Provisional Committee and especially the General Secretary, Visser't Hooft. They rose to meet the challenge, assuming power and authority beyond that given them by any official body, but rather by virtue of their presuming to speak for the entire body of Protestants throughout the world as they represented the churches to the governments and civil authorities.⁶ This helped to give the World Council an aura of authority among the churches before it was officially constituted, making the actual approval of it a foregone conclusion.

During the war the Provisional Committee entered upon a multitude of activities, setting the nature of the Council into the mold which has shaped it to this day. Actually a very small part of its effort and energies are directed into theological discussions and tasks. The overwhelming majority of the staff and the lion's share of the funds are devoted to practical tasks.

⁶ Marc Boegner, "An Appraisal of the World Council," Ecumenical Review, VI, 363.

In those hectic months of summer and fall, 1939, the Council sponsored many meetings and resolutions against war, feverishly attempting to avert the catastrophe. It was during this period that John Foster Dulles became the official political advisor to the World Council.⁷ Immediately upon the outbreak of the war, the Provisional Committee set to work to keep the churches together and to aid the victims of war. Dr. Leiper announced in September, 1939, after the invasion of Poland, that secret means of communication had been set up between the churches in the manner of the cloak and dagger professionals.⁸ The World Council Press service was established in Geneva and kept up a steady stream of information throughout the war. In January, 1940, a group of World Council men meeting at Amsterdam received special communications from President Roosevelt urging them to advocate peace. They were taken by British intelligence agents to a secret meeting place which prompted one of them to say, "The meeting place was so secret most of us were not quite sure where we had been taken."⁹ After the meeting the church leaders were taken to see Hitler and German churchmen to speak for peace. Upon

⁷ E. Gordon, An Ecclesiastical Octopus (Boston: Fellowship Press, 1948), p. 103.

⁸ Christian Century, Vol. 56 (September, 1939), p. 1125.

⁹ New York Times, March 10, 1940, p. 28.

the basis of the report which they sent, Roosevelt dispatched Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, to Europe as his special envoy.¹⁰

In addition to activities such as this the World Council made available transmission of theological thought during the war, smuggling literature in and out of belligerent countries.¹¹ In early 1941, Rev. E. Chandler, representative of the World Council's American Section, went to Britain to arrange for World Council aid to civilians and transportation of British children to the United States. His demands that United States warships must protect these and guarantee them safe passage had a great effect on President Roosevelt's decision to return fire if attacked.¹² During the war, the office in Geneva directed and channeled all refugee and relief activity by the churches throughout the war-torn area. They established prisoner of war chaplains, Bible study groups, and distributed clandestine Christian literature. Dr. Visser't Hooft was the commander of all of these activities. In February, 1943, the office issued an eleven point so-called "Ecumenical Consensus." These points provided a program for peace and defined the churches' role in the post-war world. Point four was "The Church must proclaim the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ W. G. Muelder, "Impressions of the Evanston Assembly," Ecumenical Review, VII, 1.

¹² New York Times, February 8, 1941, p. 4.

Divine commandments concerning the order that is to reign in the world."¹³ Point nine insisted that the states provide "social security for all," and the last point demands an end to colonialism.¹⁴

At a Geneva meeting of the Provisional Committee in 1942 plans had been laid for a department of reconstruction of the World Council and at the end of the war this agency immediately swung into action.¹⁵ An incident which provides illumination as to the effectiveness of their wartime work came to light in 1945 with the discovery of Gestapo records and plans for infiltrating the World Council, drawn up in 1938 and carried out during the war. It stated that, "The church cooperation movement has a marxist, pacifist, Jewish character," and that cooperation between the Roman Church and the Protestants "must be scrupulously watched because the ecumenical movement provides for the Vatican a further means to effect reunion of the two faiths." The records also showed that the Gestapo had had its agents at every meeting of the World Council since its inception.¹⁶

The relief agencies of the World Council did a great work in the post-war days dispensing the materials granted

¹³ Ibid., February 14, 1943, p. 35.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Muelder, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁶ New York Times, November 25, 1945.

them by other churches. The British churches gave a tithe of their income to the World Council for this purpose.¹⁷

Their activities were such as this. They rushed twenty pre-fab barracks to a French village at a cost of \$70,000 contributed by American churches in the spring of 1945.¹⁸

A commission visited Italy and after three months touring told the Italian protestants that they must unite to receive further aid.¹⁹ The World Council accused the United Nations of practicing social discrimination in leaving the World Council alone to handle the problem of ten million German refugees.²⁰

The budgets for these years amounted to quite an impressive figure. The total budget for the World Council for 1945-46 was \$4,279,000.00 of which \$1,230,000.00 was allocated for relief and reconstruction.²¹ Two-thirds of this amount was raised in America and the American Lutheran Churches were the largest single contributors by far.²² Since 1949 the American churches have contributed about eighty per cent of the World Council's funds. In addition to the above, the World Council received several large grants from

¹⁷ Christian Century, Vol. 62, p. 486.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 356.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 876.

²⁰ Ibid., Vol. 64, p. 1035.

²¹ New York Times, February 1, 1945, p. 25.

²² Ibid., February 25, 1946, p. 7.

individuals. For example, John D. Rockefeller gave them one million dollars in 1945, one-half of which was to be used for the ecumenical training of leaders in Europe and one-half for relief.²³ Mr. Rockefeller also gave the World Council \$500,000.00 for the fund to be loaned at low interest rates for rebuilding churches in Europe.²⁴

The World Council staff members also junketed about the world in this post-war era in their quasi-official natures as officers of an unformed group to encourage the reunion of the churches. Dr. Horton, officially speaking for the World Council in 1947, blasted Hungarian Protestants for not uniting, saying they "had not yet been jolted out of those patterns of church activity which are no longer relevant to national life."²⁵ At a meeting of the Provisional Committee in Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, April, 1947, those Eastern Churches which would be invited to join were decided upon, and plans for the Amsterdam meeting were made. President Bersell of the Augustana Synod was present at this meeting, and he insisted upon four separate communion services at the Amsterdam Assembly. This plan was adopted although the members earnestly desired a single all-inclusive communion service.

²³ Ibid., April 1, 1946, p. 4.

²⁴ Ibid., May 31, 1950, p. 31.

²⁵ Christian Century, Vol. 64, p. 892.

The World Council had sent a seven member ecumenical delegation to the first meeting of the Evangelical Church in Germany in 1945 to explore possibility of full fellowship between German churches and others. Dr. Visser't Hooft addressed the assembly strongly urging upon them the course of unity which they followed. The Germans expressed a desire to join the World Council and to have Bishops Wurm and Niemöller represent them on the Provisional Committee.²⁶

The Provisional Committee sent out a call for world leaders to meet in Cambridge in 1946 for the formation of an organization to influence international affairs. John Foster Dulles headed the American delegation to this meeting which formed the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. Dulles commented at this meeting, "The council is seeking to channel the world's moral and spiritual forces to redeem the political life of the world from failure."²⁷ Although this meeting officially formed the Commission, it had already been set up in February by the authority of the Provisional Committee in order to have some voice at the United Nations. Then in February the Provisional Committee had told the press that the Bishop of Chichester and John Foster Dulles would be elected chairmen of the Commission in August, nine

²⁶ New York Times, August 5, 1946, p. 1.

²⁷ Ibid.

months later.²⁸ The whole idea of this commission was met with mixed feelings. As in pre-war days a split developed between American and European delegates on this matter of power politics. Dr. J. Oldham objected to "big, vague words" about the purpose of the proposed but de facto functioning commission.²⁹ Dr. Kirk strenuously berated the churches and churchmen for failing "in bringing Christian influence to bear in the field of secular society."³⁰

At any rate the Commission of the Churches for International Affairs was formally constituted and it immediately set up shop at the United Nations. Its role in this organization as well as in all facets of international relations has been tremendously important, more so than would be expected. At the Cambridge meeting this role was defined in such broad terms as to leave the members of the commission on their own.

The American Lutheran churches had been represented at Cambridge by Dr. Wentz and Dr. F. Nolde, dean of the graduate school at Mt. Airy Lutheran Seminary.³¹ Dr. Nolde has become the wheelhorse of the Commission in its international dealings, as will be seen in later paragraphs.

During the period before the official forming of the

²⁸ New York Times, February 28, 1946, p. 7 and August 17, 1946, p. 15.

²⁹ Ibid., August 6, 1946, p. 1.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ New York Times, August 17, 1946, p. 15.

World Council and after, this Commission on International Affairs has operated smoothly. An evaluation of its role by an impartial observer is as follows:

The Commission of the Churches enjoys great distinction [at the United Nations]. It rates, in some judgments, highest of all non-governmental organizations at the UN. Several of its leaders have records for liaison, survey, mediation, and successful negotiation that compares favorably with those of the top UN delegates. Some have gone in where official emissaries feared to tread and come away with the makings of solutions. . . . It enjoys more consultative competence and prestige than any other.³²

The business of the Commission is not limited to the UN. In its official report to the International Missionary Council the commission said:

The business of the CCIA is by no means confined to the UN and its related agencies. Its officers are called upon to act on many problems and to travel to many parts of the world.³³

An example of this is the sending of William C. Kerr, later a member of the commission, by the Provisional committee with General Douglas MacArthur as he entered Japan with the occupation forces. Six months before other missionaries were allowed to enter, Kerr was serving as Protestant Advisor to General MacArthur in the religious section of the Occupation and laying the groundwork for future missions sponsored by

³² C. Petermann, "They Sell UN to the World," Freeman, (March, 1955), V, 376.

³³ Ibid.

the World Council.³⁴

The commission is also active in the economic and social spheres of human activity, such as the Schuman Plan and the United Europe plan. Dr. Visser 't Hooft writes of this:

The ecumenical commission for European Unity, which is composed of politicians and economists, now seeks to define and specify the message of the churches. For it is very clear that there will be no progress toward greater (political) unity in Europe unless spiritual forces are unleashed which will overcome the psychology of fear, of self-seeking, and mere conservatism, that still dominate the political negotiations.³⁵

The activity of the World Council through this Commission in the social sphere is even more graphically illustrated in the adoption of the Declaration on Human Rights by the UN. This was to a great degree a World Council inspired move. Dr. Charles Malik, generally conceded to be the one responsible for the Declaration, is also a member of the Commission of the Churches, and speaks for the World Council often. The World Council takes credit for the actual formulation and adoption of this declaration by the Economic and Social Council of the UN.³⁶ Dr. Malik's speeches give the content of the Commission's message to the world, as it speaks for the millions of Protestants belonging to the World Council.

We must hope and pray that there will develop in the Western world a mighty spiritual movement which will

³⁴ C. T. Leber, editor, World Faith in Action (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1951), p. 232.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 86.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 68.

rediscover and reaffirm its glorious hidden values, and fulfill mankind's longing for a more just order of things, a more beautiful world, a New Heaven and a New Earth. . . . The only effective answer to Communism is a genuine spiritualized materialism which seeks to remove every trace of social injustice without loss of the higher values which constitute the very soul of the West.³⁷

In its attempt to further this "spiritualized materialism" the Commission prepares and circulates before every General Assembly of the UN a fifty to sixty page memorandum outlining the problems of the Assembly in the forthcoming agenda and giving the delegates, all of them, the viewpoint of the entire world-wide Protestant Church.³⁸ During the Assembly portion of 1953 Commission leaders participated in no less than fifty-two conferences on world affairs representing the "spiritualized materialism" of the world-wide Protestant churches. The question must be asked, "Do they represent Protestant thinking?" It is evident that the Commission does not. It represents the thinking of the World Council leaders and has no contact with church members at all.

Indicative of the power of this Commission is the little-known but well-attested fact that it is this commission that was chiefly responsible for the Korean truce. Dr. Nolde, American Lutheran representative on the Commission, flew to

³⁷ Leber, op. cit., p. 69.

³⁸ Peterman, op. cit., p. 376.

Korea on forty-eight hours' notice, consulted with the World Council sponsored National Commission on Churches in Pusan, and met with President Syngman Rhee and United States Assistant Secretary of State Robertson over an official memo of the Commission urging "deferred action" on the prisoner of war question. It was this meeting which actually brought the fighting to an end.³⁹

This affiliation has led to an attitude on the part of the World Council concerning political theory that identifies the United Nations and Christianity, leading a high World Council official to state:

These attacks on the United Nations--as distinguished from friendly suggestions for improving it--are actually attacks on the Christian faith itself.⁴⁰

Dr. Van Kirk, secretary of the World Council committed all of the American Churches to the UN saying:

The Churches of Christ in the United States are fully committed to the establishment of a world political order through the United Nations. Christians are the divinely inspired propagandists of a world community.⁴¹

Dr. Van Kirk in his book, A Christian Global Strategy, terms Jesus "the master geopolitician of all times"⁴² and advocates the formation of a World Board of Christian Strategy to work

³⁹ Peterman, op. cit., pp. 375-76.

⁴⁰ E. A. Opitz, "Religious Propagandists for the UN," Freeman, Vol. 5 (March, 1955), p. 381.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² W. Van Kirk, A Christian Global Strategy (New York: Willet, Clark and Co., 1945), p. 5.

for the spread of Christianity through the United Nations.⁴³

The World Council itself apparently endorses this view of the world order. Its Central Committee, meeting in Toronto in 1950, advocated the intervention of the UN in the Korean War.⁴⁴ This caused the withdrawal of its Chinese membership, one of whom was a president of the World Council.

The late Evanston Assembly favored the UN and resolved:

It is important that a dynamic concept of the world organization be kept alive and that the United Nations structure be subjected to periodic review. . . . [The United Nations should] become more comprehensive in membership. . . . [We lament] little or no progress has been made towards world disarmament or creation of an international police force.⁴⁵

The World Council proposed an International Observer Commission to the United Nations to act as on the spot observer in areas of tension. This was unanimously adopted by the UN in 1950 as a part of the "Uniting for Peace" resolution. It is now working in such areas as Palestine.⁴⁶

The World Council must answer for itself the question whether it is a political or ecclesiastical organization. By far the greatest amount of its energies is expended in political action and little in theological and moral tasks. It is

⁴³ Ibid., passim.

⁴⁴ Boegner, op. cit., p. 366.

⁴⁵ Opitz, op. cit., p. 382.

⁴⁶ W. Kagi, "International Affairs - Christians in the Struggle for the World Community," Ecumenical Review, VI, 33.

largely silent on basic moral issues but vociferous in the political arena.

The theological attitude of the World Council can best be seen in the various pronouncements and reaction to the Lund Conference of the Faith and Order division of the World Council in 1952. It is analyzed as follows:

What is ecumenical theology? With the maturing experience of study within the ecumenical movement more and more light is being provided to illuminate that answer. It can be understood best when contrasted with a thoroughly confessionalistic theology, which can be a narrow and imprisoned kind of thinking, a type of intellectual pluralism which thanks God that it does not think and act as others do. . . . Ecumenical theology is therefore dramatized symbolics. Theologians who are engaged in ecumenical study must boldly and diligently seek a deeper understanding of our common scriptures, our common confession to Jesus Christ, our common tradition and traditions, our common experience of worship.⁴⁷

Its attitude toward confessionalism may be seen in the report of the Disciples of Christ to the Lund Assembly:

Human creeds as bonds of union and terms of communion are necessarily schismatic and divisive.⁴⁸

Dr. Boegner writes:

Ecumenicism can be fruitful only if it obeys the truth with which each of the Churches engaged in ecumenical study realizes that it has been entrusted.⁴⁹

The attitude of the World Council to Scripture was vivified in the conference at Zetten, authorized to produce a

⁴⁷ K. E. Skydsgaard, "Faith and Order--Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches," Ecumenical Review, VI, 10-11.

⁴⁸ Ecumenical Review, VI (January, 1954), p. 169.

⁴⁹ Boegner, op. cit., p. 368.

book on the status of the Bible. This conference approved the statement:

Nothing is to be held as according to faith which is not proved by Scripture. But when problems arise, the Christian should be guided by three other considerations: (1) Tradition, that is the teaching of the church on the point involved, in particular the teaching of the fathers of the early undivided Church; (2) The light of reason, that is, insights to be gained from non-scriptural sources; and (3) The inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. The true meaning of Scripture is not ascertained until the three coincide.⁵⁰

The attitude of the World Council towards "Biblical" Christians is summed up by Dr. Wright.

There is no doubt but that the vast majority of the non-Roman Catholic Christians represented in the World Council of Churches, at least so far as they have been vocal, tend to consider fundamentalism as a serious Christian heresy.⁵¹

Dr. Wright further states:

In Europe today there would seem to be a tendency to, largely unwitting and occasioned by the attempt to find a basis on which the churches can come together, to speak of the person of Christ outside the context of Christian Trinitarianism, almost a new monotheism based on Christ.⁵²

This theological understanding of the World Council has forced the Eastern Orthodox churches to leave the theological meetings of the World Council and attend only to the practical work.

⁵⁰ O. E. Wright, "The World Council and Biblical Interpretation," Interpretation (January, 1955), III, 54.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 56.

⁵² Ibid., p. 60.

During the postwar period American Lutheranism remained active in the World Council with all bodies except the Synodical Conference eventually affiliating with it. President Bersell of the Augustana Synod recommended to his church in 1940:

I refer also the proposal that the Augustana Synod become a member of the World Council. In my opinion this should be done. Our synod would thereby be setting a praiseworthy example for the other Lutheran bodies, and we should be rendering a service to the cause of Christendom that is trying to find a common point of contact and cooperation in a world that needs a united Christian testimony such as this council will provide.⁵³

The Synod joined the World Council soon after, becoming the second Lutheran body to do so.

The American Lutheran Church according to the official announcement of the World Council joined that body on May 23, 1947.⁵⁴ However, the biennial convention of the American Lutheran Church had not voted this action until October 12, 1948, after a furious floor fight in which the Council was called a "communist front organization."⁵⁵ The American Lutheran Church had already been represented at Amsterdam in an official capacity by Dr. H. Yocum at the time of this convention.

⁵³ Lutheran Companion, Vol. 24 (June 13, 1940), p. 330.

⁵⁴ New York Times, May 24, 1947, p. 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid., October 13, 1948, p. 23.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church at first rejected the Council in 1948, but joined it later, as did the United Evangelical Lutheran Church.⁵⁶ Of these bodies the United Lutheran and Augustana Synod have been the most active in World Council work, with several of their men holding high positions in the Council.

The reaction of the non-participating bodies has been decisive and clear. They have termed it a "unionistic body" and regarded it as a pariah.

In our day many are trying to unite the Church by first removing the division and then speaking the same thing. This is really the definition of a unionist, one who seeks to remove the divisions of the Church before first removing points of doctrine which have caused the divisions . . . to leave them matters of indifference or open questions is contrary to God's Word.⁵⁷

Dr. John T. Mueller in reporting to the convention of his church, the Missouri Synod, said:

Here then we have a federation of denominations, having divergent religious views. This means that this federation is both unionistic and liberal and therefore far removed from the true ecumenicity of the ancient Christian Church, namely, true doctrinal unity.⁵⁸

In an address before the American Lutheran Conference in Rockford, Illinois, in 1947, Dr. John W. Behnken, president of the Missouri Synod, insisted on loyalty to the Word of

⁵⁶ Ecumenical Review, Vol. VI (April, 1954), pp. 300-14.

⁵⁷ A. O. Preus, Jr., What Stands Between? (n. p.: 1949), pp. 20-21.

⁵⁸ J. T. Mueller, "The Modern Ecumenical Movement and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod," The Lutheran Witness, Vol. 72, p. 270.

God and the Lutheran Confessions as the basis for any union or cooperation, thus specifically excluding the World Council from any consideration by his body.⁵⁹

The World Council and the ecumenicists look eagerly for any sign of cooperation from these conservative Lutheran bodies. Even such an insignificant thing as the decision of the St. Louis Lutheran Pastors Conference of the Missouri Synod to become an "ecumenical associate" of the local Church Federation was hailed as a "major advance" in Protestant church relations, with the ecumenicists admitting that the Missouri Synod might accomplish more good by remaining aloof and partially cooperating than by joining in.⁶⁰

The Amsterdam Assembly in 1948 brought to fruition the ecumenical dreams of many years in the formal organization of the World Council. The nature of its findings may be briefly stated as being inconclusive. It discussed much but accomplished little. The churches were actually solidified in their confessional stand. The weaknesses and problems of the movement are many as was evidenced in the second assembly at Evanston in 1954, but these lie out of the scope of this examination. It will remain for another to examine the

⁵⁹ Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 18, p. 171.

⁶⁰ Christian Century, Vol. 69, p. 820.

World Council itself after it has reached its mature development. To attempt such a task in this paper would make it inordinately lengthy and be beyond the goal originally set--to examine the historical development of the World Council.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adam, K. One and Holy. New York: Shedd and Ward, 1951.
- Ainslie, Peter. If Not a United Church--What? New York, Chicago, London, and Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1920.
- . The Message of the Disciples for the Union of the Church. New York: n.p., 1913.
- . "The Rapprochement of the Churches," The Christian Century, Vol. 44, pp. 1099-1101.
- Allen, W. O. B., and Edward McLean. Two Hundred Years; The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698-1898. London: SPCK, 1898.
- Anstadt, P. Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D. D. York, Pa.: P. Anstadt and Sons, 1896.
- Arndt, W. "The Lutheran Church and Unionism," Theological Monthly, Vol. 6, pp. 321-8.
- . "Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry," Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 4, pp. 174-5.
- . "Lund," Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 18, pp. 721-38.
- Athenagoras, Patriarch. "Encyclical Letter to the Patriarchs and Heads of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches," The Ecumenical Review, Vol. V, pp. 167-9.
- Bate, H. N., editor. Faith and Order. Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne, August 3-21, 1927. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1928.
- Bell, G. K. A., editor. The Stockholm Conference, 1925. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.
- Bente, F. American Lutheranism. 2 Vols. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919.
- . Was Steht Der Vereinigung Der Lutherischen Synoden Amerikas im Wege? St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917.
- Berg, E. R. Behind Barbed Wires. Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1944.

- Bergendoff, Conrad. "Report to the American Home Missionary Society, 1849-1856," Augustana Historical Society Publications, Vol. V. Rock Island, Ill: Augustana Book Concern, 1935. Pp. 35-84.
- Bergendoff, C. What Lutherans Are Thinking. Columbus: Wartburg, 1947.
- Bettenson, E. Documents of the Christian Church. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1947.
- Bilheimer, Robert S. The Quest for Christian Unity. New York: Association Press, 1952.
- . "What Must the Church Do?" The Interseminary Series, Vol. 5. New York and London: Harper and Bros., 1947.
- Bingle, E. J. "Ad Interim 1954: A Comment," International Review of Missions, Vol. 43. Pp. 443-50.
- Boegner, Marc. "An Appraisal of the World Council of Churches," The Ecumenical Review, Vol. VI. Pp. 361-9.
- Bradshaw, M. J. Free Churches and Christian Unity. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1954.
- Brent, C. Understanding. New York: Longmans, 1925.
- Brilioth, Archbishop Y. "Sermon at the Faith and Order Conference Service," The Ecumenical Review, Vol. V. Pp. 37-42.
- Brookfield, G. W. Revelation and Reunion. London: Oxford University Press, 1942.
- Buchman, J. W. "The Creed of the World Council of Churches," Hibbert Journal, Vol. 38. Pp. 386-91.
- Campbell, A. The Christian System. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., n. d.
- Cavert, S. M. "Europe's War-Tossed Churches," Christian Century, Vol. 59. Pp. 1390-92.
- . "Evanston and the American Churches," Ecumenical Review, Vol. VII. Pp. 111-16.
- Christian Prospect in Eastern Asia; Papers and Minutes of the Eastern Asia Christian Conference, Dec. 3-11, 1949. New York: Friendship Press, 1950.

- Churches Allied for Common Task, The. New York: Federal Council of Churches in America, 1921.
- Church Unity. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896.
- Conference of the Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland, Report of the First Annual Conference Held at Hayes, Swanwick, Darbyshire. London: CMSGBI, 1912.
- Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia, 1912-1913.
New York: Chairman of the Continuation Committee, 1913.
- Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity. New York: International Missionary Council, 1910.
- Dau, W. H. T., editor. Ebenezer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922.
- Doctrinal Declarations. n.p. n.d.
- Doggett, L. L. Life of Robert B. McBurney, Foreign Missionary. Cleveland: Barton, 1902.
- Dwight, H. O. The Centennial History of the American Bible Society. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916.
- Edwall, P., editor. Ways of Worship. The Report of the Commission of Faith and Order. New York: Harpers, 1951.
- Ewing, J. W. The Goodly Fellowship: A Centenary Tribute to the Life and Work of the World's Evangelical Alliance. London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1946.
- Fahs, C. H. Conspectus of Cooperative Missionary Enterprises. New York: International Missionary Conference, 1934.
- Fey, H. E. "Where World Council." Christian Century. Vol. 64. Pp. 583-5.
- Fischer, G. M. John R. Mott Architect of Cooperation and Unity. New York: Association Press, 1952.
- Flew, N. The Nature of the Church. London: SCM Press, 1952.
- Freytag, W. "Impressions of the Evanston Assembly," Ecumenical Review, Vol. VII. Pp. 9-13.
- Gairdner, W. H. F. Echoes from Edinburgh, 1910. New York, Chicago, Toronto, London, and Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.

- Garrison, A. A Protestant Manifesto. New York: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1952.
- Goodall, N., editor. Willingen Meeting, Missions under the Cross. New York: Friendship Press, 1953.
- Gordon, E. An Ecclesiastical Octopus. Boston: Fellowship Press, 1948.
- Graebner, T. "Kirche und die Kirchen." Weltluthertum von Heute. Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1950. Pp. 112-36.
- , and P. E. Kretzmann. Toward Lutheran Union. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943.
- , "What Is Unionism?" Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 2. P. 580.
- , The Problem of Lutheran Union. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935.
- Hall, F. J. Christian Reunion in Ecumenical Light. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930.
- Hodgson, L. "Letter." Christian Century. Vol. 56. P. 188.
- , editor. Convictions: A Selection from the Responses of the Churches to Lausanne, 1927. London: n.p., 1934.
- , editor. The Second World Conference on Faith and Order Held at Edinburgh, August 3-18, 1937. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938.
- , The Ecumenical Movement. Sewanee, Tenn.: The University Press, 1951.
- , "The Task of the Third World Conference on Faith and Order," Ecumenical Review. Vol. V. Pp. 1-14.
- Hogg, W. R. Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth Century Background. New York: Harper and Bros., 1952.
- , Sixty-five Years in the Seminaries: A History of the Interseminary Movement. New York: Interseminary Movement, 1945.
- Hope, N. V. One Christ, One World, One Church. Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1953.
- Hopkins, C. H. History of the Y. M. C. A. in North America. New York: Association Press, 1951.

- Hull, W. E. "American Interseminary Alliance," Lutheran Quarterly. Vol. 16. P. 550.
- Hutchinson, J. A. We Are Not Divided. New York: Round Table Press, 1941.
- Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, Vols. 1-8. New York: International Missionary Council, 1928.
- Kägi, Werner. "International Affairs--Christians in the Struggle for World Community," Ecumenical Review. Vol. VI. Pp. 32-9.
- Keller, A. Karl Barth and Christian Unity. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933.
- Kelley, A. D. "The Assembly and American Christianity," Anglican Theological Review. Vol. 36. Pp. 249-50.
- Kennedy, J. W. Venture of Faith. New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1948.
- Kerr, H. T. Positive Protestantism. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950.
- Knubel, F. H. Church Unity. Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1936.
- Konstantinidis, C. "Impressions of the Evanston Assembly," Ecumenical Review. Vol. VII. Pp. 14-20.
- Krauth, C. P. "The Relations of the Lutheran Church to the Denominations Around Us." Free Lutheran Diet in America. Philadelphia: J. F. Smith, 1878. Pp. 27-80.
- Laetsch, T. "Forward." Concordia Theological Monthly. Vol. 6. Pp. 1-11; 81-93.
- Latourette, K. S. A History of Christianity. New York: Harper and Bors., 1953.
- Leber, C. T. "Evanston and the Ecumenical Mission," Ecumenical Review. Vol. VI. Pp. 370-8.
- , editor. World Faith in Action. Indianapolis, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1951.

- Leiper, H. S. "The World Council and the War Emergency," Religion in Life. Vol. 13. Pp. 483-95.
- . World Chaos or World Christianity. Chicago, New York: Willett, Clark and Co., 1937.
- Lhamon, W. J. "The Bible and Christianity," Christian Century. Vol. 44. Pp. 653-55.
- Luhndahl, A. "Missionary Cooperation in Sweden," International Missionary Review. Vol. XL. Pp. 421-9.
- Luther, M. Large Catechism. Translated by Dr. Lenker. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1953.
- . "The Papacy at Rome," Works of Martin Luther. I. Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1943.
- MacFarland, C. S. Steps Toward the World Council. London: Revell Co., 1938.
- MacNeill, J. T. Modern Christian Movements. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954.
- Madras Series, The. New York: IMC, 1939. Vols. 1-7.
- Manikam, R. B. "Some Concerns of Younger Churchmen," Ecumenical Review. Vol. VI. Pp. 287-94.
- Man's Disorder and God's Design. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.
- Mayer, F. E. The Religious Bodies of America. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954.
- Miller, R. C., editor. "The Church and Organized Movements." The Interseminary Series. Vol. II. New York, London: Harper and Bros., 1946.
- Minutes. Unpublished excerpts from the Minutes of the United Lutheran Church from 1920-36, obtained from Prof. E. T. Bachman in a graduate seminar conducted in Los Angeles.
- Monsma, N. J. The Trial of Denominationalism. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1932.

- Mott, J. R. Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott. Vols. 1-6.
New York: Association Press, 1947.
- "The Cost of Ecumenical Unity," Christian Century.
Vol. 58. Pp. 929-31.
- Muelder, W. G. "Impressions of the Evanston Assembly,"
Ecumenical Review. Vol. VII. Pp. 1-8.
- Mueller, J. T. "The Ecumenical Movement and the Lutheran
Church-Missouri Synod," The Lutheran Witness.
Vol. 72. Pp. 266 ff.
- Mundinger, C. S. Government in the Missouri Synod. St. Louis:
Concordia Publishing House, 1947.
- Neve, J. L. Lutheran and Church Union. Philadelphia: The
Lutheran Publication House, 1921.
- Nichols, J. H. Evanston. New York: Harper and Bros., 1954.
- Nolde, O. F. Power for Peace: The Way of the United Nations
and the Will of Christian People. Philadelphia:
Muhlenberg, 1946.
- "Toward World Wide Christianity." The Interseminary
Series. Vol. IV. New York: Harper and Bros., 1946.
- Northam, F. "Financing the World Council of Churches,"
Ecumenical Review. Vol. VI. Pp. 317-325.
- "Official Responses to the Lund Report," Ecumenical Review.
Vol. VI. Pp. 169-78.
- Olson, O. N., editor. A Century of Life and Grace. Rock
Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1948.
- Opitz, E. A. "Religious Propagandists for the United Nations,"
Freeman. Vol. 5 (March, 1955) Pp. 381-392.
- Pascoe, G. F. Two Hundred Years of the S. P. G. 2 Vols.
London: Published at the Societies Office, 1901.
- Peterman, C. "They Sell UN to the World." Freeman. Vol. 5.
(March, 1955) Pp. 374-78.
- Potter, H. C. "Youth and the Evanston Assembly," Ecumenical
Review. Vol. VII. Pp. 105-110.
- Preus, Jr., J. A. O. What Stands Between? n.p.: 1949.

- Reu, M. In the Interest of Lutheran Unity. Columbus, Ohio: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1940.
- Rossmann, P. Ecumenical Student Workbook. New York: The United Student Christian Council, 1949.
- Rouse, R., and Stephen C. Neill, editors. A History of the Ecumenical Movement. London: S.P.C.K., 1954.
- Rouse, R. "William Carey's Pleasant Dream." International Review of Missions. Vol. LXXII (April, 1949). Pp. 181-92.
- Schaff, P. The Reunion of Christendom. Chambersburg, Pa.: Anstadt and Sons, 1893.
- Schlink, E. "The Christian Hope and the Unity of the Church." Ecumenical Review. Vol. VI. Pp. 113-17.
- Schmucker, S. S. Lutheran Church in America. Philadelphia: E. W. Miller, 1852.
- Shedd, C. P. "A Time for Decision in Y. M. C. A.--Church Relations," Religion in Life, Vol. 14. Pp. 586-91.
- Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements.
New York: Association Press, 1934.
- Skydsgaard, K. E. "Faith and Order--Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches," Ecumenical Review. Vol. VI. Pp. 10-24.
- Slosser, G. J. Christian Unity, Its History and Challenge. New York: International Missionary Council, 1929.
- Soderblom, N. Christian Fellowship. New York: Revell, 1923.
- Spaude, P. W. The Lutheran Church Under American Influence. Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1943.
- Stowell, J. S. The Utopia of Unity. New York: Revell, 1930.
- Student Missionary Appeal, The. New York: SVMFM, 1898.
- Student Missionary Conference, The. Boston: Metcalf Co., n.d.
- Sweet, W. W. The Story of Religion in America. New York: Harper and Bros., 1930.
- Tatlow, T. The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland. London: SCM Press, 1933.

- Tomkins, O. S. "Implications of the Ecumenical Movement." Ecumenical Review. Vol. V. Pp. 15-26.
- . The Church in the Purpose of God. New York: World Council of Churches, n.d.
- ., editor. The Third World Conference on Faith and Order. London: SCM Press, 1953.
- Temple, W. The Church Looks Forward. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944.
- Trueblood, E. Signs of Hope. New York: Harper and Bros., 1950.
- Van Dusen, H. P. World Christianity. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1947.
- Van Kirk, W. V. A Christian Global Strategy. New York: Willett, Clark and Co., 1945.
- Visser't Hooft, W. A., editor. The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Report). London: SCM Press, 1949.
- Wentz, A. R. "Edinburgh Conference, 1937." Lutheran Church Quarterly. Vol. 10. Pp. 341-64.
- . "The Lutheran Church and the Modern Ecumenical Movement." World Lutheranism of Today. Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1950.
- . "Die lutherische Kirche im religiösen Leben Amerika." Das Erbe Martin Luthers. Leipzig: Dörfflung und Francke, 1928.
- . History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland. Harrisburg: Evangelical Press, 1920.
- . History of the Gettysburg Seminary. Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1926.
- . "The New Testament Idea of the Church," International Missionary Review, Vol. LXII (April, 1939), pp. 182-5.
- Wilson, E. Fifty Years of Association Work. New York: Y. W. C. A., 1916.
- Wolf, L. B. "Edinburgh." Lutheran Quarterly. Vol. 41. Pp. 173-4.

World Missionary Conference, 1910. Vols. 1-9. Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, n.d.

World-Wide Evangelization. New York: SVMFM, 1902.

Ylvisaker, S. C., editor. Grace for Grace. Mankato: The Lutheran Synod Book Co., 1943.

Y. M. C. A. Lectures in Exeter Hall, 1858. London: Nisbet Co., n.d.

Zabriskie, A. C. Bishop Brent, Crusader for Christian Unity. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948.