

(5) Summary of Some activities:

We have hinted at a few of the activities of the council, particularly in the social and political arena. But two of the major activities interest us for what they would have implied for the rest of the Christian community.

--An attempt was made to persuade the major broadcasting networks to allow the council to be the determining voice in broadcasting religious radio programs. Radio, at first mocked by the religious world, had become a major source of propagandizing and some of the religious programming was deemed in good taste. Contrary to today, just about anyone with the funds could purchase time on just about any station. The idea in the council was that it would be a clearing house and an advisory body on whom could and whom could not be sold time, etc. This was a very sensitive issue and interesting notes may be found on it in the book A MAN TALKED--THE WORLD LISTENED by Paul Maier. This is the biographical account of Walter Maier, founder of the Lutheran hour and in the thirties-forties, the most widely broadcasted program in the world. It (the book) notes the anguish religious broadcasters endured while the council worked for this and while the broadcasters worked against it. Public pressure ended the matter but I think the liberal churchmen never gave up and eventually succeeded with something less awesome and probably less efficient but nevertheless effective in limiting the individualized thrusts with the Gospel.

--A similar move was made with regard to the military chaplaincy at the beginning of the military draft just prior to World War II (1940). With the return of the draft there was a great need for chaplains in the military and the Federal Council sought to be the agency making recommendations on this line. The move was frustrated by a number of fundamentalist groups who argued for equality in representation of religious belief.

Probably we should apologize for just mentioning negative projects...the more positive ones came in the form of combined help in health, education, and employment projects. There were some! Local councils often undertook projects on these lines and also in the matter of securing hospital and prison chaplains. Local councils as well often sought parity in the placing of churches. Overtones were made in Christian education and attempts were made in different places at regulating released time classes, daily vacation Bible school, and summer camps. Some church mergers