

(3) The Faith and Order Conference

These three moves are of enormous importance in this study. They not only set the stage for the eventual formulation of the World Council but also determined the pattern of its inclusivistic nature but their own make-ups. We will not hammer this point at this time but the biblical concept of the church is not that of a gathering of religious persons but of those who are professed adherents of the Scriptural revelation as understood in the life of the church. Doctrinal hair-splitting is not the problem: the inclusion of liberals and modernists who patently deny the most foundational truths of Christianity is the problem. Likely I will wax eloquent on this and on some of the leaders in the group. But probably not so eloquently as does the Apostle in Acts 20.

c. The call for the conference: 1937

d. Convening of the World Council: Amsterdam, 1948

The war interrupted the actions set in motion by the call. From 1939 through 1946 very little was possible in any sort of sociological religious development. With the end of the war came a great relaxation of tensions. The UN was developed and the pressures of the struggle for peace made the relaxation all-consuming to the point of near collapse. It is easier to understand that mental set if one has lived through such an era. The euphoria that comes at the end of such conflict is a false anesthesia to the real ills but it is very gripping and hard to offset. The formation of the World Council of Churches came as a part or an inclusion of that euphoria as did the UN and a bunch of other things.

e. Council meetings since 1948...as they seem important to us.

--Evanston, 1954